LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
AFTER SCHOOL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNIT

An Analysis of the Customer Service Survey Results:

Understanding LA County Grantee Perspectives on Support Received in 15-16 and Needs Moving into 16-17

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Respondent Information	5
General Findings	7
Conclusion and Next Steps	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A total of 130 respondents provided information for an online survey designed to capture Los Angeles County grantee perspectives on the technical assistance services provided by the LACOE After School Technical Assistance Unit (ASTAU) in 2015-16. More specifically, two distinct online surveys were distributed to all grantees via email. One survey was intended for Site Coordinators and one was for Program Leadership (e.g., Grant Managers, Program Directors, Superintendents, Authorized Agents. Both surveys consisted of both multiple-choice items and some open-ended questions. Overall, the findings were very positive and highlighted a generalized sentiment that the ASTAU provided a diverse, valuable set of support services and that ASTAU team members were very responsive to grantee needs and concerns. The results yielded a concrete set of needs for the ASTAU to consider addressing in the coming year.

The largest group of respondents was school district employees. In terms of position title, the sample includes a diverse set of stakeholders (80 Site Coordinators, 50 Program Level Leaders). All grade levels from kindergarten through twelfth grade are represented although the largest group of respondents reported serving elementary school aged students (TK-5, TK-6).

The majority of respondents reported that the TA received had a positive impact on their program practices and that that the ASTAU team members were responsive to their concerns in a timely way. In general, respondents reported a high level of value added by the TA they received. Site Coordinators most commonly reported receiving information and resources, coaching, mentoring, and participating in training. Program leaders most commonly reported receiving information and resources, consultation by phone or in person, training, and the Quality Standards TOT. When asked to provide examples of how the TA received impacted their program practice, the largest groups of respondents from both Site Coordinators and Program Leaders reported an increased understanding of the Quality Standards and how to implement them. These findings suggest that different respondents took advantage of different types of TA services and in general found them to be useful.

Respondents were asked to identify any current needs that they would have liked to have met in 14-15 and that would be of use in 15-16. Although the specific content varied to some degree, both stakeholder groups reported wanting more training in 15-16 and into 16-17. The Quality Standards and CQI did emerge as most salient even though both groups did identify other needs including staffing, program content/management, and budgeting.

INTRODUCTION

The After School Technical Assistance Unit (ASTAU), housed within the Los Angeles County Office of Education, provides a diverse menu of support services to all of the publically funded grantees (e.g., school districts, community-based organizations) across the LA County. Such technical assistance services include but are not limited to training, facilitating special interest groups, providing and brokering resources, coaching, consulting, and mentoring. As part of an effort to improve upon their current practice, the ASTAU commissioned the current study to survey grantees about their general satisfaction with the services received. This effort was also intended to serve as a basic needs assessment for planning the scope and nature of services to be provided in 16-17. This study is the third such evaluation effort to be launched by the ASTAU.

In order to gather this important information, the current study was designed to address the following three research questions:

1. What types of technical assistance did grantees receive?

2. How satisfied are grantees with the technical assistance provided by the ASTAU in 15-16?

3. What needs do grantees want addressed in 16-17?

The content of this report was provided by after school leaders and program staff from ASES and 21st CCLC funded after school programs throughout LA County. The information shared by these respondents has been synthesized in this report and is presented in subsequent sections. More specifically, this report provides important information about general grantee satisfaction with ASTAU technical assistance services and identifies anticipated grantee needs to be addressed in 16-17.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

A total of 130 respondents completed an online survey. Two distinct online surveys were administered: one for program level leadership (e.g., Grant Managers, Program Directors) and one for Site level leaders (e.g., Site Coordinators). See Table 1 for a breakdown of respondents by position type. Site Coordinators comprised the largest respondent group followed by Grant Managers.

