



Legal Hotlines Client Outcome Study 2006



AARP Foundation Technical Support for Legal Hotlines Project

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Acknowledgements

The authors well understand the challenges of managing a legal hotline. For this reason, they are extremely grateful to those hotline managers who volunteered to assist with this project. This study would not have been possible without their advice, patience, enthusiasm, and willingness to undertake the burdens of participating.

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David Neumeyer: LawLine, Virginia Legal Aid Society, Lynchburg, Virginia

Al Schwartz: Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal services (CARPLS), Chicago, Illinois

W.G. Pete Stokes: Maryland Legal Aid Bureau and Maryland Legal Assistance Network, Baltimore, Maryland

Claudia Johnson of Bay Area Legal Aid's Legal Advice Line, Oakland, California provided valuable assistance in the early stages of the project.

We would also like to thank Julia Stephens, ARRP Foundation Director of Grants Programs. Without her support, the Legal Hotlines Outcomes project would not have taken place. We also would like to thank Marie Hubbard of AARP Foundation for her wonderful work in converting the data tables into the illustrative Charts contained in the report.

Shoshanna Ehrlich,

September, 2006

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Legal Hotline Consumer/Public Benefits Clients Follow up Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AARP Foundation Technical Support for Legal Hotlines Project worked with seven diverse legal hotlines to identify cases where the client was advised to take a follow up action regarding a consumer problem or public benefits issue. Hotline staff interviewed these clients after the hotline consultation to determine (1) if they followed the hotline advice; (2) whether their situation changed as a result of the follow up action and (3) whether the hotline experience had benefited them in other ways. Cases were identified during a five month period between April and September 2005, and follow up calls were made 45 days to 60 days thereafter.¹ Mailed surveys were sent to clients who were not reached by phone. The ultimate goal of the survey was to determine if providing telephone legal advice to clients with the types of consumer and public benefits cases tracked in the study is a beneficial use of program resources, and whether additional assistance is needed by staff to assure that clients have a positive outcome in these case categories.

Whereas previous studies² sampled all hotline callers, this study focused on those cases where clients were told to take a follow up action on their own because hotlines do not routinely learn of the outcomes for callers who are instructed on self-help steps to resolve a problem. In contrast, clients who call to ask a legal question are usually fully served within the context of the call and outcomes for clients referred to a free legal services program for additional assistance are usually tracked and reported to the hotline.

Participating hotlines helped identify the range of cases to be included in the study. The types of consumer cases included in the study were ones where the hotline advocate believed that a phone call or letter from the client would resolve or ameliorate the client's problem. These did not include complex consumer issues such as predatory lending or priority issues such as mortgage foreclosures or utilities where the hotline was likely to secure free representation for the client either through its in-house full service unit or through a referral to another local program. The public benefits cases flagged for this study were ones where the case was not in a posture for the legal representation routinely provided by legal aid programs. The public benefits cases primarily were limited to identifying clients who appeared to be eligible for a public benefit they were not receiving and were advised to apply. Different surveys were used for the consumer and public benefits cases and the results were analyzed separately.

¹ All hotlines identified cases over a period of one to three months, but due to staffing problems, some hotlines started identifying cases later than others, so the flagging process for the whole study spanned five months.

² The Project for the Future of Equal Justice Outcome Assessment Study, Phase II, 2002 and Senior Legal Hotline Client Outcomes Study, 2000 and 2003, www.legalhotlines.org

KEY FINDINGS:

CONSUMER CASES:

- **Follow up Action Taken: Seventy-two percent of callers with consumer cases surveyed took the action the hotline advised.** Of those callers who did not take action, 34 percent of them reported still planning on taking action. Only 24 percent of the minority who didn't take action said they either did not remember what to do, it was too hard to do, or they did not understand the advice. This follow up rate is quite high and most likely due to the fact that the flagged callers were advised to perform one discreet manageable task. Writing a letter to a creditor was the most frequent action taken (30 percent of those who took action). Sixteen percent wrote a letter to a business with whom they were having problems; 12 percent contacted an agency; 9 percent filed a form in court; another 9 percent went to court and 15 percent reported taking "other" action.
- **Results Obtained: A majority of consumer case respondents (55 percent), reported a change for the better after taking the action;** Forty-five percent reported no change. However, of those who reported "no change" 41 percent were still awaiting the results of the action at the time of the survey. Had a longer period of time passed between the hotline call and the survey, we expect a higher proportion of clients would report a change for the better and a smaller percentage would still be waiting for results. The most common improvement reported (39 percent) was the cessation of annoying contacts from debt collectors; fifteen percent did not have to pay a disputed bill. The average amount of the bill was \$1,924. Twenty-one percent reported working things out to their satisfaction and 18 percent reported "other" changes for the better.
- **Other Help Received from the Hotline: Ninety-one percent of consumer case respondents reported receiving other types of help from the hotline in addition to advice to take the follow up action.** These included understanding their choices better (60 percent); understanding their rights better (65 percent); feeling calmer and less anxious (38 percent); getting their questions answered (27 percent); 5 percent felt they would know how to avoid the problem in the future. Seventy-four percent remember receiving materials in the mail after the hotline call and 90 percent of those reported the information helped with the problem.
- **Demographic Correlations: data was analyzed with regard to clients' gender, LSC income eligibility, age, and whether they lived alone.** Gender, LSC eligibility or whether the client lived alone did not affect the clients' propensity to take action. However, younger clients were significantly less likely to take action when compared to older clients. While 74 percent of those between 41-60 years, and 78 percent of those 61 and older, reported taking the advised action, only 55 percent of those under 40 reported taking action. With regard to results achieved, men were more likely to report a change for the better after taking the action (66 percent) than women (50 percent), and callers who were not LSC eligible reported a change for the better at a higher rate (59 percent) than LSC eligible clients (46

percent); neither age nor living alone significantly impacted results achieved. No significant differences were found among the demographic groups for other types of help provided by the hotline.

BENEFITS CASES:

- **Follow up Action Taken: Seventy-eight percent of benefits cases reported taking the action suggested; making an application for a benefit (45 percent) was the most common action taken.** Seventeen percent made a phone call; 12 percent contacted an agency and 7 percent asked for a hearing; 16 percent reported taking “other” action. Of those that did not take action, 53 percent still plan on doing so; twelve percent did not understand the advice; 6 percent did not remember what to do; 6 percent thought it was too hard to do, and 24 percent (4) had some “other” reason for not taking action.
- **Results Obtained: Sixty-five percent of benefits cases reported a change for the better with 52 percent of that group receiving an average benefit of \$1,150 per month with the range being \$79 - \$3,500.** Fourteen percent worked things out to their satisfaction; another 9 percent did not have to pay back money related to a benefit and 17 percent reported an “other” positive change. For the minority of respondents who did not experience a positive change, 40 percent are still waiting to hear from the agency and 48 percent had their application for benefits rejected. Eight percent still have to pay the benefit-related money back and 4 percent reported “other” as a negative outcome.
- **Other Help Received from the Hotline: As with the consumer clients, almost all the public benefits clients (93 percent) said the hotline provided other types of help.** Sixty-eight percent understood their choices better; 65 percent understood their rights better; 51 percent felt calmer and less anxious and 7 percent felt they would know how to avoid the problem in the future. The public benefits callers remember receiving mailed material at a much lower rate (46 percent) than the consumer callers (73 percent). Of those who did remember receiving information on benefits, 78 percent found the information helpful.
- **Demographic Correlations: For benefits cases the age of the respondent affected whether they were likely to take action.** The older age group (71 and over) was significantly less likely to take the recommended public benefits action than the younger age groups. While only 43 percent of the over 71 group reporting taking action, 77 percent of the under 40 age group took action, 83 percent of the 41-60 year old took action, and 100 percent of the 61-70 year old took action. No significant differences were noted in the types of action taken. Making an application for a benefit was the most common action taken by all the age groups. Gender, LSC eligibility, and living alone did not significantly affect the client’s propensity to take action nor the results achieved. No differences were found among the groups for other types of help received from the hotline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Identifying clients who are likely eligible for a benefit they are not receiving is an extremely successful use of hotline resources resulting in an increase in monthly payments to or on behalf of the client in a substantial number of cases.** Hotline efforts to train staff to screen, identify, and counsel clients through the application process for benefits would likely lead to more clients receiving benefits at little additional cost to the hotline for providing this adjunct to the legal consultation.
- **Providing advice regarding the performance of a discreet act to solve a legal problem also showed mostly positive results both in the number of clients who took action and the number whose situation changed for the better.** Hotlines could increase the chances for performance of the follow up action and rate of success even further by expanding the number of mailed or emailed materials they deliver to clients with detailed instructions on as many situations as possible; a library of form letters that can be quickly personalized for the client by hotline staff during or after the call should be developed and expanded to situations as they arise; protocols should be developed and resources allocated for providing brief services to those clients who seem unlikely to be able to take the follow up action on their own. In cases where follow up is important to the client's well being, the hotline should flag the case and contact the client later to determine the status.
- **Training staff to identify clients who may not follow up would strengthen hotline services.** The demographic analysis noted some differences in gender, age, and income related to the rate at which clients performed the follow up tasks and the success they achieved. However, the differences are not of a type that can be addressed through change in services to a whole demographic group. Rather, the differences point out the need for the hotline advocate to try to determine whether the particular client is likely to follow up, with membership in one of these groups being a factor to consider in the likelihood for success. For example, is the caller a younger individual whose time is consumed by work and/or child care and who will therefore be less likely to have time to complete the follow up action? Does the client sound too frail or timid to make a phone call on his own? Does the client's educational level seem too limited to successfully write a letter? Hotlines could be more effective by training advocates to identify those clients not likely to follow up and providing additional means of assistance for them through in-house brief services, volunteers, law and paralegal student participation, and other means.

I. BACKGROUND

The Legal Hotline model originated in 1985 and has since been adopted in some form by over 150 non-profit legal services programs in the United States, Canada and Australia. The goal of the model was to improve the lives of clients by providing the following services in the most cost efficient manner with the greatest speed and convenience for the client:

- Establishing an organized and streamlined system for clients to access legal services;
- Quickly identifying clients needing extended representation and rapid connection with the appropriate unit or program;
- Providing answers to callers' legal questions;
- Providing advice on how to solve a legal problem;
- Providing *pro se* advice in suitable cases;
- Identifying problems and trends in the service community so they can be dealt with systemically.

The use of the legal hotline model has grown significantly in the ensuing years. Hotlines are popular with legal managers and staff because, properly managed, they are more efficient than traditional delivery systems, enabling programs to serve more clients at a lower cost. Likewise, hotlines are popular with clients, because they provide personalized legal advice and assistance to callers who can access this help from their own home phone. Over the years, the initial goals for hotlines have remained viable and constant. Until recently, however, little was known about how effective hotlines are at resolving the underlying legal problems presented by callers. Several recent studies have attempted to gather information that can be used to improve this delivery model.

