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The experiences among communities of color with the State of Oregon's online services: A qualitative analysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In order to better understand the needs of Oregon communities, a series of focus groups and interviews were performed to gather insight about how people are using the State of Oregon Website, challenges Faced, and ideas for improvement. participants were recruited primarily from immigrant communities and communities of color, since the 2022 Benchmark survey identified barriers to access for these communities.

FINDINGS & DESCRIPTIONS · EXAMPLE QUOTES

CONTINUE TO HIGHLIGHT WHAT IS WORKING WELL

1. Many people found the website easy to navigate and straightforward. Highlighting resources that are already available, such as instructional videos, would further support what is working well already.

"THE STATE IS DOING WELL ALREADY, KUDOS"

THE CURRENT TRANSLATIONS ARE GOOD AND MORE WOULD BE EVEN BETTER

2. One of the most frequently discussed topics was the use of translation. Participants appreciated that translations were already available for text, and would like to see more translation of chat and audio resources.

"A LOT OF TIMES THE TRANSLATION IS NOT HELPFUL. HAVING A LITTLE VOICE OVER IF YOU CAN IN THE VIDEOS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES..."

INCREASE CONTINUITY ACROSS DIFFERENT STATE WEBSITES, WHERE POSSIBLE

3. While state agencies and entities will always have individual needs, at times the differences across sites was confusing. Expanding support resources, such as chat, more broadly as well as routinely putting resources in a common location may increase continuity across the sites.

"[THE CHAT] WOULD BE USEFUL ACROSS ALL WEBPAGES."

SUPPORT COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND AWARENESS OF THE ROLE OF THE STATE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

4. Participants shared information about the importance of connection. Participants expressed frequently helping others or seeking help from community organizations. More information sharing with community partners about the online resources would be beneficial.

"IF THE STATE CAN REACH OUT MORE READILY AND MORE REGULARLY AT THE COMMUNITY EVENTS... THAT WILL HELP NEW IMMIGRANTS"

IDEAS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF WEB RESOURCES

5. In thinking about the future direction of the website, many participants expressed wanting to see more audio and visual support resources in multiple languages as well as suggested ways long forms may be made more approachable.

"THE WEBSITE COULD BE ABLE TO READ OUT WORDS, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL"

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The State of Oregon's E-Government Program provides services to members of the community which are accessible from both mobile and desktop devices. As part of the process to understand the needs of the public and the public's experience with the online resources, a survey is administered every two years.

The most recent benchmark survey, completed in 2022, included responses from 1200 individuals who reside in the State of Oregon. The 2022 Benchmark Survey Report (Girard, J.; Gibb, G.; Kokedhima, I.) identified two demographic groups that were more likely to experience barriers with accessing the State of Oregon web resources - immigrants, refugees, and asylees as well as people who speak a language other than English.

While the Benchmark Survey Report offers a broad perspective of the online services of the State of Oregon, additional information was needed about the specific challenges and expectations of members of immigrant communities and communities of color. Specifically, through a targeted research approach we sought to understand:

1. Why do participants in this study report using the state website?
2. How people navigate the state website?
3. What are the challenges for the state website?
4. How do people troubleshoot problems with the website?
5. What do people find easy with the website?
6. What do people want in the future from the State's online resources?

These questions were designed to both understand existing challenges and use patterns as well as to elicit responses about possible future directions for the platform. Focus groups and interviews were chosen for the data collection method due to the depth of data desired from the study and the ability to specifically recruit members of communities who experience greater barriers to access (Morgan, 1996).

In order to have a targeted recruitment strategy and the proper structures in place for data collection (e.g., translators at meetings), this study focused on the recruitment of members of immigrant communities and communities of color. However, there were two additional groups who were identified in the 2022 Benchmark Survey Report (Girard, J.; Gibb, G.; Kokedhima, I.) that would also benefit from additional follow-up research:
- People with disabilities
- Members of the business community.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The findings from the E-Government Program's 2022 Benchmark Survey Report (Girard, J.; Gibb, G.; Kokedhima, I.) suggested that members of immigrant communities and communities of color experience greater barriers to accessing the State of Oregon's online resources. Building upon these findings, this qualitative analysis was designed to gather additional in-depth information about the existing barriers for these communities and generate ideas for future improvements. Improving customer experience is a central goal of the State of Oregon's E-Government Program and this research was performed in support of creating equitable access for all Oregonians.

The objective of this report is to accurately represent the ideas, concerns, and feedback of the people who chose to participate in this research. Importantly, although we asked questions targeted at learning about the online experiences with the State of Oregon E-Government Program, the lived experience is not bound by the limits of a single program. The experience of individuals does not necessarily match the programmatic boundaries of the State organization. Many of the participants described the fullness of their experiences, including what was happening in their lives as individuals, who they interacted with to gather information or seek assistance, their experience with the steps that they were asked to complete online, and the resolution. As a result, some of the findings presented may cross program boundaries or even extend to partnerships outside of the State of Oregon as an organization. These experiences are included because they are integral in providing a holistic view of how people experience the service and information seeking process, as well as reflect the way participants' navigate their needs.

HOW THE DATA WERE COLLECTED

ABOUT THE FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

The main aim of the qualitative phase of the study was to contextualize the information gathered through the E-Government Survey from phase one. As such, focus groups and interviews were determined to be the most effective data collection methods for capturing study participants' experiences with accessing and navigating the State of Oregon website. Focus groups are a preferred data collection method when the research focus is designed to elicit responses collectively over a given topic. One of its major strengths is that participants can build on the responses of others in the group to draw out a more holistic view of the groups'

experience with the topic (Thomas & Campbell, 2021). This proved to be useful for the Russian and Ukrainian participants who shared similar linguistic and cultural translation challenges. Focus groups were conducted for larger groups of participants with 8-12 members. More information can be found in Table 1.