Table 1. Number of Respondents by Position Title

Position Type	Number of Respondents
Grant Manager	27
Program Director	20
Superintendent/Authorized Agent	1
Fiscal	1
Site Coordinator	80

Not all of the respondents answered every question and the total number of respondents for each survey item is noted in the caption under the respective figure. Respondents were asked to identify whether they worked for a school district, charter school, or community-based organization. The largest group of respondents across position titles reported working for a school district (see Figure 1).

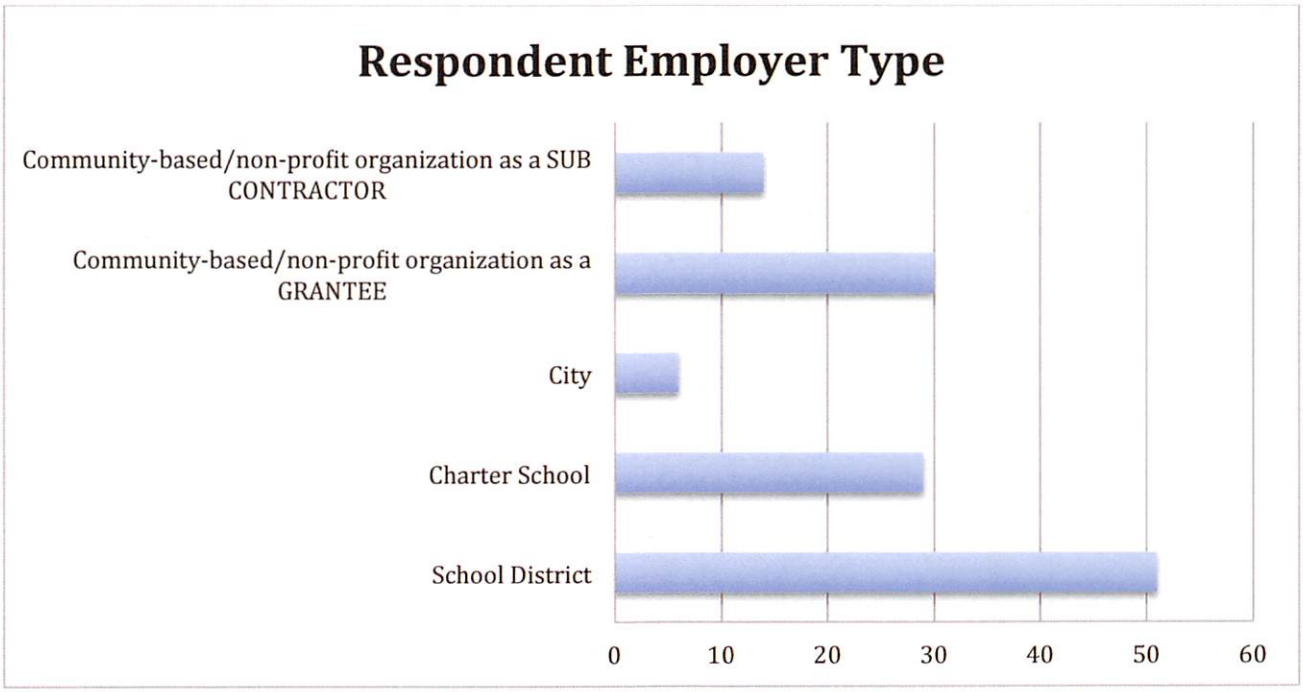


Figure 1. Number of respondents selecting each of the response choices related to employer type (N=130).

Another important demographic variable for this sample was the level of program the respondent worked with. This sample represents all grade levels from kindergarten through twelfth grade (see Figure 2). The largest group of respondents reported serving elementary school aged students (TK-5 or TK-6). The smallest group of respondents reported serving high school aged students.