In 2000 and 2002 the AARP Foundation Technical Support Project surveyed all callers to eight statewide senior legal hotlines to try to determine if some of these initial goals had been met, and to learn more about client satisfaction with the hotline model. Specifically, the Foundation surveys found that 45 percent of the respondents had called to get an answer to a legal question and 87 percent of those clients found the answers they received helpful to some degree.

In those studies, where results were extremely similar for both years,³ 43 percent wanted advice about how to solve a legal problem and 45 percent of those reported being advised to take a follow up action. Of those, 85 percent reported taking a follow up action and 57 percent of those who took action had improvement in their problem while 30 percent were still waiting for results.

In 2002 the Project for the Future of Equal Justice (PFEJ) completed its survey of clients at five low-income hotlines. Notable differences between the surveys included:

³ <http://www.legalhotlines.org/standards/index.cfm#outcome>

- Senior clients were much more likely (45 percent) to report they needed an answer to a legal question than PFEJ clients (21 percent);
- Eighty-five percent of the senior respondents in 2000 and 2002 reported taking an advised follow up action while only 39 percent of PFEJ clients did. The higher follow up rate for older clients was confirmed in the present study for clients with consumer issues. 55 percent of those under 40 years of age reported taking a follow up action in consumer cases compared to 74 percent of those between 41-60 and 78 percent of those over 60.

From these previous studies, it is clear that hotlines are achieving the goal of answering legal questions and fulfilling the legal needs of those clients whose reason for calling is to get an answer to a legal question. For that reason, the purpose of this study was to focus on the clients who were advised to take some action to resolve a legal problem and to attempt to measure whether they followed the advice and whether the situation was ameliorated if they did so. The goal of the study was to explore the results of Hotline advice in two discrete areas that typically involve the need for some follow up action on behalf of the client, public benefits and consumer cases, to determine whether clients are able to resolve the problem by following the advice provided. This information is necessary to determine if the hotlines are meeting their goals or whether programs need to adjust their methods of service delivery to better meet client needs. The results of the outcome study can be used to determine if resources are being allocated in a cost effective manner.

II. STUDY METHODOLOGY

Seven Hotlines volunteered to participate and the study was designed to minimize disruption to hotline staff and callers. Participating hotlines represented a range of different delivery models, service areas and clientele.⁴ The following programs participated in the study:

- CARPLS (IL)
- Bay Area Legal Services Legal Aid Line (FL)
- Virginia Legal Aid Society LawLine
- Counsel and Advice Law Line (MI)
- Maryland Legal Aid Bureau
- Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut
- Consumer Law Project for the Elderly (CT)

Each participating hotline assisted in the design of the project, determining the scope of the study by identifying the types of cases that would be flagged by their advocates as potentially eligible for participation in the outcomes survey. As mentioned previously, the range of cases flagged fell into two distinct case types: public benefits and consumer cases. These areas were selected because each routinely involves the hotline advocate

⁴ Sites included stand alone, single program, and multi-office intake hotline models, serving both low-income residents and senior populations.

suggesting that the client take some follow up action on his or her own behalf to resolve the matter.

Objectives of the Study included:

- To determine whether clients followed hotline advice to take a follow up action;
- If clients followed the advice, to determine whether the action worked to resolve the clients' problems;
- To learn about the barriers clients face in carrying out the follow up action;
- To determine whether the client's gender, age, income, or number in household affected the client's propensity to take the action and achieve a successful outcome;
- To determine what additional measures hotlines might need to take in order to assist the client in achieving a successful resolution;
- To obtain information about the caller's overall experience with the hotline.

The study sought to determine whether there were certain case types requiring client follow up, or certain client characteristics in follow up cases, that were more likely to result in successful completion of the recommended action, and/or successful resolution of the client's legal problem.

Examples of consumer cases flagged for inclusion in the study are ones where the caller was told to write a demand letter, file a complaint with a state agency, or take some other step to resolve the situation or problem. Examples of public benefits cases flagged for inclusion are those where clients were identified as potentially eligible for a benefit or service, counseled on how to apply for the benefit or service, or coached on how to appeal denial or termination of a benefit or service. Participating hotlines decided whether to survey consumer cases, public benefits cases, or both.⁵ Front line staff received a brief training on how to identify and flag appropriate cases for the survey. Individual programs determined whether to track flagged cases by hand or through a computerized case management system.

Each program began flagging cases in the spring of 2005 and continued until 100 potential cases for inclusion had been identified. In programs that did not have the call volume to identify 100 potential cases, advocates flagged cases for a period of 60-90 days. Clients in flagged cases were contacted between 45 and 60 days after they called the hotline and asked if they would be interested in participating in the study. Those clients who agreed to participate in the study were then asked to complete a brief survey via phone⁶ about their experience (see Appendices A and B). The surveys were administered by staff and/or volunteers within each program who received a brief training on how to administer the survey. The results of these surveys form the basis for this report. Throughout the study, participating hotlines met via conference call to discuss

⁵ Seven programs participated by flagging consumer cases and four of these hotlines flagged public benefits cases, as well.

⁶ Program sites were given the option of sending the survey via US mail with return postage, but all sites decided to use the telephone model exclusively as the initial method of contact.

issues related to identifying cases and administering the survey. As a result of some of these discussions, slight changes were made to the study plan.⁷

Participating programs were also asked to complete a brief survey about their experiences in the study. The participating programs found the process itself to be extremely valuable, because it helped each program to better understand what happens to a client after the call ends, and to consider whether it might be useful to couple telephone advice with written assistance or additional coaching in certain types of cases, or whether written materials should be adapted for certain client populations. A typical response from a manager to the survey process was as follows: “The experience has been great and it was very easy to do. Our hotline would like to institutionalize this follow up process as part of an ongoing evaluation of our services. We learned a lot from our participation in the study.”⁸

Response Rate

A total of 945 cases were flagged for follow up and 400 surveys were completed – an overall response rate of 42 percent. 771 consumer cases were flagged and surveys were completed for 314 of them – a response rate of 41%. 174 benefits cases were flagged and surveys were completed for 86 of them – a response rate of 40 percent.

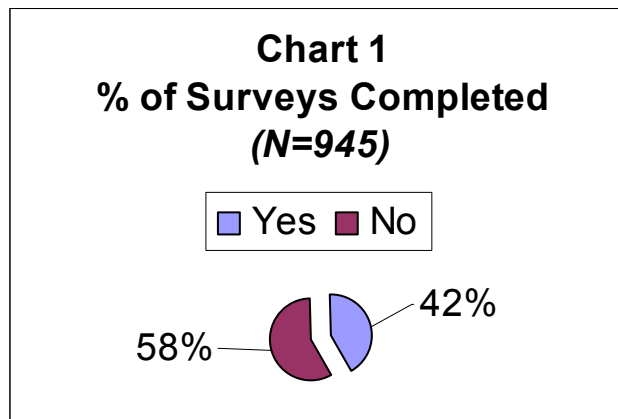
Calling the client back proved a much more successful strategy for completing the survey than mailing the surveys to clients. Of the 400 completed surveys, 94 percent were completed over the phone. However, more than half of clients could not be reached by phone for follow up, either because the phone had been disconnected, the phone number on record was invalid, or because the hotline tried several times and simply didn’t find the client there. Some of the hotlines mailed surveys to clients that could not be reached by phone. Of the 143 surveys mailed, only 17 percent, or 24 surveys, were returned. Table 1 and Chart 1 describe the number of cases flagged and completed.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Surveys Completed of Clients Flagged

	No. of Cases Flagged	Survey Completed on Phone	Mailed Survey Returned	Surveys Completed
Consumer Cases	771 82 %	292 38% of consumer	22 3% of consumer	314 41% of consumer
Benefits Cases	174 18%	84 48% of benefits	2 1% of benefits	86 49% of benefits
Total	945 100%	376 39% of total	24 3% of total	400 42% of total

⁷ For example, during the process of flagging cases we realized that some of the programs would not be able to identify 100 cases as quickly as initially thought, so we extended the period of time for identifying cases to 90 days.

⁸ Hotline manager during outcomes study conference call on held on 9/27/2005.



III. Detailed Results

A. Consumer Cases Findings - Total Respondents

1. Consumer Case Demographics

A total of 314 clients completed the consumer survey. Charts 2a-f describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Seventy percent (219) of the respondents were women and 30 percent (92) were men.⁹ The median age was 59.5 years. Twenty-two percent (68) were under 40 years of age; 31 percent (97) were between 41-60 years of age, 19 percent (60) were between 61-70 years old; 21 percent (65) were between 71-80 and 7 percent (24) were over 81 years old.

Sixty-five percent (185) of respondents described themselves as white, 29 percent (82) as African American and 3 percent (8) as Hispanic. Thirty-six percent (113) of respondents were LSC income eligible. The average number in the household was 1.9 but 52 percent (175) of the respondents lived alone; only 19 percent (55) were married; 32 percent (90) were single; an additional 32 percent (91) were divorced or separated and 17 percent (48) were widowed.

⁹ Three surveys were not gender identified.