Interviews were conducted with three aims in mind. The first was to pilot the questions to ensure the participants understood what was being asked and any issues with comprehension were addressed. The second was to take advantage of the availability of those participants who wanted to share their experiences, but could not attend the scheduled focus groups. The third, was to ensure the interviewer could establish rapport with those participants who were not a part of a group. Many of the focus groups were facilitated by an interpreter who is also a member of that community (e.g., Somali, Ukrainian, Russian) and therefore rapport was built in. For those not part of a group, rapport required more time and intent from the interviewer (Thomas & Campbell, 2021). As a result, interviews were longer but allowed the participant and interviewer to engage at the beginning of the conversation and establish rapport.

The focus groups and interviews were focused on the largest populations in the State of Oregon that reported difficulty accessing the state website (Girard, J.; Gibb, G.; Kokedhima, I. 2022). Focus groups were conducted with Latino/Hispanic, Somali, Russian, Ukrainian, and African groups; interviews were conducted with African American, Latino/Hispanic, Vietnamese, and Chinese participants. More information about the participants can be found in Table 1 and a diagram of the in-person focus groups can be found in Appendix A: Focus Group Detail.

Statements from participants have been included throughout the report in order to illustrate the primary findings with the participants own words*. The scripts for the interviews and focus groups were written with the research questions in mind and aimed at discovering the reasons for usage, challenges with the website, and future expectations for eGovernment services. The primary questions included in the sessions are provided in Appendix A and an overview of the analysis in Appendix B.

RECRUITMENT

Participants for the interviews and focus groups were recruited through various forms of outreach. The most effective form was going through established community based organizations and their member listserv.

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*Quotes have been edited for readability (removing pause words such as *uh, um,* and *er*) and identifying information was removed. Extracts of long statements were used where the full statement focused on multiple topics.

These organizations functioned as gatekeepers to the community and facilitated participant recruitment (Negrin et al., 2022). Recruitment was also done through passive methods such as posting recruitment flyers in the lobbies of community based organizations and more direct methods such as sending participant information via email. Both of these methods are common forms of recruitment but are not always as effective as recruiting through gatekeepers.

Community based organizations outside of the Portland metro area (e.g., Salem) were also contacted by email and phone calls. However, while many organizations seemed interested they were unable to recruit any participants for the study. In the future, using more active methods of recruitment, such as setting an in-person introductory meeting with organizations outside of the Portland metro area, may result in greater engagement and successful recruitment.

Study participants were incentivized to participate. A grocery store gift card in the amount of $25 was distributed to all participants after the completion of the focus group or interview. Including incentives in qualitative research has been shown to increase participant engagement (Kelly et. al. 2017). In addition to the $25 gift card, culturally appropriate food/snacks were provided during the in-person focus groups, as non-monetary incentives have also been proven to motivate participants (Fergusen & Wynne, 2021).

ROLES OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

LEAD FACULTY:
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT LEAD:
DR. GIRARD
- **DATA ANALYSIS**
- **REPORT WRITING**
- **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

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- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**
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- **DATA COLLECTION**
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- **REPORT WRITING**
- **COMMUNICATIONS: PROJECT UPDATES/ PRESENTATIONS**

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT:
BRANDON FIELDING
- **RECRUITMENT**
- **DATA ANALYSIS**
- **REPORT WRITING**

TABLE 1: FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

As part of this research, feedback was collected from communities of color within oregon. The most frequent ways respondents reported interacting with the state of Oregon online resources was through the DMV site to seek services and paying taxes online (see appendix C for more detail).

GROUP	PARTICIPANTS	FORMAT
AFRICAN	4 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE INTERVIEWS
AFRICAN AMERICAN OR BLACK	5 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE INTERVIEWS
CHINESE	5 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE INTERVIEWS
LATINO OR HISPANIC	5 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE FOCUS GROUP & ONE ONLINE INTERVIEW
	5 PARTICIPANTS	IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUP
RUSSIAN	8 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE FOCUS GROUP
SOMALI	10 PARTICIPANTS	IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUP
UKRANIAN	12 PARTICIPANTS	ONLINE FOCUS GROUP
VIETNAMESE	1 PARTICIPANT	ONLINE INTERVIEW

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

CONTINUE TO HIGHLIGHT WHAT IS WORKING WELL

Summary:
- Respondents, in general, found the website to be easy to navigate and accessible.
- However, many participants were unaware of resources already available that would make navigation even more accessible, particularly for non-English speaking communities.
- While the web pages can be translated into different languages, many respondents did not know about this option, could not find it on their phone, or reported that the translation is not clear.
- Videos explaining how to complete a task are a valuable resource and many believe there would be benefits in increasing awareness of these videos as well as translating the audio into different languages.

In all focus groups and interviews we heard positive sentiments about the current state of the website and its accessibility. People appreciated when they were able to efficiently complete tasks online, prepare for appointments by printing needed documents, and be prepared in advance with necessary information when filling out forms. Many respondents shared that they thought the State of Oregon web resources were very good.

"

IT SEEMS QUITE STRAIGHTFORWARD. I DON'T SEE ANY DIFFICULTY FOR ME.

IT WAS OKAY TO USE BECAUSE OF HOW ACCESSIBLE THE WEBSITE IS AND HOW USER FRIENDLY IT IS, ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE LANGUAGE OPTIONS.

Additionally, many participants liked the visuals of the website and found the landing page useful for navigating to needed resources. Although, a few found the scrolling challenging on a phone or the background movement distracting. There were relatively few comments on the overall look and feel of the website and most comments focused on the content when asked about ways to improve.

At times participants noted that they were surprised that a particular resource already existed. For example, many participants were unaware of the ability to translate the web pages to other languages, stating "Oh, nice! I never realized there is a language feature there." and "I think now that you have shown me how, I can translate the website and videos into Spanish. I think that is a huge help already."

While the translation indicator is available, participants frequently noted that it was difficult to find, particularly when using their phone. Others indicated that the symbol for translation is not universally understood. Even though they see the globe symbol (along with the English word "Languages" if they are using a laptop) the symbol may not be recognizable to all.