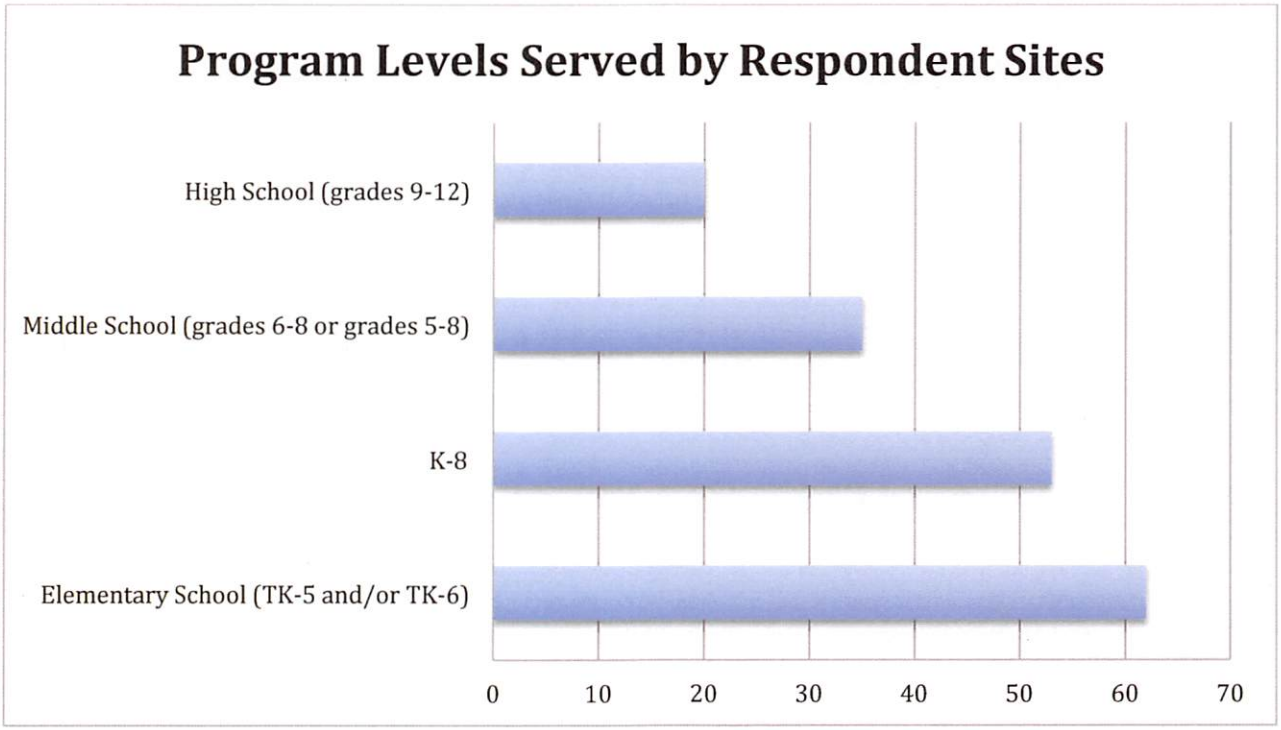


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents selecting each of the four response choices related to the grade levels they serve (N=130).

GENERAL FINDINGS

Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to capture information about the types and utility of technical assistance received, the overall impact of the TA received, the perceived responsiveness of ASTAU team members in addressing stated concerns, any current needs that were not addressed in 15-16, and any anticipated needs for 16-17. Data from all of these questions is synthesized in the subsequent paragraphs and is presented by stakeholder group. That is, program leadership data is presented separately (but is compared to) from Site Coordinator data.

All respondents were asked to identify the types of technical assistance (TA) that they received in 15-16 and also to rate its respective utility in informing their work (see Figures 3- 4). Fairly large groups of Site Coordinators reported not using all of the TA services. This is not entirely surprising since much of the TA provided is targeted and participation can be based on need and instruction from program leadership. Site Coordinators most commonly reported receiving information and resources, coaching, mentoring, and participating in training. Program leaders most commonly reported receiving information and resources, consultation by phone or in person, training, and the Quality Standards TOT. Of the respondents who did report receiving particular types of TA, the ratings of utility were high with the largest groups indicating that the service was very useful (see the blue bars in Figures 3-4).