Charts 2a-2f: Consumer Respondents Demographic Characteristics

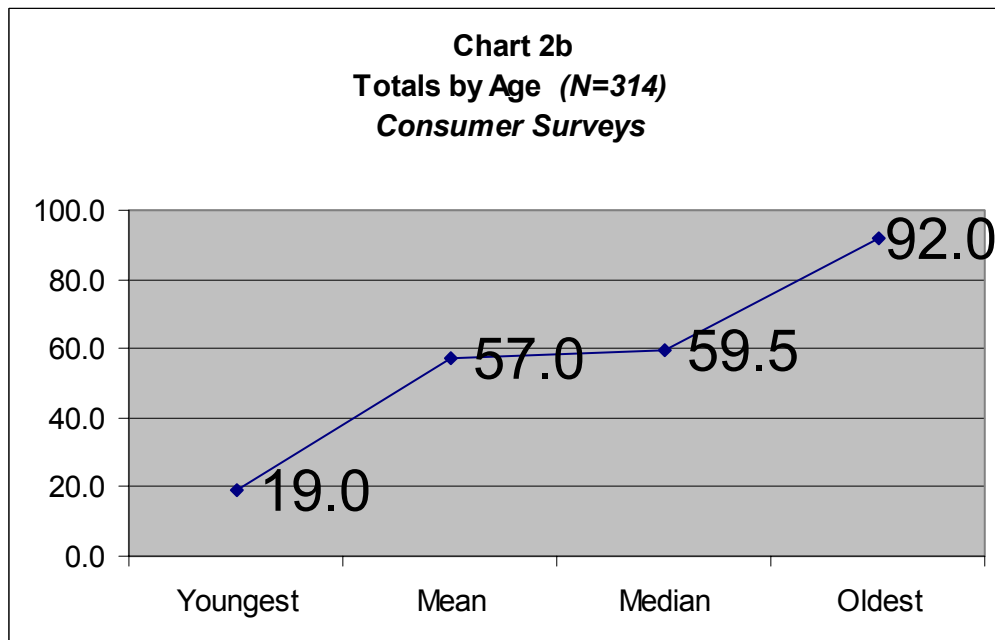
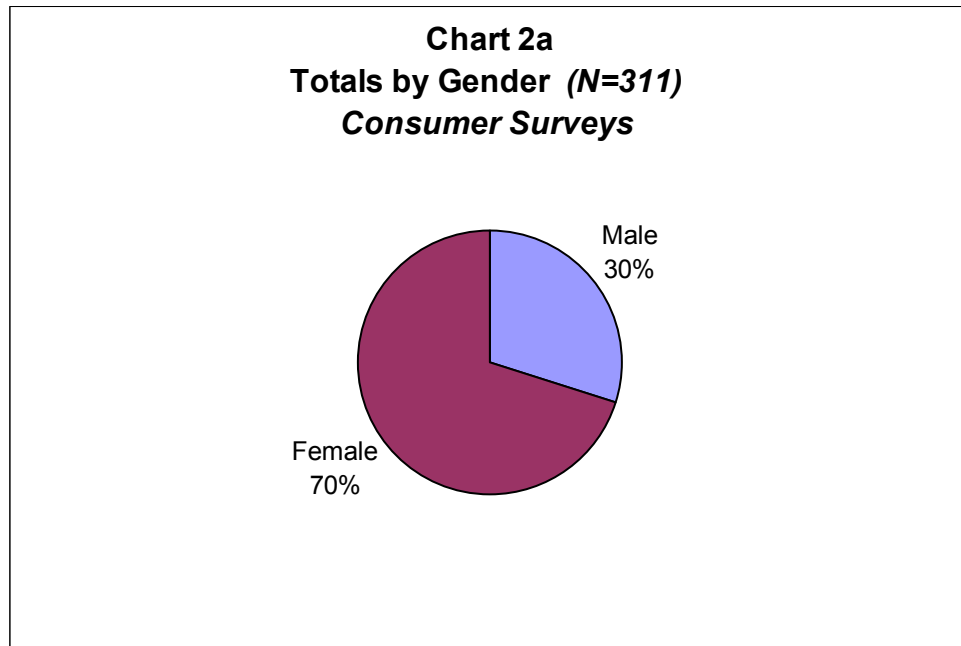


Chart 2c
Totals by Race (N=287)
Consumer Surveys

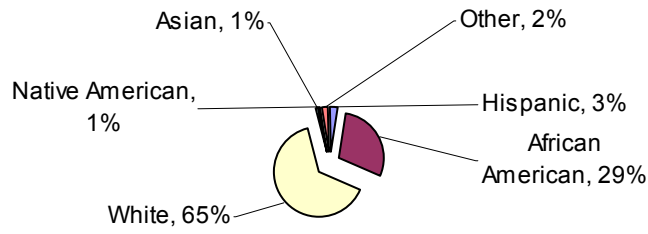


Chart 2d
LSC Eligibility (N=314)
Consumer Surveys

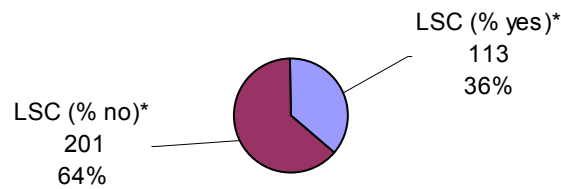
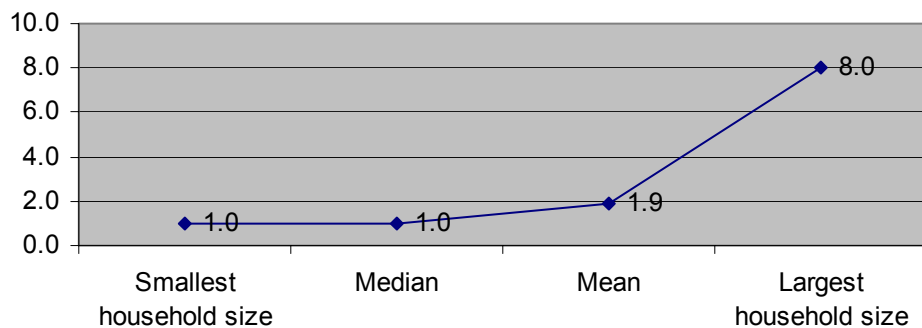
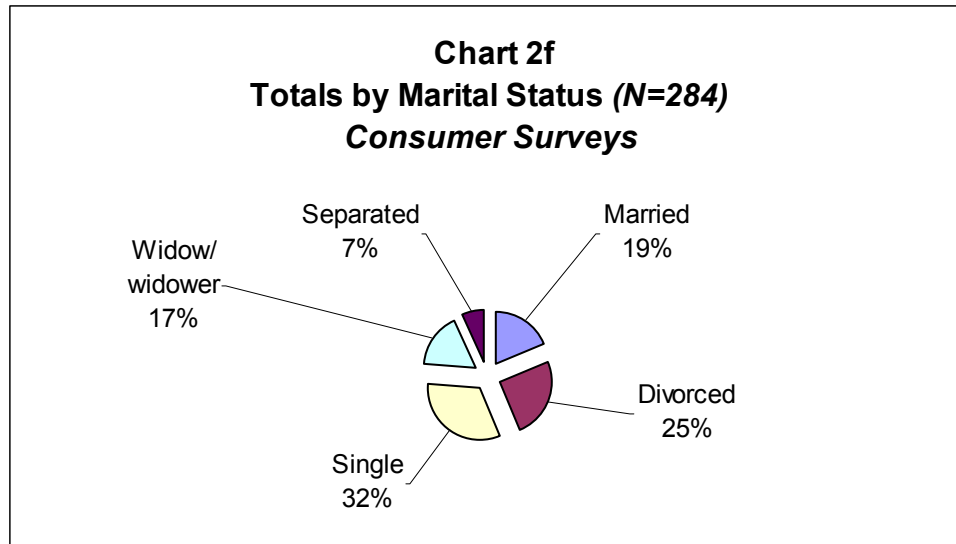


Chart 2e
Totals by Number in Household (N=314)
Consumer Surveys





2. Actions Taken By Respondents in Consumer Cases:

As mentioned in the Methodology section, consumer cases flagged for follow up were ones where the hotline advocate believed the client's taking a discreet action such as writing a letter to a creditor or contacting an agency was likely to result in solving the client's problem. Flagged cases excluded complicated cases such as predatory lending as well as legal aid priority-type cases ripe for representation by a hotline's in-house program or referred to another local program.

The vast majority of respondents, 72 percent (225), took the action the hotline suggested. Of those who took action, 30 percent (68) wrote a letter to a creditor, 16 percent (65) wrote a letter to a business with whom they were having problems, 12 percent (26) contacted an agency; 9 percent (21) filed a form in court; another 9 percent (21) went to court and 15 percent (43) reported taking "other" action. Charts 3a and 3b show the percentage of clients who took action and the types of action taken.

Chart 3a
% Who Took Action (N=309)
Consumer Surveys

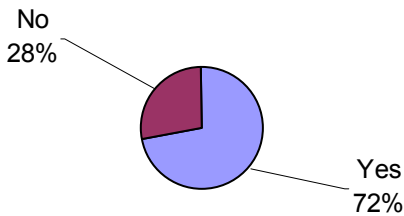
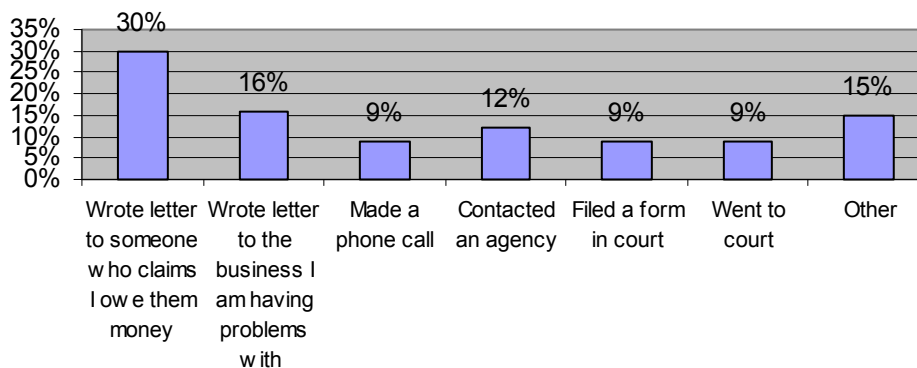


Chart 3b
Of those who took action, action taken: (N=221)
Consumer Surveys



3. Results Obtained by Respondents in Consumer Cases

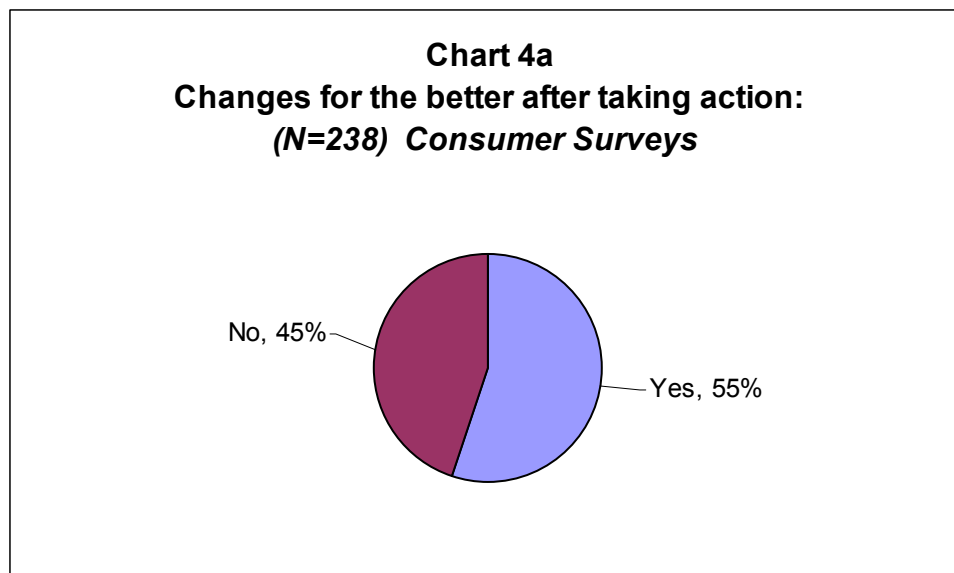
A majority of respondents, 55 percent (130), reported a change for the better after taking the action; 45 percent (108) said there was no change. However, of those who reported “no change” 41 percent (47) were still awaiting the results of the action at the time of the survey. Had more time passed, it is likely a higher percentage of clients would report a change for the better and a smaller percentage would still be waiting for results.