Many people were also unaware of the existence of videos which explain how to complete certain tasks, such as filling out an unemployment application. Respondents appreciated that the videos are available and reported that these types of resources are very helpful, especially for those who already use other video resources or who do not prefer to learn through reading text. For example, after showing an example video, participants stated:

> FIRST. I THINK THIS IS VERY USEFUL, VERY CLEAR. IT'S SHORT. IF WE CAN'T REMEMBER EVERYTHING, IT'S OKAY. WE CAN PAUSE, GO BACK AND LEARN ABOUT IT AGAIN. YES, I THINK THIS IS A VERY USEFUL, HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP.
>
> THAT CREATES AN EASIER APPROACH FOR EVERYTHING. EVEN FOR THOSE THAT DO NOT READ OR WRITE. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE VISUAL LEARNERS SO SEEING THINGS ON VIDEO WOULD BE MUCH EASIER.
>
> ESPECIALLY, YOU KNOW, ELDERLY PEOPLE AS WELL...A LOT OF THE PEOPLE THAT I ENCOUNTER JUST HAVE TO SEE IT. LIKE I HAVE TO WRITE IT DOWN AND VISUALLY SEE IT MYSELF. SO, HAVING THOSE THINGS, HAVING THEM IN ORDER, IN MY SPECIALTY FIELD, IN THE WAY I TRAINED, IT JUST MAKES IT A LOT EASIER 'CAUSE YOU HAVE A VISUAL AND YOU HEAR IT TOO, AUDIO, IT HELPS.

THE CURRENT TRANSLATIONS ARE GOOD, AND MORE WOULD BE EVEN BETTER

Summary:

- Participants appreciated the translations that were available and would like to see this expanded further.
- Adding additional translation capability for non-text communications, such as chat and video, would be beneficial for accessibility.
- Ensuring high quality and accurate translation could improve clarity of communication.
- Translations in additional languages or dialects would increase accessibility for some communities.

Translation or challenges with translation was one of the topics that participants spoke about most frequently. The existing translations were greatly appreciated and were found to be useful for people trying to navigate the website in languages other than English. However, there were issues with either certain languages not available or the translations were inaccurate, For example:

> **MY LAPTOP CHROME WAS IN UKRAINIAN, IT WAS A LITTLE TOUGH UNDERSTANDING BY THE WAY. I DON'T SEE UKRAINIAN AS AN OPTION.**

> **NOT EVERYTHING WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, THE TRANSLATION WAS NOT FINE, BUT WE GUESSED WHAT WE SHOULD DO.**

There were a number of different ways people discussed possible improvements related to translation. First, increasing the number of translated items was a primary concern. While the text on most web pages can be translated, the additional communication modalities, such as video and chat, are more limited. For example, participants stated:

> **THOSE CHAT BOXES, WHEN THEY ARE AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE, ARE ONLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH.**
>
> **HAVE EVERYTHING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, ACCESSIBLE ON PHONES.**

Participants frequently spoke about the importance of having the information they need in their preferred language. Particularly for tools that are aimed at offering assistance, such as chat or audio options, having additional languages allows the participants to use language and search terms that they are more familiar with and alleviates concerns around not being understood due to accent or speech patterns. As one participant mentioned, "I think it would be very helpful and easier to navigate the website. In Ukrainian though."

Second, increasing the accuracy of existing translations and ensuring they remain accurate would also be beneficial. At times the current translations are not clear, with one respondent stating "Some are good, some could be funny. For example, the first one, very far left one. This one is not the correct translation. Yes, it makes strange sense in Chinese."

However, there is also recognition that more detailed translations could become out of sync as the information is updated. For example, "With multiple languages… its out of sync sometimes. That is an issue for the multiple languages." and "In sync is a big challenge, because you need to keep many pages at the same time with a lot of information. It's very easy to make some mistakes." So, while additional translations can increase access, particularly for non-text items, there is also the additional challenge of keeping those items updated with the translations.

Third, people spoke about different dialects or languages that were not currently included in the translation tools - such as dialects of Somali. While this limitation came up less frequently, it is an issue that may be addressed with increased access to videos that illustrate processes where written translations are not viable.

> "
> A LOT OF TIMES THE TRANSLATION IS NOT HELPFUL. HAVING A LITTLE VOICE OVER IF YOU CAN IN THE VIDEOS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.…THE ISSUE WITH TRANSLATION IS THAT SOMALI HAS DIFFERENT DIALECTS. SO, IF YOU CLICK TRANSLATE I CAN'T READ THAT DIALECT SOMETIMES…IT IS JUST MORE OF THE WRITING THAT IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO SPEAKING I AM ABLE TO UNDERSTAND…

INCREASE CONTINUITY ACROSS DIFFERENT STATE WEBSITES, WHERE POSSIBLE

Summary:
- While navigation was generally easy for participants, there were also suggestions to make this process more seamless.
- Making the chat function available across all state web pages, rather than only available to specific sites could help with navigation across different agencies.
- Having important resources, such as accommodation information and links to helpful videos, available in the same location across all agencies and entities could help alleviate some navigational challenges with finding these resources.
- Bringing together information from various agencies about resources that are commonly accessed together may also offer more continuity for end-users.

Generally, navigation was viewed positively. This was particularly true among participants who spoke English and for those who used the internet frequently. The web site was described as "straightforward" and some thought "navigation was easy" with "vivid descriptions." People also appreciated when they could follow step-by-step instructions. One participant stated:

> "
> SO NAVIGATING IT WAS PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD FOR ME,..YOU KNOW, LIKE YOU'VE GOT THE LIVING, JOBS, AND BUSINESS. EVERYTHING IS RIGHT THERE AND YOU JUST CLICK ON THE DROP DOWN MENU OR YOU CAN SEARCH IT UP AND IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD.

While there are obvious benefits to individual-agency control of website material, at times the differences across the websites added confusion. Some participants indicated that they navigated to the page they needed via a third-party search engine or just clicked around until they found what they were looking for.