Both groups of respondents were also asked to rate the extent to which the TA received impact their program practices (as defined by personal work and overall work of the program). The majority of both groups reported that the TA provided had a marked impact on their work:

- ✓ ***77% of Program Leaders and 63% of Site Coordinators reported that the TA received had a more than moderate to substantial impact on their work***

In order to understand more about how the TA received impacted program practice, all respondents were asked to provide at least one example of impact. For Site Coordinators, 38 respondents answered the question, which yielded a total of 62 responses (each individual could provide up to 3 examples). Only 3 responses were "n/a" and the rest fell into 7 thematic categories:

- **Increased knowledge of Quality Standards/CQI: 21**
- It was generally very helpful: 5
- **Improved leadership and coaching skills: 24**
  - Value of peer networking for sharing knowledge and resources
- Increased parent communication: 3
- Increased communication with the school day: 2
- Improved youth leadership opportunities: 6
- Improved summer planning: 1

For Grant Managers/Program Directors/Superintendents/Authorized Agents, only 34 respondents answered the question and yielded a total of 52 responses (each individual could provide up to 3 examples). Responses fell into 7 thematic categories, which are listed below with frequency counts:

- **Improved knowledge of Quality Standards: 30**
  - Implementation strategies, assessment, general knowledge of expectations
- Improved ability to manage budget: 3
- Improved practices related to early release: 4
- General improvements (none specified): 11
- Site visit feedback improved site practice: 2
- Improved knowledge of social emotional learning: 1
- Improved parent communication: 1

For both groups of stakeholders, the most commonly reported area of impact was related to an increased conceptual and practical understanding of the Quality Standards and CQI process. Otherwise, the areas of impact were not too related save the reference to increased parent communication for both groups. However, both groups did make generalized comments about the usefulness of the TA received as it helped to improve their program practice.

Respondents were also asked to reflect upon their interactions with the ASTAU team and to then describe the extent to which team members had been responsive to addressing their concerns in 15-16 (see Figure 5). More specifically, respondents were asked to identify the amount of time it took for the ASTAU team to respond to their needs/requests. In general, all respondents reported receiving timely responses from the ASTAU team. The largest groups of respondents from both groups reported receiving a response within 1 business day. Less than 10% of both respondent groups reported a wait time of longer than 3 days.