Of those where things changed for the better, 39 percent (52) reported that annoying contacts from debt collectors stopped; 15 percent (20) did not have to pay the disputed bill. The average amount of the bills was \$1,924. Six percent (8) reported they got money back in the average amount of \$250, while 2 percent (2) reported a repair was made.

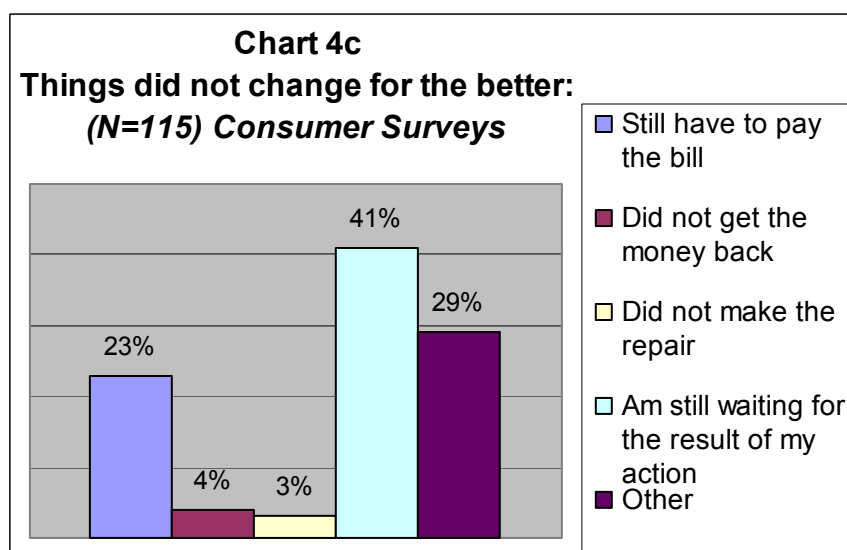
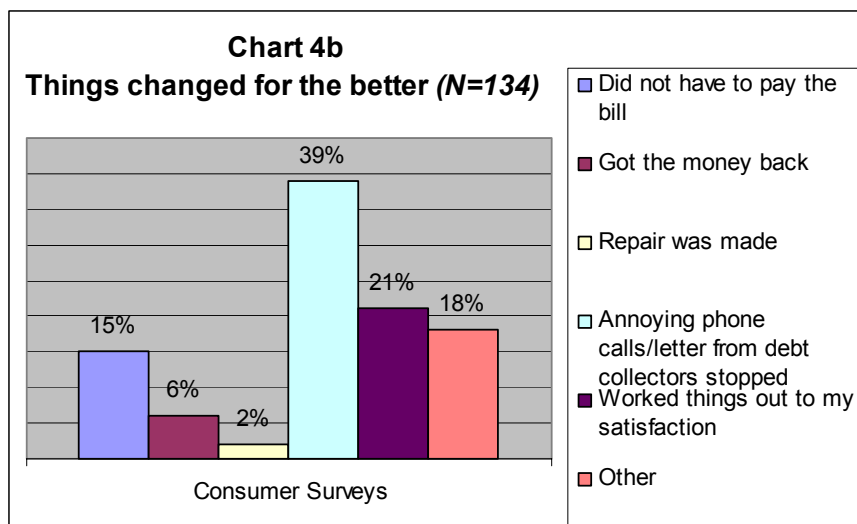
Twenty-one percent (28) reported working things out to their satisfaction and 18 percent (24) reported “other” changes for the better.

For the 45 percent (108) of consumer respondents who reported that things did not change for the better, the largest group, 41 percent (47), is still awaiting the results of their action.¹⁰ Twenty-three percent (27) still have to pay the disputed bill, 4 percent (5) did not get their money back, 3 percent (3) did not get the needed repair. “Other” was reported as a negative outcome by 29 percent (33) of this group.

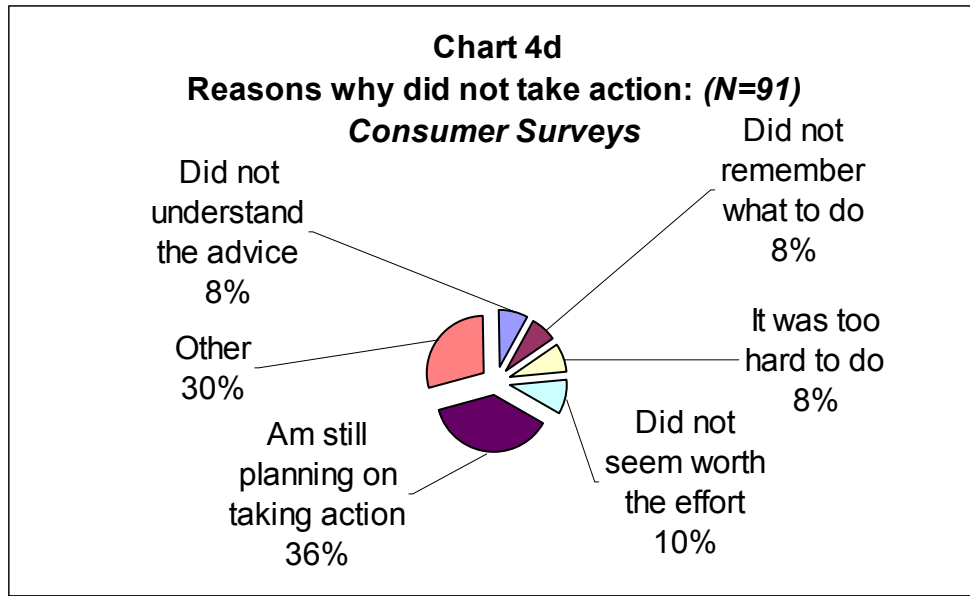
Charts 4a and 4b show the percentages of respondents who experienced a change for the better and the results obtained by respondents with positive outcomes. Chart 4c details results where respondents did not report a change for the better as of the date of the survey.



¹⁰ These results are similar to the Senior Statewide Client Outcomes Surveys of 2000 and 2002, <http://www.legalhotlines.org>. In the 2000 survey, where 1-2 months separated the hotline advice from the follow up survey, 48% had achieved an improvement and 43% were still awaiting results of the action taken; in 2002, 2-3 months elapsed between the advice and the survey. 57% reported an improvement in their legal problem and the number waiting for results was reduced to 30%.



Of the 28 percent (88) who did not take the recommended action, the largest group, 36 percent (34), still plans on taking the action; 10 percent (9) believed it wasn't worth the effort, 8 percent (7) thought it was too hard to do; 8 percent (7) did not remember what to do and 8 percent (7) did not understand the advice. Another 30 percent (27) did not take action because of "other" reasons. Chart 4d describes the percentage of callers who did not action for a particular reason. As only 28 percent (88) of respondents reported not taking action, the numbers in each category are low.

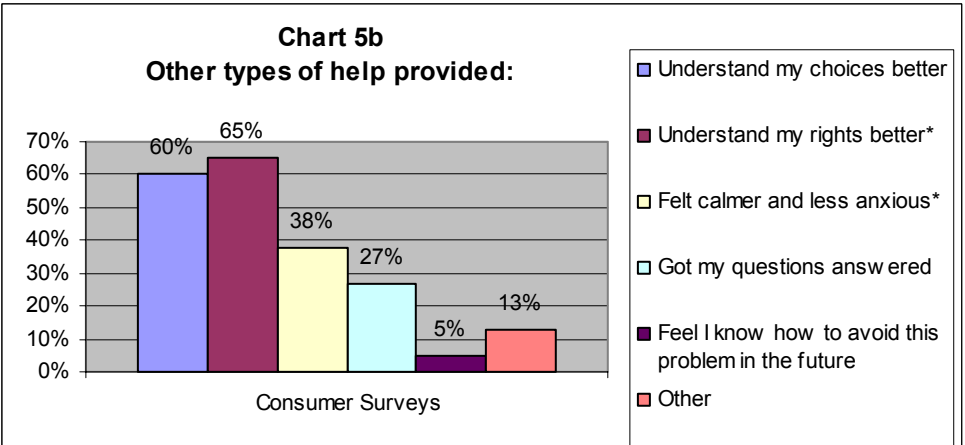
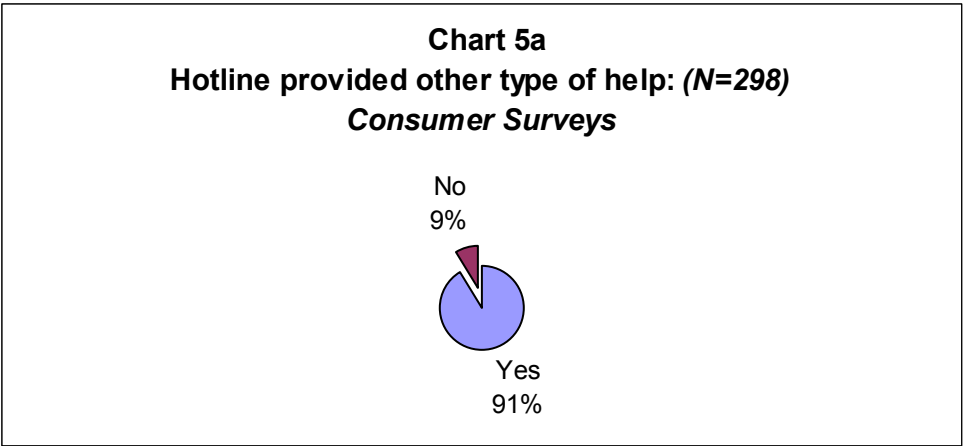


4. Other Help Provided by Hotline in Consumer Cases

Apart from receiving advice on follow up actions to solve a legal problem, the survey asked clients if the hotline provided other types of help to them. Almost everyone, 91 percent (272), said the hotline did provide other help. Sixty percent of clients (163) reported they understand their choices better; 65 percent (177) reported they understood their rights better; 38 percent (103) reported feeling calmer and less anxious; 27 percent (72) said they got their questions answered; 5 percent (14) felt they would know how to avoid the problem in the future, and 5 percent (13) chose “other”.

Of the 9 percent (26) who did not feel they hotline was any help, 30 percent (7) gave the reason that the hotline was not able to give them a free lawyer; 17 percent (4) did not get their questions answered; another 17 percent (4) did not understand what they were told; 13 percent (3) said the advice made them feel more worried and 22 percent (5) chose “other”.