> **FIRSTLY, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE BECAUSE IT IS VERY COMPLICATED. THERE IS A LOT OF INFORMATION AND YOU MAY GET EASILY LOST.**

People reported looking for a wide variety of information, including help creating a resume and low cost legal assistance. However, trying to understand the architecture of the state website was confusing at times when resources were assumed to be state-wide, but were actually limited to a specific agency. For example, people appreciated the chat available on the DMV website, but it was somewhat unclear that the chat function was limited to the DMV. When the chat box was later used to query other state resources, such as unemployment, no results were found - leading to frustration or confusion.

> **SO WHEN I...GO TO YOUR WEBSITE AND LOOKING FOR SOMETHING [BECAUSE] I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME. I WANT TO GET TO MY INFORMATION. I WAS GOING TO, BECAUSE I WAS TRYING TO FIND A CONSUMER PROTECTION, RIGHT [FOR EXAMPLE]? SO, SCROLL, SCROLL, SCROLL, SCROLL. AND [I] KIND OF GAVE IT UP, SO I WILL DO A GOOGLE SEARCH. SO, I DIDN'T GO TO YOUR [STATE OF OREGON WEBSITE] SEARCH. I HAVE TO DO A GOOGLE SEARCH. GOT IT. OREGON STATE CONSUMER PROTECTION. ON GOOGLE SEARCH, THEN GET INTO THE RIGHT SPOT AND IN.**

When discussing chat resources in general, respondents also added that a human to chat with would be more valuable than simply a bot.

Continuity of resources across different pages may also be a way to highlight resources that already exist. For example, including a link to videos in the same location on agency homepages could be a way to highlight the video resources available:

> **THESE VIDEOS WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL. IF THEY HAD VIDEOS LISTED ON THE MAIN PAGE TO GUIDE YOU FOR DIFFERENT SERVICES. THEN YOU CLICK ON THAT VIDEO, THAT WOULD BE EASIEST FOR ME.**

Some respondents also discussed the desire to more easily locate information about accommodations or disability support resources. For example, one respondent was questioning their upcoming challenge of finding accommodations for their child at one state agency -

stating "So, we will see how difficult this will be to find out what accommodations they have for him." Including this type of information in the same place for each agency may alleviate some of the challenges in locating accommodation information for each office or agency separately.

Bringing together information for actions that frequently occur together, across state agencies and entities, may also be a way to increase continuity across the state web resources. For example, if somebody is looking for disability information for their child, they may also see resources for caregivers and links to accommodation resources in other agencies. Respondents also suggested customized adverts as a way to increase continuity across entities which may connect people to additional resources.

Finally, some participants noted that they were asked to set up different accounts or create new passwords for different state accounts. A single account with password could assist with continuity across state resources.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND AWARENESS OF THE ROLE OF THE STATE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Summary:
- **Community engagement is particularly important for the communities we spoke with.**
- **Participants frequently reported helping others, being helped by others, or reaching out to organizations which interface with the community - such as AYCO, Bienestar de la Familia, Latino Network, and Public Libraries - when seeking assistance.**
- **When people are frustrated, they are still reaching out to a live person - either somebody they know, a community organization, or a state employee.**
- **Working with these organizations around opportunities for low-cost electronics, computer access, and sharing information could help reduce barriers to access.**

Participants frequently reported relationships with other individuals, both family and friends, as well as relationships with local organizations. Often this information was shared with us in relation to how people are seeking information, supporting others, and looking for help. Participants often expressed helping others in their community and wanting to learn more in order to share with others, for example:

"

I LIKE TO LEARN SO I CAN THEN HELP OTHERS THAT NEED HELP.

YES, I TRIED ASSISTING AN ELDERLY PERSON IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD TO ACCESS THE WEBSITE AND PUTTING HIM THROUGH AS WELL.

FOR ME, I ENCOURAGED THEM TO TRY NEW DEVICES. LIKE YOU CAN GET A BETTER DEVICE TO ACCESS THE WEBSITE...JUST HOLD ON, MAYBE THERE'S A LOT OF TRAFFIC, YOU CAN TRY SOME MINUTES LATER, MAYBE IN THE MORNING, MAYBE LATE AT NIGHT,

Frequently, when people were not able to navigate their needs on the website, they sought a live person. Some went to a friend/family member or found somebody that spoke English. Others went to a community organization for help:

> **THE THING WAS THAT FOR THE FOOD STAMPS IT REQUIRED A LOT OF INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS. IT WAS LIKE A 20-PAGE APPLICATION SO WHEN I WENT TO BIENSTAR THEY TOLD ME IT IS EASY, BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING…WHEN I CHECKED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, THEY SENT ME AN APPLICATION ON PAPER. SO, I TRIED TO FILL IT OUT, BUT IT WAS A LOT TO MANAGE WITH A NEWBORN. SO THAT IS WHEN I LOOKED FOR ASSISTANCE AT BIENESTAR…**

While people noted these were slower options, they were still critical resources that people utilized and relied upon when "clicking around" or re-reading did not suffice.

Others sought assistance by going into an office or tried to find a phone number or email address to request help from an employee:

> **SO FINALLY, I CALLED THE DMV AND THEN WITH SOME TROUBLE I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO TALK TO SOMEONE, AND THEY EXPLAINED TO ME HOW TO DO IT IN THAT KIND OF SITUATION. AS LONG AS I GOT TO TALK TO A REAL PERSON, IT WAS PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD. ONLINE, I COULDN'T FIND THE ANSWER.**

> **SOMETIMES YOU HAVE SOME QUESTIONS YOU REALLY WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE, AND I KNOW NOW THERE IS A LOT OF SERVICES, LIKE THE CUSTOMER SERVICES IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT, AND YOU CALL INTO A NUMBER AND IT'S ALWAYS THE MACHINE, WHICH FEELS SO FRUSTRATING.**

> **I PAID ONLINE AND WHEN [THE LICENSE PLATES] DIDN'T ARRIVE, I WENT INTO THE OFFICE AND PAID AGAIN. THEN I GOT THE PLATES. I WAS NEVER REFUNDED FOR THE ONLINE PAYMENT.**

The more people in the community who know about the state resources, the more likely somebody with a question will be able to identify the help they need. As a result, partnering or otherwise sharing information with community organizations would be a possible avenue for increasing accessibility to state resources.