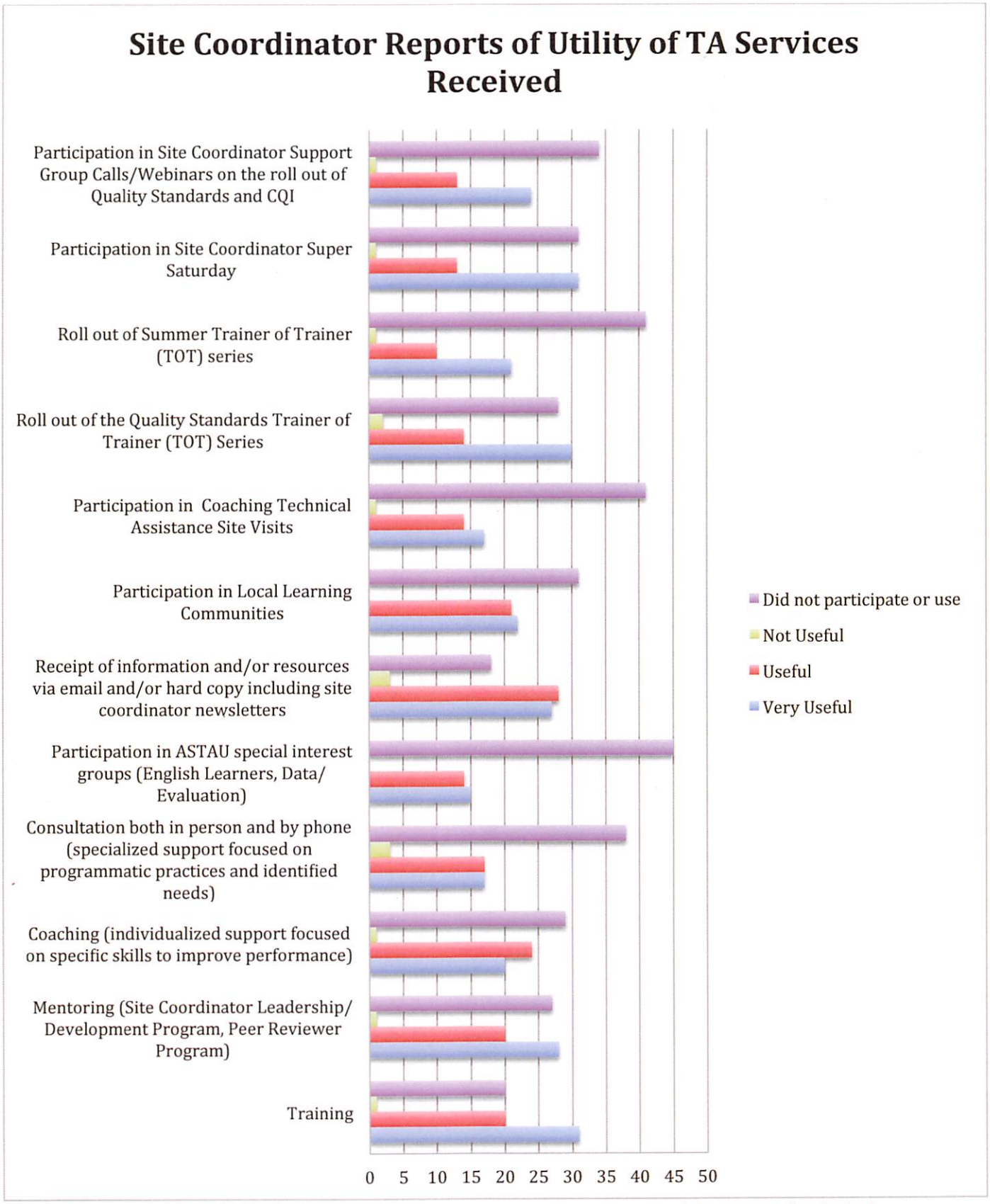


Figure 3. Number of Site Coordinator respondents rating the utility of each of the types of technical assistance received in 15-16 (N=79).