Charts 5a and 5b show the percentage of callers who found the hotline helpful and the reasons the hotline was helpful. For Chart 5b, the client could choose multiple answers. Hence the percentages exceed 100 percent and the number of respondents is omitted.



Respondents were also asked if they remember receiving written materials after the call, and if so, whether the written materials were helpful. Seventy-three percent (222) said they did receive mailed information subsequent to the hotline call, and 90 percent (197) of those reported that the information helped with the problem.

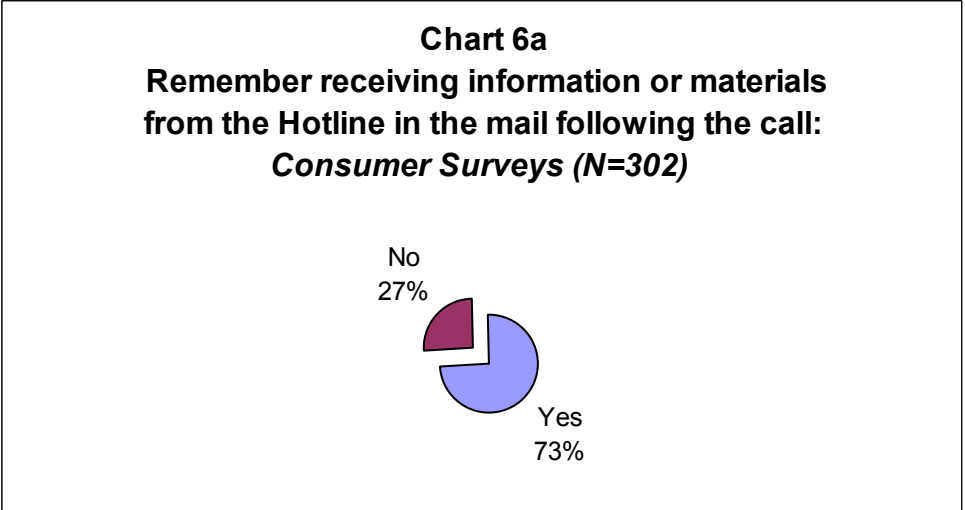


Chart 6b
Of those who remember receiving information,
information helped with problem: (N=218)
Consumer Surveys



B: Consumer Case Results by Demographic Characteristics

One of the goals of the survey design team was to compare results for clients with different demographic characteristics to determine if there were any significant differences in the propensity to take the recommended action and the success of the outcome, and if such differences were revealed, whether adjustments ought to be made to service delivery. Results were correlated for gender, age, LSC income-eligibility, and whether the client lived alone. Researchers tried to ascertain whether any of these factors impacted the client's propensity to take the follow up action and whether, if the client took the action, a positive or negative outcome could be linked to any of these characteristics. The data revealed some statistically significant differences related to taking action and results achieved.

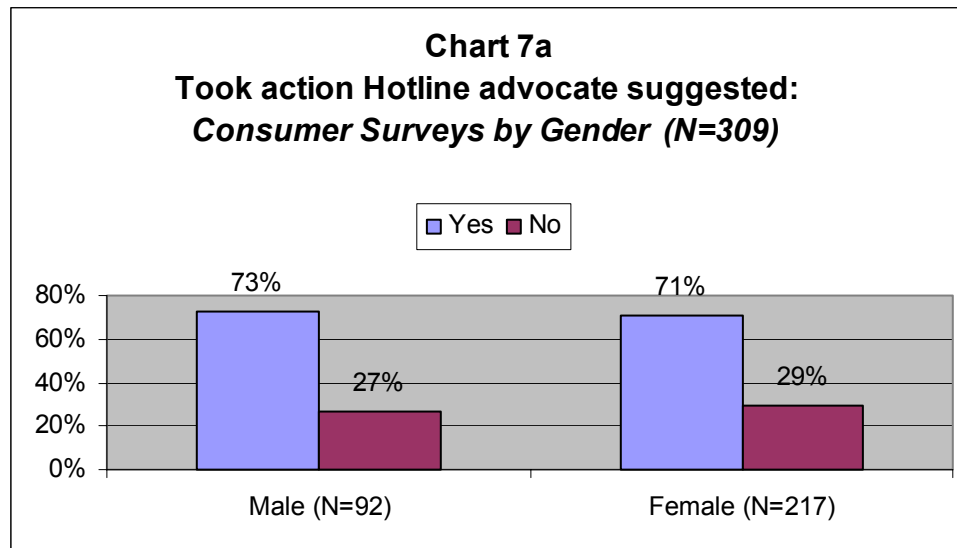
Significant differences in consumer case respondents related to demographic characteristics include:

- Male and female callers are equally likely to report taking the hotline action; however, males are more likely to report a change for the better after taking the action (66 percent) than females (50 percent);
- The youngest age group, under 40 years old, is significantly less likely to take action than older age groups; 55 percent of that age group took the suggested action compared to 74 percent of those aged 41-60, and 78 percent of those aged 61 and older;
- Living alone did not impact whether the client followed the hotline advice or results achieved;
- LSC eligibility did not affect whether the client took action but callers who were not LSC eligible reported a change for the better at a higher rate (59 percent) than LSC eligible clients (46 percent).

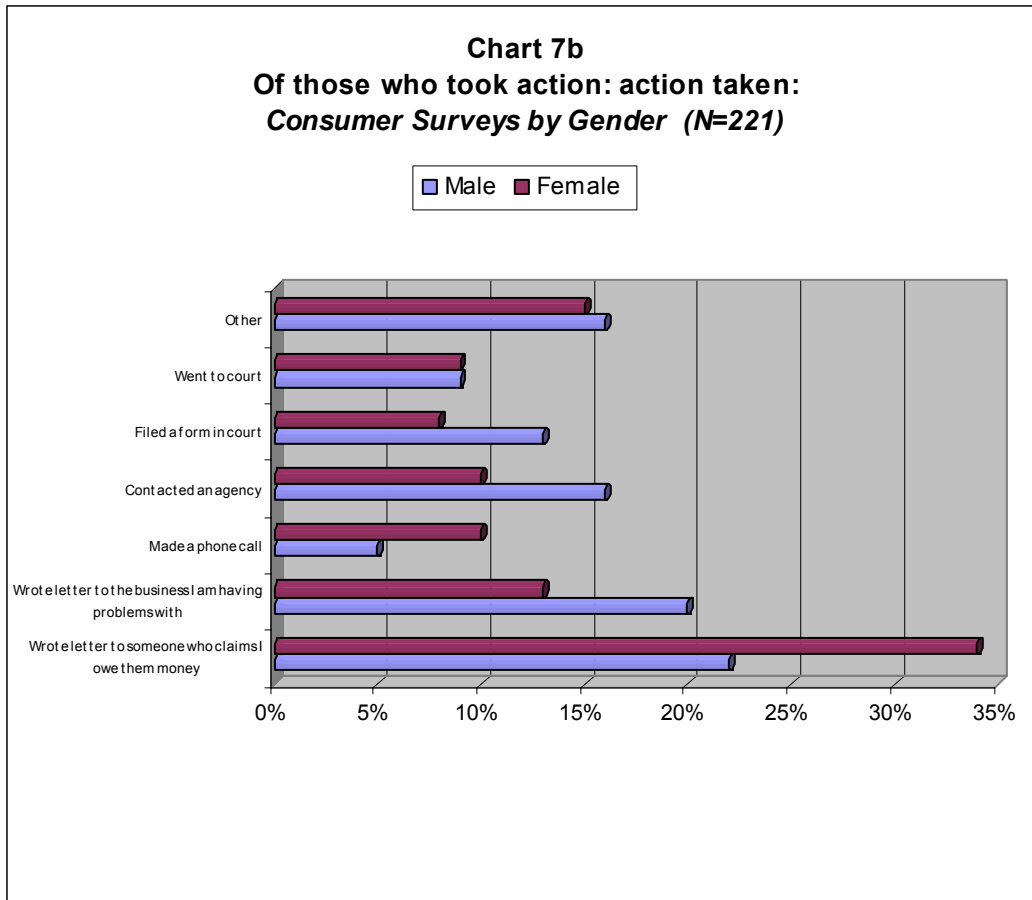
1. Gender Findings

Actions Taken and Results Achieved

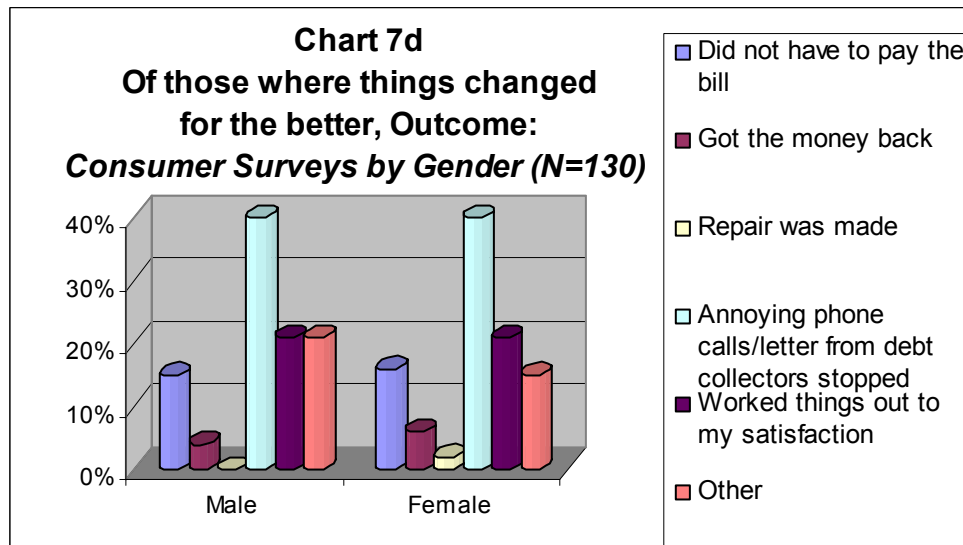
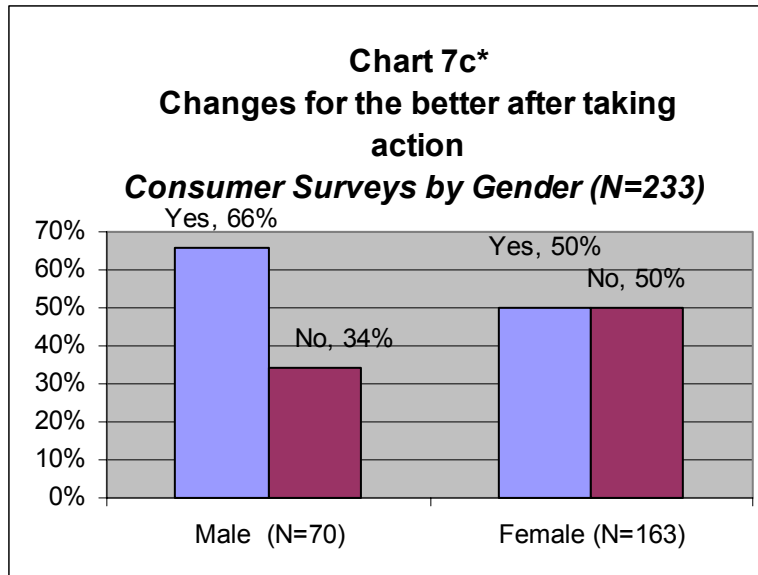
Charts 7a-7f show gender differences in actions taken and results achieved. A similar percentage of men and women, 73 percent (67) and 71 percent (154) respectively, reported taking the follow up action. However, a larger percentage of men - 66 percent (46) than women - 50 percent (82), reported a change for the better after taking the action. Twenty-nine percent (63) of the women and 27 percent (25) of the men reported that they didn't take action. Charts with data showing statistically significant differences are identified by an asterisk (*).