For instance, for immigrant communities first and second-generation children tend to provide the support parents and elderly community members need to complete tasks related to state services.

"

KIDS, FAMILY, FRIENDS THAT SPEAK ENGLISH. THEY NEVER PHYSICALLY WENT ON THERE [WEBSITE] ON THEIR OWN BECAUSE THEY CAN'T NAVIGATE IT, BECAUSE IT'S IN ENGLISH.

Participants suggested partnerships with organizations who already interface with the public, such as AYCO, Bienestar de la Familia, Latino Network, Slavic Family Radio, or the public Library, could be helpful in bridging service gaps or help with online tasks.

These community based services may be well positioned to assist with technological challenges. One of the challenges that participants described was a general discomfort with technology experienced by some in their communities. While there will always be people who experience this issue, having greater capacity in the community as a whole will increase the likelihood of them finding a trusted partner for them to navigate with. Examples of descriptions related to difficulty with technology are:

> **I TRIED FOR ID BUT I DON'T HAVE THE SKILLS FOR IT. TECHNOLOGY SKILLS. I WENT TO THE OFFICE.**
>
> **MY HUSBAND CAN'T USE IT SO IT'S DIFFICULT FOR HIM AND NOW I HELP HIM.**
>
> **[TRANSLATION] WOULD BE EASIER FOR SOME, BUT LIKE HE SAID, IT WOULD NOT BE BENEFICIAL FOR HIM BECAUSE OF THE TECHNOLOGY.**
>
> **THE ISSUE IS THAT YOU NEED ALL YOUR DOCUMENTS [AT DMV] AND WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THE WEBSITE YOU CAN'T CHECK WHAT DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE TO DMV [APPOINTMENT].**

For others the challenge was rooted in lack of access to technology or only having access via their phone rather than a laptop or computer:

> **I [DO] USE THE INTERNET, BUT I DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER ANYMORE AND I DON'T LIKE USING MY PHONE. MY DAUGHTER DID IT FOR ME AND FOR HER IT WAS EASY.**

One participant also noted challenges while using a Mac computer rather than Windows-based machine, stating "Then I sent an email and then basically in this email they [State of Oregon] were like 'can you send me screenshots of what you are getting', what is the problem. Long story short, it seems there were issues with the mac computer I was using."

While some respondents indicated that they preferred to use their phone, others found the screen too small or the format challenging to complete more detailed work.

> **"**
>
> **I WILL SAY THAT SIMPLY HAVING A BIGGER SCREEN TO VIEW THINGS ON LIKE ON A COMPUTER WOULD MAKE LIFE EASIER. SOMETIMES DOING IT ON THE PHONE DOESN'T HELP...ON THE PHONE THINGS SEEM A BIT MORE CONFUSING AND THE PRINT IS REALLY SMALL. WHAT SAVED ME WAS CARRYING AROUND AN ELECTRONIC TRANSLATOR APP ON MY PHONE THAT TRANSLATES EVERYTHING FROM ENGLISH TO SPANISH.**

Somewhat related to the challenges with the type of device being used is just the speed of the device. Respondents in multiple focus groups noted that they struggled with the speed of the website. They reported encouraging others to try a different device with more RAM or trying at a later time when there was less site traffic.

These organizations may be willing to share information about where and how to access technology resources, such as lower-cost electronics or where to access public computer terminals with translators, providing an opportunity for further collaboration.

Along the same lines, culturally specific community organizations fill the generational gap while adhering to cultural norms and providing assistance in the language of origin.

> COMMUNITY MEMBERS COME HERE [AYCO] FOR HELP… DURING COVID, THEY [COMMUNITY MEMBERS] CAME HERE EVERY MONDAY AND FORMED A HUGE LINE BECAUSE WE WERE THE ONLY ORGANIZATION THAT WAS OPEN FOR THEM TO SUBMIT THEIR CLAIMS. THEY KNOW THEIR BASIC INFORMATION AND FROM THERE ON WE TRIED TO FIGURE IT OUT. I WAS DOING EVERYTHING ONLINE. I WOULD ASK THE QUESTIONS AND THEY WOULD PROVIDE THEIR INFORMATION.
>
> THEIR MAIN PRIORITY IS TO GO TO THE PLACE AND HAVE IT COMPLETE, RATHER THAN ONLINE. THEY WERE SO USED TO GOING TO A PLACE AND GETTING IT FINISHED, THAT IS WHY THEY LIKE THAT OUTREACH.
>
> …SPEAKING AS SOMEONE THAT WORKS IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH I WOULD SAY THAT IN-PERSON WITH THIS GENERATION IS MUCH EASIER. PERHAPS FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS, BUT FOR SOMEONE THAT ALREADY HAS A LANGUAGE BARRIER, TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEBODY THAT DOESN'T SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE. LIKE FOR DMV, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT. [FOR] SOCIAL SECURITY IS MORE EASIER, BUT UNEMPLOYMENT WAS VERY DIFFICULT AS WELL.

Another suggested idea that could be done in partnership with community organizations, is having a basic overview of the legal framework of the state and government functions.

> **SOMETIMES THE TERMS COULD BE A LITTLE DIFFICULT UNLESS THE PERSON IS FAMILIAR WITH CERTAIN SITUATION; TO IMMIGRANTS. WHO ARE NOT USED TO THE LEGAL FRAME, THE CUSTOMS, MANY THINGS, SORRY, IT'S CLEAR IN VIEW, BUT PEOPLE DON'T SEE IT. IT'S JUST FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER CULTURE. SO I THINK THAT'S MORE OF THAT INVISIBLE BARRIER - HAVE TO LIVE HERE FOR SOME TIME TO BE IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND GET IT. THAT'S HOW I FEEL.**

Participants also discussed the need for a primer on the services and requirements of the state, including what can be completed online, with terms clearly explained.