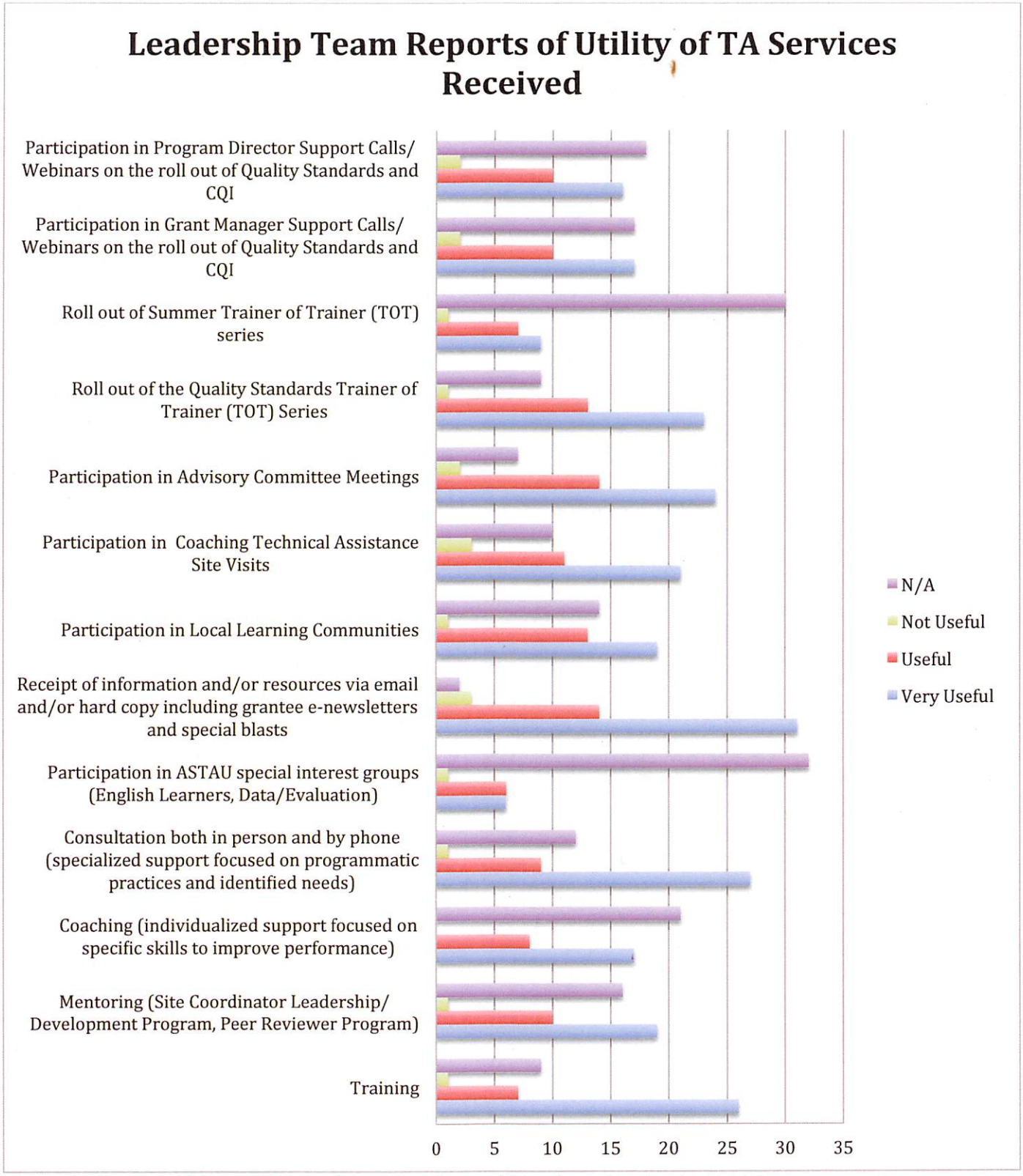


Figure 4. Number of Grant Manager/Program Director/Superintendent/Authorized Agent respondents rating the utility of each of the types of technical assistance received in 15-16 (N=50).