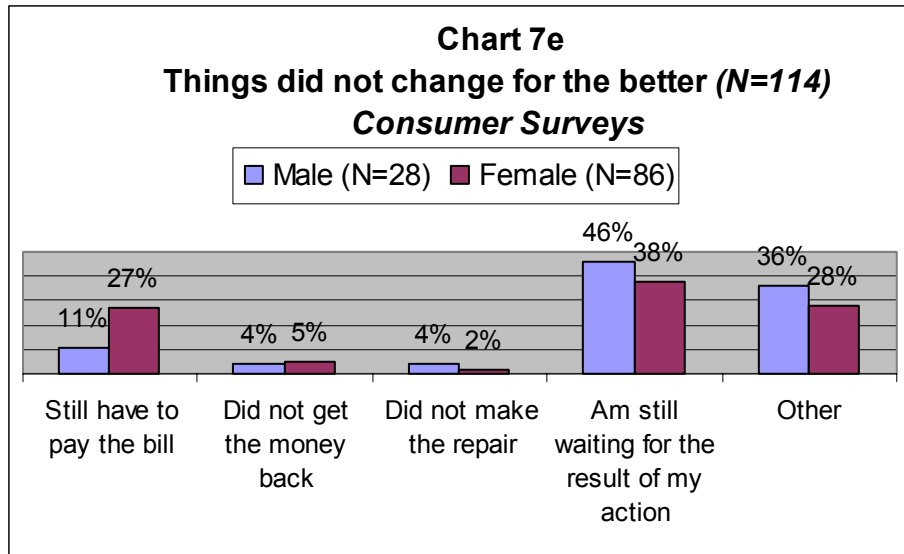
Of those that took action, 34 percent (54) of the women and 22 percent (14) of the men, wrote a letter to someone who claimed the client owes them money. Thirteen percent (21) of women and 20 percent (13) of men wrote a letter to a business they were having problems with; 10 percent (15) of women and 16 percent (10) of men contacted an agency. Eight percent (13) of women filed a form in court as did 13 percent (8) of the men. Nine percent of both men (6) and women (14) respondents went to court, while 15 percent (24) of women and 16 percent (10) of men took some other action.



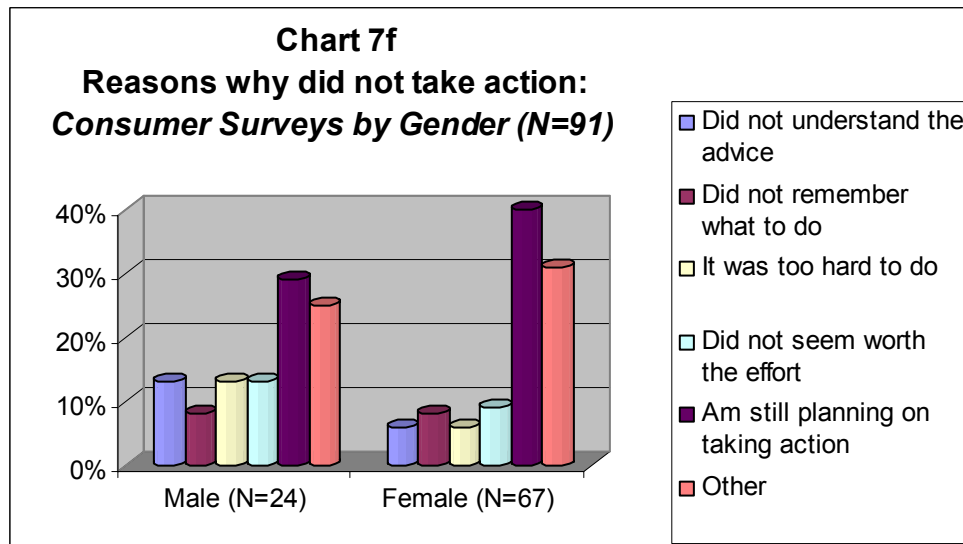
As noted, a significantly higher proportion of men, 66 percent (46), reported a change for the better compared to women, 50 percent (82). Forty percent of both men (19) and women (33) said that annoying phone calls/letters from debt collectors stopped. Things worked out satisfactorily for both 21 percent (17) of women and 21 percent (10) of men. Fifteen percent of men (7) did not have to pay the disputed bill in the average amount of \$2,660 while 16 percent of women (13) did not have to pay the bill in the average amount of \$1,557.



Of those surveys where respondents reported that things did not change for the better, 46 percent (13) of men and 38 percent (33) of women were still waiting for the results of their action. Eleven percent of men (3) and 27 percent (23) of women still have to pay the bill while 4 percent (1) of men and 5 percent (4) did not get their money back. Thirty-six percent of men (10) and 28 percent (24) of women chose “other” as the reason things did not change for the better, but did not necessarily elaborate.



For the people who did not take action, 29 percent (7) of men and 40 percent (27) of women are still planning on taking action. Thirteen percent (3) of men and 9 percent (6) of women did not think it seemed worth the effort to take action; 13 percent (3) of men and 6 percent (4) of women thought it was too hard for them to do. Thirteen percent (3) of men did not understand the advice while 8 percent (2) did not remember what to do. Six percent (4) of women did not understand the advice while 8 percent (5) did not remember what to do. Twenty-five percent (6) of men and 31 percent (21) of women listed “other” as the reason they did not take action.

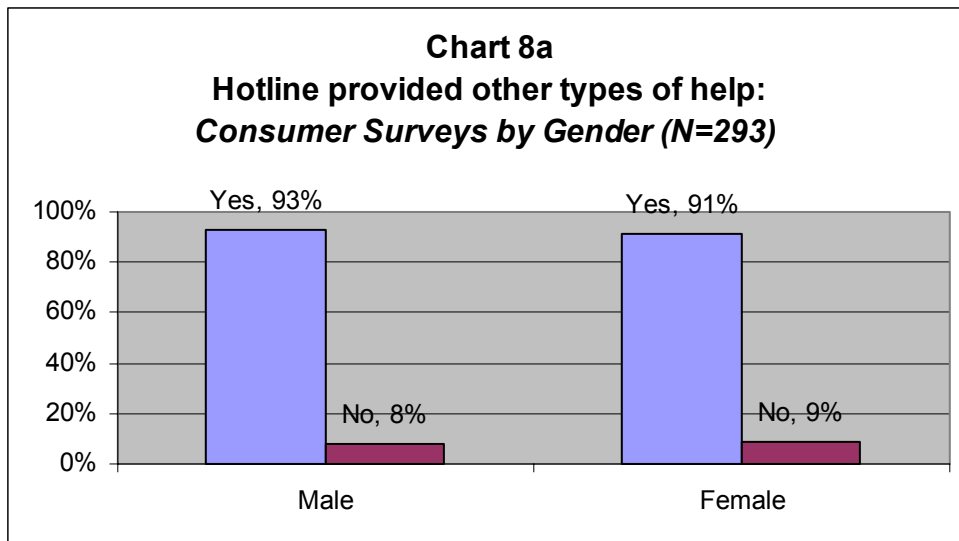


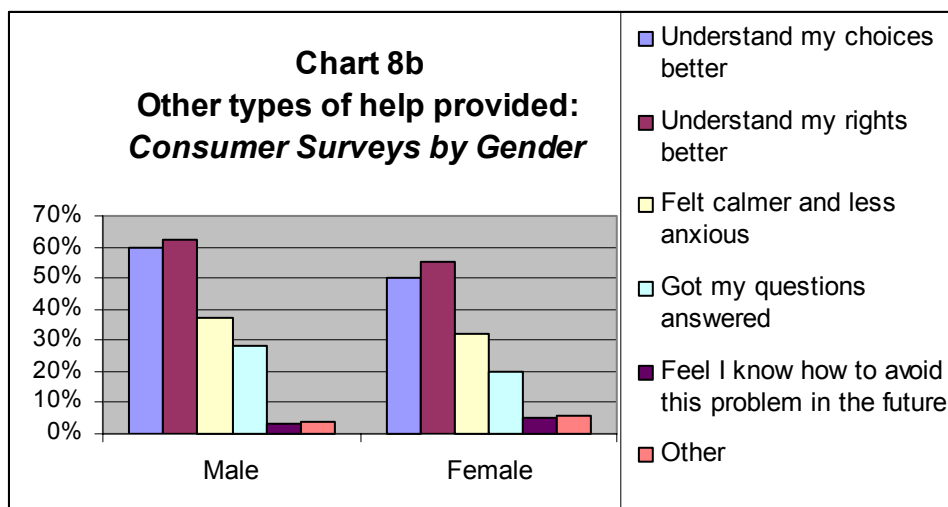
Other Types of Help Provided by the Hotline

No significant differences were noted in how the genders viewed other help provided by the hotline. Ninety-three percent (81) of men and 91 percent (187) of women said the hotline provided them with some other type of help in addition to recommending the follow up action.

Sixty percent (55) of men and 50 percent (109) of women said they understood their choices better; 62 percent (57) of men and 55 percent (120) of women said they understood their rights better. Thirty-seven percent (34) of men and 32 percent (69) of women reported feeling calmer and less anxious. Twenty-eight percent (26) of men and 20 percent (44) of women got their questions answered. Three percent (3) of men and 5 percent (11) of women felt that they would know how to avoid the problem in the future and 4 percent of men (4) and 6 percent (12) of women gave “other” as the reason for hotline helpfulness.