> **SO MAYBE YOU HAVE SOME SORT OF SHORT VIDEO SAYING, OH, YOU WANT TO DO THIS, YOU NEED TO DO THIS, OR YOU NEED TO GET YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE, YOU NEED TO DO THIS, ...SO IT'S MORE THAN JUST TRANSLATING THE LANGUAGE. IT'S A CULTURAL TRANSLATION TOOL, ISN'T IT?**
>
> **EVEN IF THEY GO TO [STATE OF OREGON] WEBSITE, THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO PAY FOR A DMV. FIRST IS, THEY DON'T KNOW WHICH PART IS ON THE "LIVING" [WEBPAGE LINK], OR ON THE "BUSINESS", OR ON THE "GOVERNMENT", MAYBE ON THE "GOVERNMENT"? BUT FOR THE FARMER, THEY COME OVER HERE, THE FIRST THING IS THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT DOES IT MEAN "DMV".**
>
> **MAYBE SOME TRAINING, EVENTS, FROM DMV OR OTHER SERVICES TO SHOW US, TRAIN HOW TO NAVIGATE AND WHAT TO DO.**

Finally, the state could benefit from these types of partnerships as part of a change management strategy. Partnering with community organizations could assist in the spread of information when things change, as described by one participant:

> "
>
> SO, THEY ARE UPGRADING SYSTEMS TO FOR BETTER ACCESS TO CERTAIN THINGS AND ALL THAT JAZZ BUT THERE'S NO SORT OF, "WE ARE GOING TO OFFER A TRAINING CLASS" OR "WE ARE GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING THAT TALKS ABOUT THIS NEW SYSTEM" "WE ARE GOING TO SEND YOU A LETTER THAT TALKS ABOUT THIS SYSTEM AND HOW GREAT IT IS AND HOW OUR TAX DOLLARS ARE WORKING TOWARDS IT OR SOMETHING."

IDEAS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF WEB RESOURCES

Summary:
- **Chat was generally seen positively, particularly where the answers are accurate, when chatting with a live person, and when information is provided in multiple languages.**
- **Audio options, particularly in a variety of languages, are also seen as an avenue for future exploration.**
- **Broadening search terms could make the search more accessible to many communities.**
- **Long forms are challenging to some and participants volunteered several ideas that could make them easier to understand.**

Much of the conversation with focus group and interview participants focused on what people would like to see in the future. Participants were asked questions about specific technologies as well open-ended questions about what would make their experience better in the future.

One of the technologies that was asked about specifically was the use of chat. Participants did find chat somewhat helpful, but was almost always qualified as being important to connect to a live person when the appropriate information is not found.

> " I WOULD LIKE THE CHAT BOX BUT NOT THE AUTOMATED CHAT BOX. BUT IF IT IS LIKE A LIVE PERSON.
>
> IF CHAT WAS AVAILABLE, AND IF I AM CHATTING WITH A REAL PERSON, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE RESOLVED WITH CHAT. BUT IF THE OTHER END, IF THE ROBOT, I'M NOT SURE.

This technology is already active on some state web pages and the use of chat has grown substantially in recent years. Whether the chat is connected to a live person or not, having multiple language options and more widespread use of chat would be helpful as long as the information remains updated and accurate.

If chat is developed further, broad search terms should be employed. One of the concerns with searching, either chat or a search bar on the website, was the specificity of the search terms required to find the needed information. Also, some participants felt the drop down menu options can seem vague for a non-English speaker. Examples of comments related to the concern about using the right search terms include:

"

I THINK THE ISSUE IS THAT NOT ALL [STATE OF OREGON] WEBSITES HAVE VIDEOS, AND YOU NEED TO GOOGLE FIRST TO SEE IF ONE EXISTS AND SOMETIMES, I DON'T KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS TO USE TO GET TO THE VIDEO OR IT DOESN'T COME UP BECAUSE I AM NOT USING THE RIGHT SEARCH WORDS.

AND ANOTHER THING IS CONSUMER PROTECTION [CONSUMER PROTECTION USED AS AN EXAMPLE FROM EARLIER IN THE CONVERSATION], BECAUSE THAT IS A SITUATION MY DAUGHTER ENCOUNTERED OR I FEEL ENCOUNTERED. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT SHOULD WE DO? WE EVEN DON'T KNOW THE TERMINOLOGY CONSUMER PROTECTION IS, MAYBE WHAT WE'RE THINKING IS CREDIT CARD, BANK OR WHATEVER IT IS.

An audio search option did receive positive feedback related to ease of use, reducing the barriers related to literacy, and potentially helping community members with vision impairments. However, participants were also concerned that the audio may only be available in English or the search terms would be too limiting, which would limit its utility similar to the text chat option. For example:

> **BUT YOU STILL NEED TO KNOW WHAT SPECIFIC WORDS TO USE RIGHT? IF YOU ASK ONE THING AND SIRI MISUNDERSTANDS THE ANSWER WILL BE DIFFERENT.**
>
> **IN MY OPINION, THE WEBSITE COULD BE ABLE TO READ OUT WORDS, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE WITH EYE-SIGHT DISABILITY. THEY WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO WORDS AND TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS.**
>
> **IT WOULD SIMPLIFY THINGS BECAUSE WHILE MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY SPEAK SOMALI, THEY DO NOT READ OR WRITE SOMALI. SO IT TAKES THEM A LITTLE CLOSER TO USING IT. ALSO, FOR SOME PEOPLE THEY ARE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH SPEAKING SOMALI THAN WRITING IT.**

Long forms were also brought up by participants in a variety of contexts. Participants had many ideas related to completing long forms and making the process more useful. For instance, adding checklists to the side to ensure forms are completed correctly:

> I MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF TOO, LIKE THAT WANT TO SEE HOW TO DO IT IF THEY HAVE A VIRTUAL CHECKLIST, SO SAY IF YOU CLICKED ON A SERVICE YOU KNOW AND BEFORE YOU EVEN DO ANYTHING THEY'RE LIKE HEY WATCH THIS SHORT ONE MINUTE VIDEO OF HOW YOU SHOULD BE DOING THIS AND THEN ON THE SIDE YOU GOT A CHECKLIST. ONCE YOU FILL OUT YOUR BASIC INFORMATION YOU PUT A CHECK NEXT TO IT. IF SOMETHING IS OFF MAYBE THE CHECK IS RED. IF IT'S ALL GOOD MAYBE IT'S GREEN.