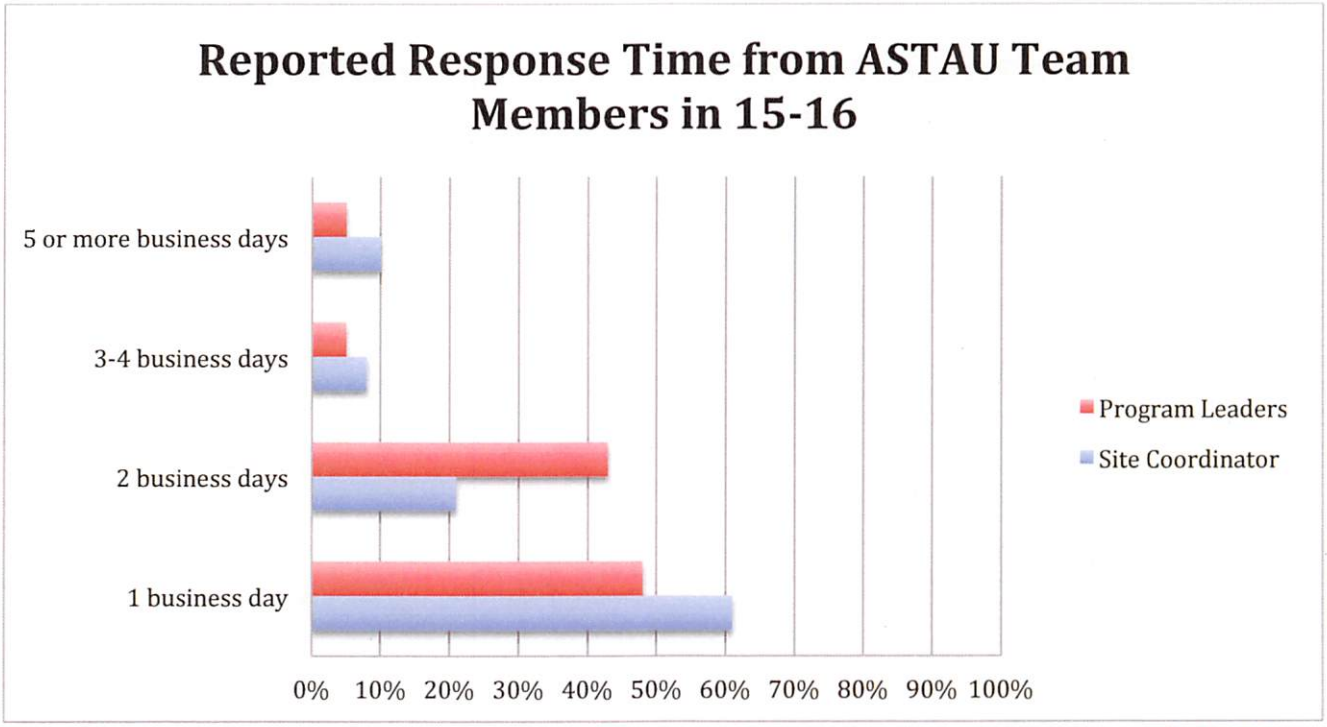


Figure 5. Percentage of respondents by stakeholder type selecting each of the response times for ASTAU staff (N=130).

Respondents were asked to identify any current needs that they would have liked addressed in 15-16 and also any anticipated needs to be addressed in 16-17.

Grant Manager/Program Director/Superintendent/Authorized Agent Data:

15-16 Needs: Only 28 respondents answered this question and yielded a total of 36 responses (each individual could provide up to 2 responses). 4 responses were "N/A". The remaining responses fell into 7 thematic categories, which are listed below with frequency counts:

- **More support with budgets and/or funding opportunities**: 6
- **More support with assessment of quality/CQI**: 3
- **More support related to implementing the Quality Standards**: 7
- **More site visits**: 3
- **More support with middle school attendance**: 2
- **More support with staff retention**: 2
- **Other**: 9
    - Examples: mentorship, early release forms, more resources, CDE updates about ASES, SEL, in-person district trainings

16-17 Needs: Only 14 respondents provided information for this question, which yielded a total of 16 responses (each individual could provide up to 2 responses). 5 respondents provided answers that were "N/A". The remaining responses fell into 3 thematic categories listed below with frequency counts:

- **More trainings**: 6
  - SEL, staffing, budget, contract vs. grant, monthly reporting for staff
- **More support with CQI**: 2
  - Data collection and analysis
- **Other**: 3
  - More peer support
  - Sharing best practices for Morning Academy

Site Coordinator Data:

15-16 Needs: Only 29 respondents provided data for this question (up to 2 responses per individual were possible). There were a total of 43 responses that fell into two thematic categories. These categories are listed below with corresponding frequency counts. Categories were created based on the existence of more than 2 responses in that area. There were 5 responses that were "N/A". The most commonly cited need was related to more training on a wide range of topics. Thematic categories included:

- **More trainings**: 33
  - **Topics included**: attendance, behavior management, ELL, funding/in-kinds, high school topics, lesson planning, STEM, project-based learning, Quality Standards, partnerships
- **Other**: 5
  - **Some examples included**: "I only receive information from my district personnel", "The district plan to run dual at fee base programing in conjunction with grant programming overriding grant liberties such as flexible attendance"

16-17 Needs: Only 16 respondents provided data for this question (up to 2 responses per individual were possible). There were a total of 23 responses that fell into three thematic categories. These categories are listed below with corresponding frequency counts. Categories were created based on the existence of more than 2 responses in that area. There were 7 responses that were "N/A". The most commonly cited need was related to more hands-on and online training. Thematic categories included:

- **More trainings** (online and hands-on): 4
- **More information on grants/additional funds**: 2
  - Workshops for Site Coordinators on how to apply for grants
- **Other**: 9
  - Some examples included: "more technological support", "ways to glow?",

Additionally, all stakeholders were asked to share any additional information related to customer service in 15-16. Only 14 Site Coordinators did so, and since people could provide up to two responses, there were a total of 19 responses:

- ✓ ***8 Site Coordinator respondents*** indicated that they did not have anything additional to share

- ✓ ***2 Site Coordinator respondents provided*** comments that were coded as "other" and they included:
  - "From others, I will not get a response at all"
  - "Phone conferences not very helpful, would rather meet in person"

- ✓ ***10 Site Coordinator respondents*** reported that the customer service received was very helpful/informative and had a positive impact on their practice. In particular, these responses referenced increased communication with parents and teachers.

17 Grant Manager/Program Director/Superintendent/Authorized Agent respondents provided information for this question. There were a total of 21 responses as individuals could provide up to 2 responses each:

- ✓ ***18 Leadership respondents*** reported that the TA was well done, timely, and much appreciated

- ✓ ***3 Leadership respondents*** provided distinct answers that could not be categorized:
  - More district level trainings on FPM
  - More notice for site visits
  - A request for not copying recipients on emails:
    - "Sometimes responses to emails are cc'd to many people and it's inappropriate and somewhat inconsiderate without the sender's consent to share, unless this practice is shared as a norm with everyone. This practice should be reconsidered. It makes people feel uncomfortable reaching out via email to ask sensitive questions and quite honestly is damaging to relationship building"

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The current study yielded an informative data set for the ASTAU to consider as it plans for 16-17. Findings suggested that in general, grantees appear to value the technical assistance received and find the ASTAU team responsive to their concerns in a timely manner. The data suggest that moving forward, the ASTAU would be well served consider the following recommendations:

1. ***Expand the range of trainings available to program and site level staff both in terms of topic and format.*** Similar to 15-16, the current findings revealed the most commonly utilized forms of TA included training and the brokering of resources. Additionally, respondents identified particular areas of training (for both program and site staff) as a priority need for 16-17. As such, it would seem that investing time and energy on expanding the training offerings in 16-17 (both in terms of the suggested topics and formats- that is, countywide vs. program/site level) is a natural next step.

2. ***Continue to provide Site Coordinators with opportunities to develop leadership and coaching skills and to peer network.*** Site Coordinator respondents reported improved leadership and coaching skills as the greatest area of impact in 15-16 and also reported the value of peer networking opportunities (for sharing resources and best practices).

3. ***Continue to offer and strategically target special interest groups, learning communities, mentoring, coaching, and TA site visit services.*** Although these forms of technical assistance appeared to be less commonly received by respondents, the majority of those who did receive these services reported being satisfied.

4. ***Examine strategies for providing assessment support (related to the CQI process) to programs.*** Learning more about the CQI process including data collection and analysis emerged as a need in the qualitative data. Additionally, it would be beneficial to build program and site level leader capacity related to how they can use the data collected to make informed program improvement decisions.