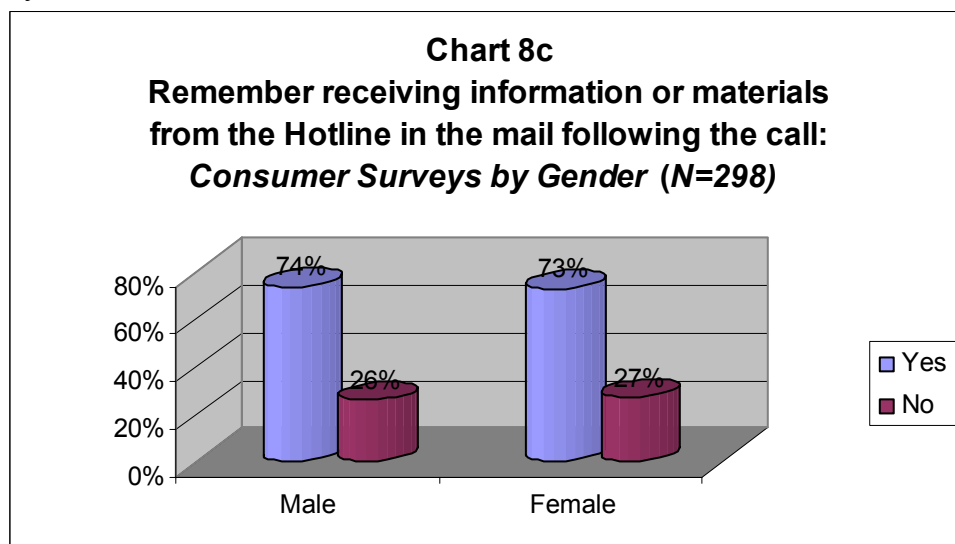
Charts 8a and 8b show other types of help provided as reported by gender.

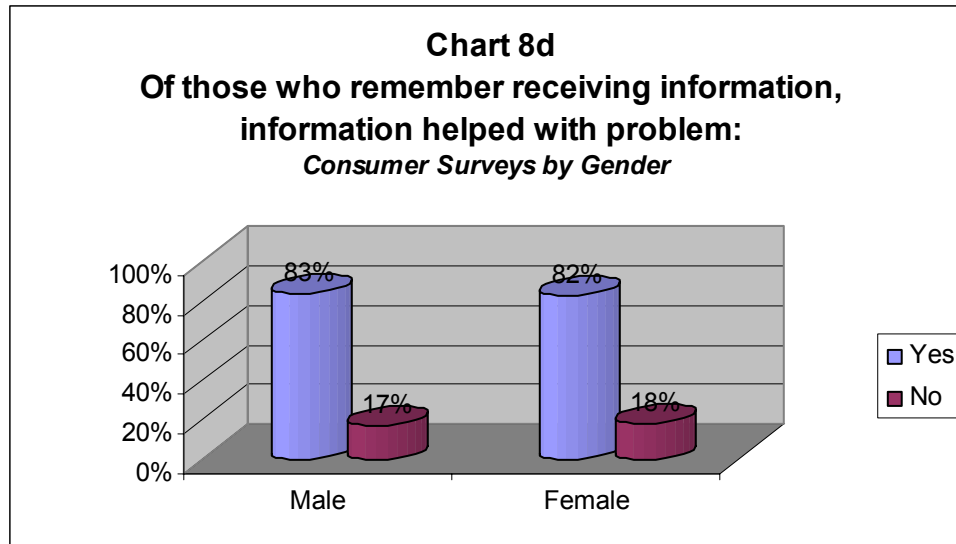




Of the 25 respondents who said the hotline was not helpful, 50 percent (3) of the men and 25 percent (4) of women said it was because the hotline was not able to give them a free lawyer. None of the other reasons listed received more than three responses from either gender.

Finally, men and women both recall receiving mailed materials at equal rates: seventy-four percent (66) of the men and 73 percent (153) of the women. Men and women were just as likely to have found that the information helped with the problem, Eighty-three percent of men (60) and eighty-two percent (138) of women reported being helped by the mailed materials.

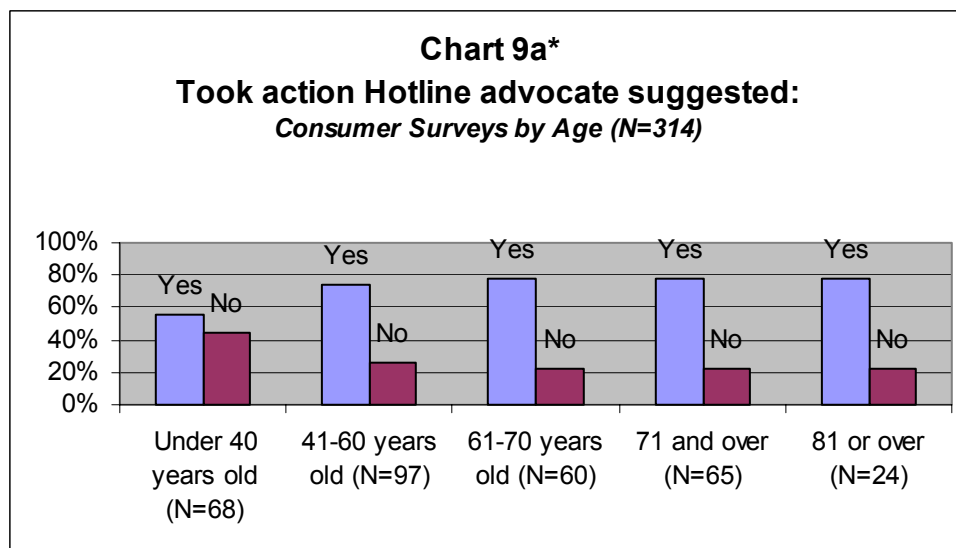




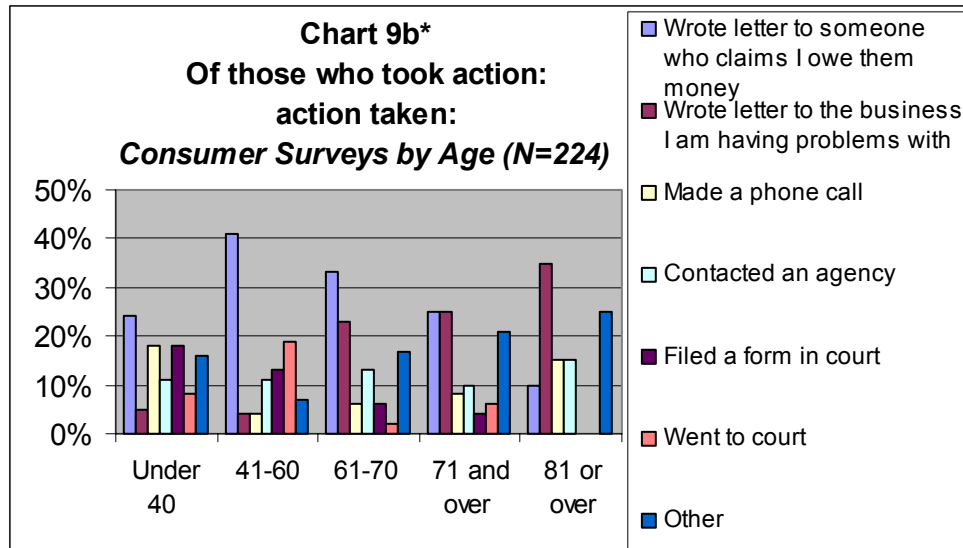
2. Age Findings

Actions Taken and Results Achieved

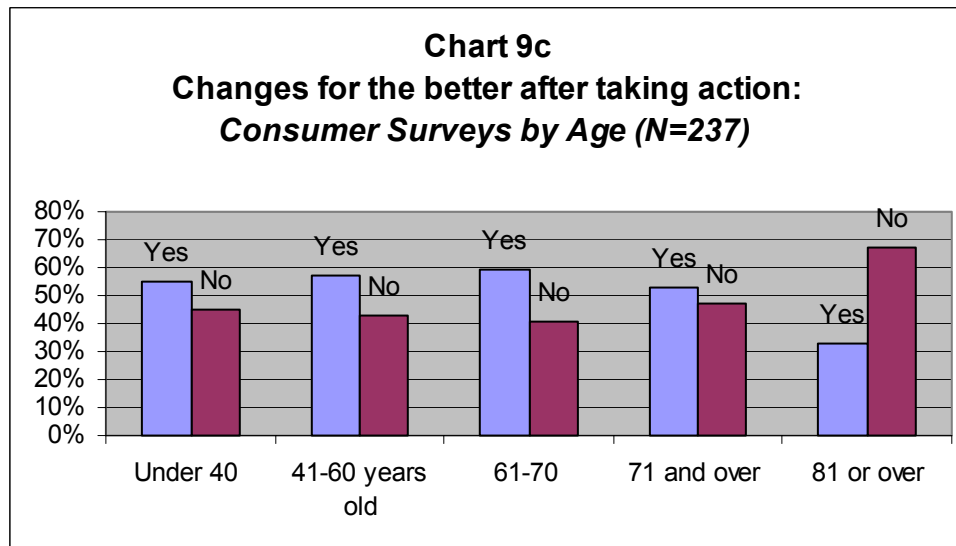
One of the few statistically significant differences to be noted in the demographic comparisons is that younger hotline clients were significantly less likely to take action when compared with their older counterparts. While 72 percent (225) of total consumer case respondents said they took action, only 55 percent (37) of those under 40 years of age did so. Seventy four percent (72) of those between 41- 60 took action as did fully 78 percent (115) of those over 60. See Chart 9a.



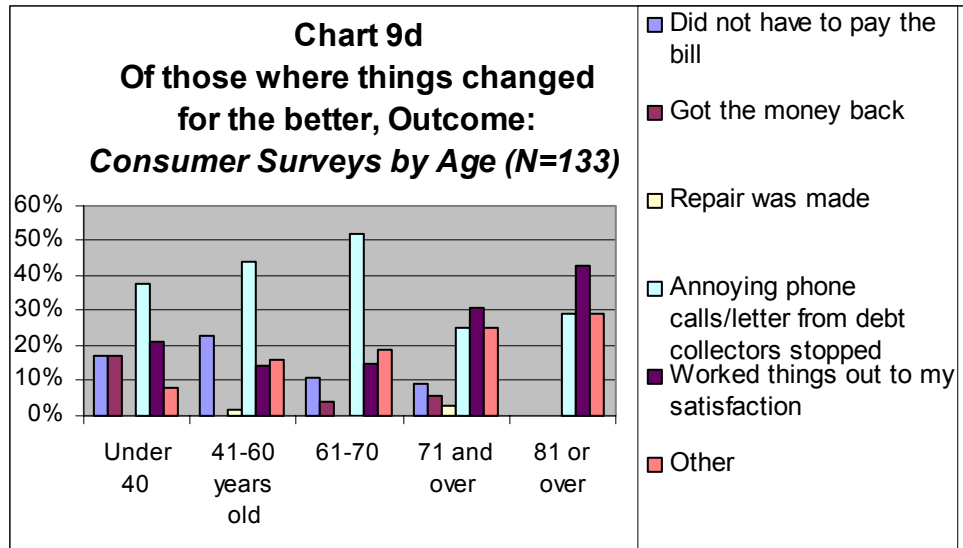
The 41-60 year age group was significantly more likely - 38 percent (29) - to report writing a letter to someone who claimed the caller owed them money than those callers over the age of 81 - 10 percent (2). Older age groups were also more likely to write a letter to a business they were having problems with compared with the younger age groups. See Chart 9b.