In addition to utility some participants also wanted the process to be enjoyable, such as:

> POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS THROWN IN THERE A LITTLE BIT, YOU KNOW, LIKE JUST LIKE, 'HEY, DON'T GIVE UP YOUR SEARCH' OR 'DON'T GIVE UP YOUR JOURNEY,' 'YOU CAN DO IT IF YOU NEED TO COME BACK TO IT.' YOU KNOW, JUST LITTLE MESSAGES EVERY NOW AND AGAIN I THINK IT WILL BE REALLY HELPFUL.

Furthermore, reducing pop-ups during the process and more clear confirmation of receipt of information was mentioned. As well as an explanation on where the data that is provided through the websites goes after collection and how it is used.

> . ...BUT I TRIED TO SEND MESSAGES THROUGH THERE [CHILD SUPPORT WEBSITE] AND I DON'T KNOW. YOU WOULD THINK THEY WOULD LET YOU SEND MESSAGES THROUGH THERE, BUT I GOT NO RESPONSE....SO, YEAH THOSE ARE BARRIERS THAT I HAVE. WHEN YOU ARE SUBMITTING INFORMATION AND THERE IS NO, 'THANK YOU, WE RECEIVED THIS.'

CONCLUSION

We want to thank all participants who engaged in this process. Participants shared their ideas, struggles, and insight with us openly and their active participation in this process has led to many insights. We hope these insights will support the community of Oregon now and in the future.

Continue to highlight what is working well

Highlight already existing resources, such as:
- Instructional videos
- Page translations
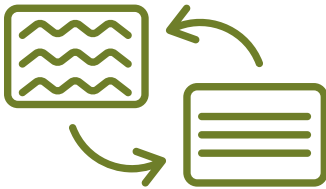
The current translations are good and more would be even better

Continue to increase the amount of translated materials, especially audio and support resources.

Increase continuity across different state websites, where possible

Increase continuity across state websites to help people identify what they need faster and more consistently.

Support community capacity and awareness of the role of the State through partnerships

Work with community partners to share information about new materials as well as changes to processes.

Ideas for future directions of web resources

Expand support for long-form completion and increase non-text support resources (such as chat and audio).

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APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DETAIL

SCRIPT:

Participants were welcomed, informed about the study, and shown the homepage for the State of Oregon (Oregon.gov):

1. Of the services listed on the screen and under the State of Oregon website, what are some services (e.g., DMV appointment, unemployment application, etc.) you have tried to access electronically through the State of Oregon?

2. What are some challenges or barriers you have experienced when trying to electronically access services through the State of Oregon website?

3. Who has helped you navigate those challenges? (e.g., adult children, teenage children, husband, wife, grandchildren, etc.)

4. How do you support your loved ones experiencing barriers to electronically accessing services through the State of Oregon website?

5. What did you find easy about electronically accessing services through the State of Oregon website?

6. Of the following training option videos, which do you think would make it easier for you to electronically access services through the State of Oregon website?

7. What would improve your experience when interacting online with the State of Oregon?

8. What can the State of Oregon do to make our online resources more useful to you?

9. Would you find integrated tools, like a chat box, that allow you to search for other services related to your current application useful?

10. Should state's online resources enable voice technology for English and non-English languages?

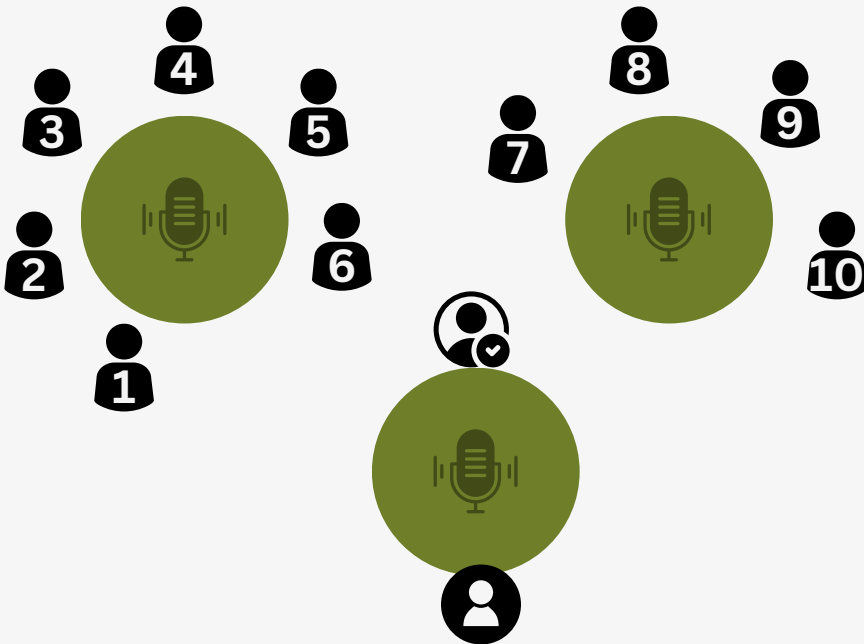11. Anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DETAIL

DIAGRAMS OF THE IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUPS

Beaverton Library Conference Room – Spanish Language

African Youth & Community Organization - Somali

APPENDIX B: DATA ANALYSIS

HOW THE DATA WERE ANALYZED

Qualitative data analysis methods tend to be iterative, with the steps in the process at times overlapping. Unlike quantitative data analysis, which is more linear, qualitative data collection methods yield different types of data (e.g., observations, verbal reports, text) that are captured and recorded by the researcher (Dixon, et al, 2019). Therefore analysis begins during the data collection phase where the researcher is simultaneously interpreting the data as it is being recorded (see Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2: DATA ANALYSIS MODEL
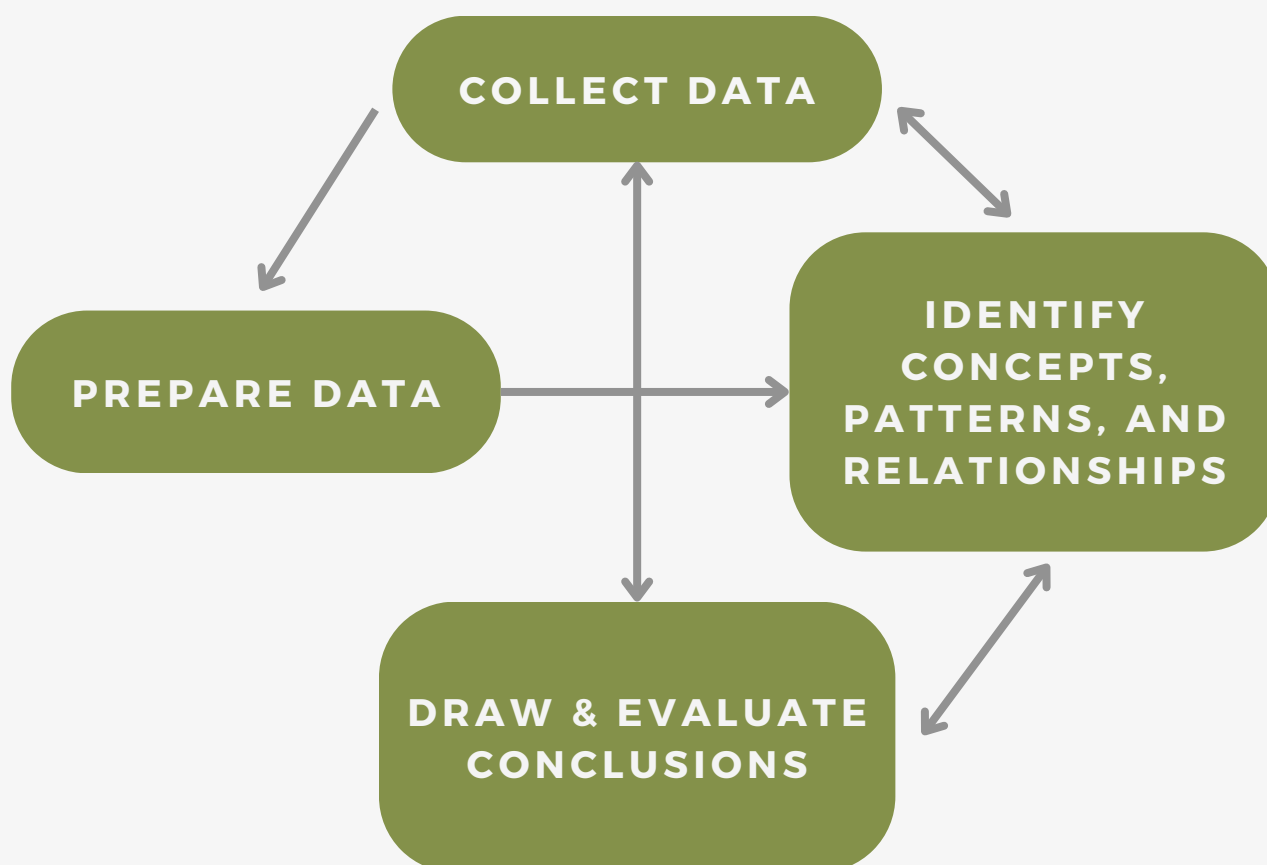
Despite this overlap, there is a standardized approach to preparing the data collected. Much like in quantitative data analysis, the data collected must be reviewed for errors "data cleaning" and organized in a readable format. Unlike in quantitative data analysis, the data prepping phase also includes an element of analysis where the research team transcribes the interview and focus group recordings. This process, when conducted internally as was done in this project, allows the research team to begin identifying recurring concepts and patterns in the data.

Therefore, the formal data analysis process began with the transcription of all the recordings. Transcription was completed by the project lead (PL) and the Graduate Research Assistant (GRA). Once transcription was completed the PL, Project Assistant (PA), and the GRA reviewed the transcripts and began identifying recurring concepts, mapping out patterns, and creating relationships within the responses provided by the study participants. This process was facilitated by coding the recurring concepts (e.g., DMV, videos, voice technology), memo-writing patterns (e.g., older generations relied on younger generations at home or in CBOs to assist), and diagramming relationships (e.g., most participants preferred to access State of Oregon services online due to convenience as long as they can understand the process). All three mechanisms resulted in the development of themes.

Conclusions were evaluated as a team for their strength and quality. The team developed five main themes from the data collected. These were recurring patterns that summarized the obvious and underlying meanings in the participants' responses. Allowing the research team to review, evaluate, and discuss the data themes together increased the reliability of the findings through constant data comparison (Leung, 2015).

APPENDIX C: RESOURCES PARTICIPANTS REPORTED USING

STATE RESOURCE (y-axis)

- DMV
- Taxes or Revenue
- COVID/Vaccine Info
- Employment/Job
- Business
- Social Services
- Passport
- Search for Information
- Unemployment
- Food or bill assistance
- Child Support
- Notary
- Public Safety
- Education
- P&R
- Legal Resources
- Licensing
- Fishing Permit
- Medicare

x-axis: 0, 2, 4, 6

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORTED USING THE RESOURCE