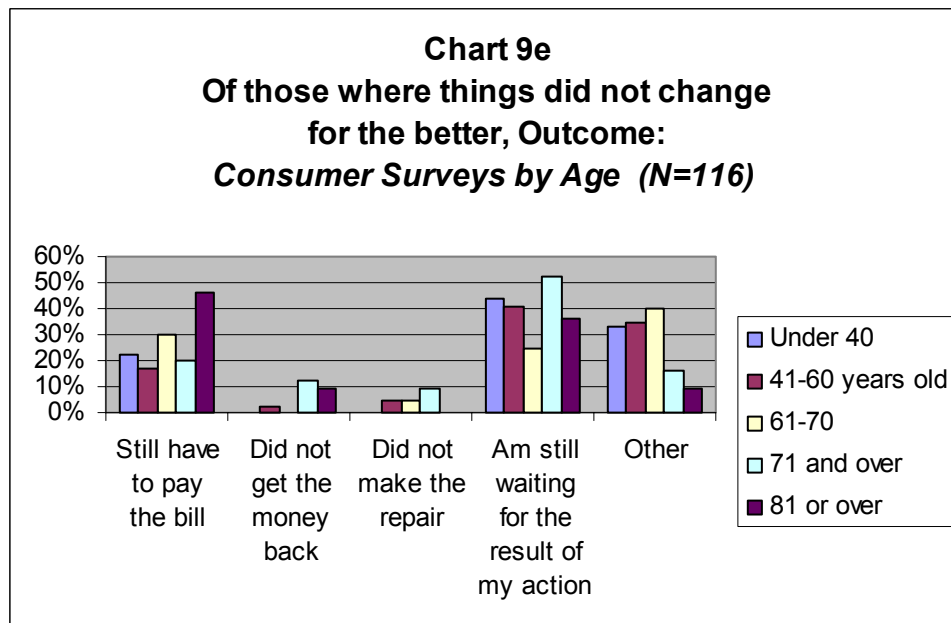
Although the older age groups reported following the advice at a significantly greater rate than the youngest age group, the oldest age groups reported achieving a change for the better at a lower rate – 33 percent (6) for the 81+ age group vs. 53-59 percent for the other age groups (123), but that difference was not statistically significant. See Table 9c.



There were no significant differences among the groups in the types of favorable outcomes. Because the six possible answers were divided among four age groups for this demographic category, the number of responses in each category per group was small, with none exceeding 19. See Chart 9d.

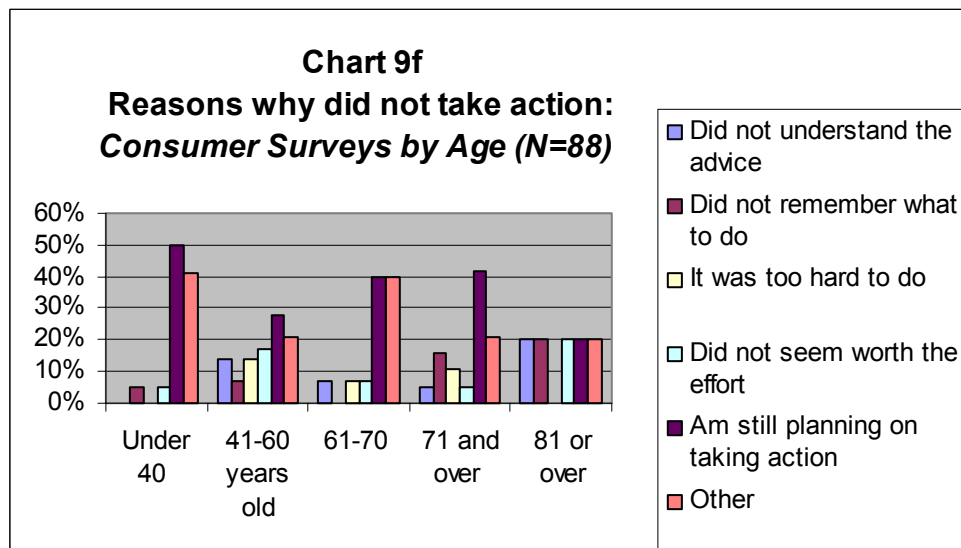


Of those who took action but reported that things did not change for the better, there were also no significant differences noted among the age groups. The largest percentage of each group is still waiting for the results of the action, from 52 percent (13) of the 71-80 age group to 25 percent (5) of the 61-70 age group. Again, since the responses were divided among four groups and five categories, the highest number of responses for any block was 17. See Chart 9e.



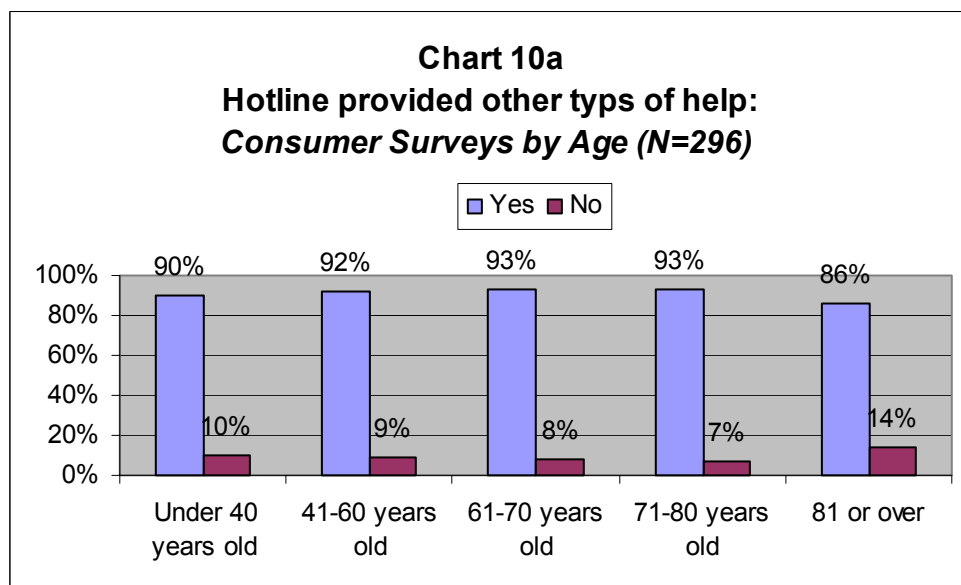
Of those that had not taken action, 50 percent (11) of the youngest group were still planning on taking the recommended action vs. 28 percent (8) of the 41-60 year old group, 40 percent (6) of the 61-70 year old group, 42 percent (6) of the 71-80 year old

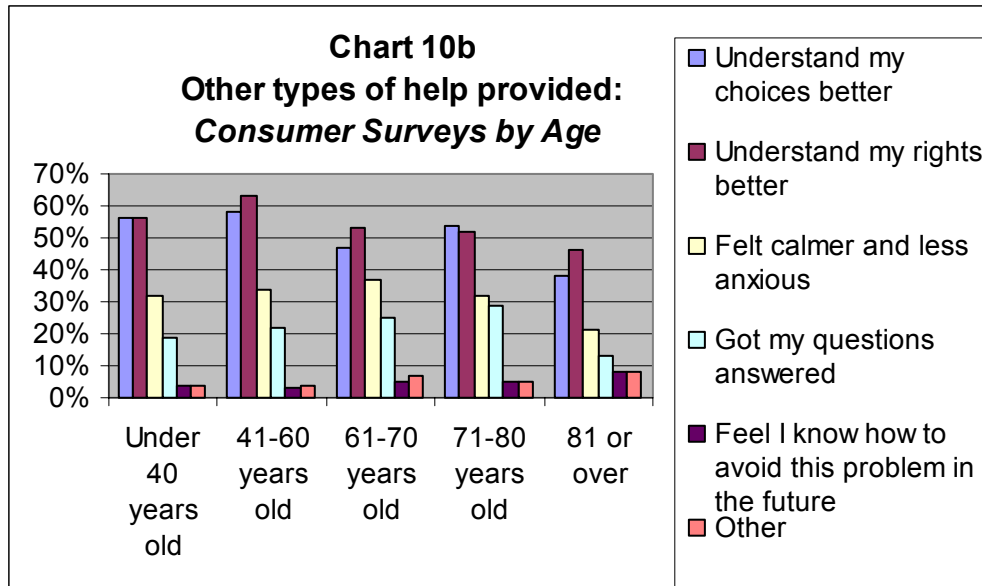
group and 20 percent (1) of the 81 and over group. None of the variances among the age groups for those that had not taken recommended action is significant. See Chart 9f.



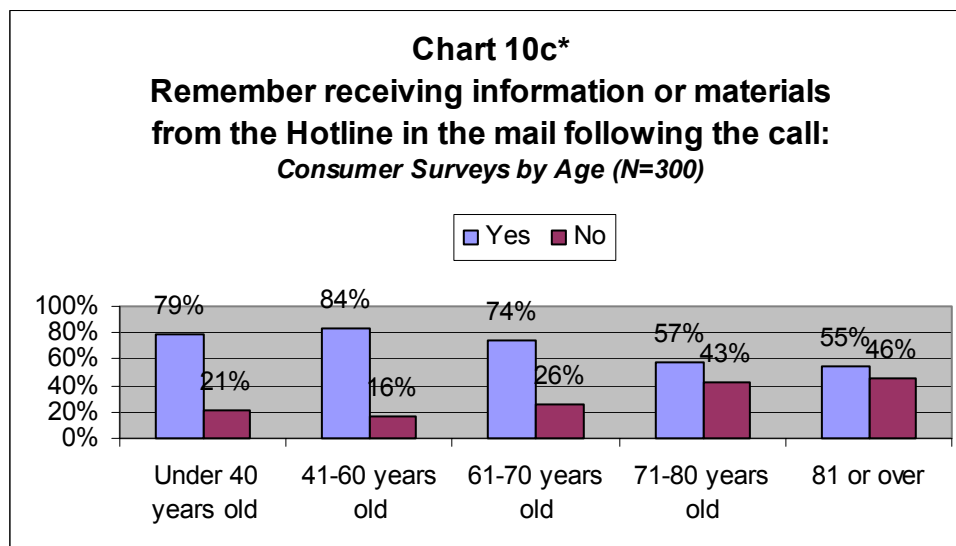
Other Types of Help Provided

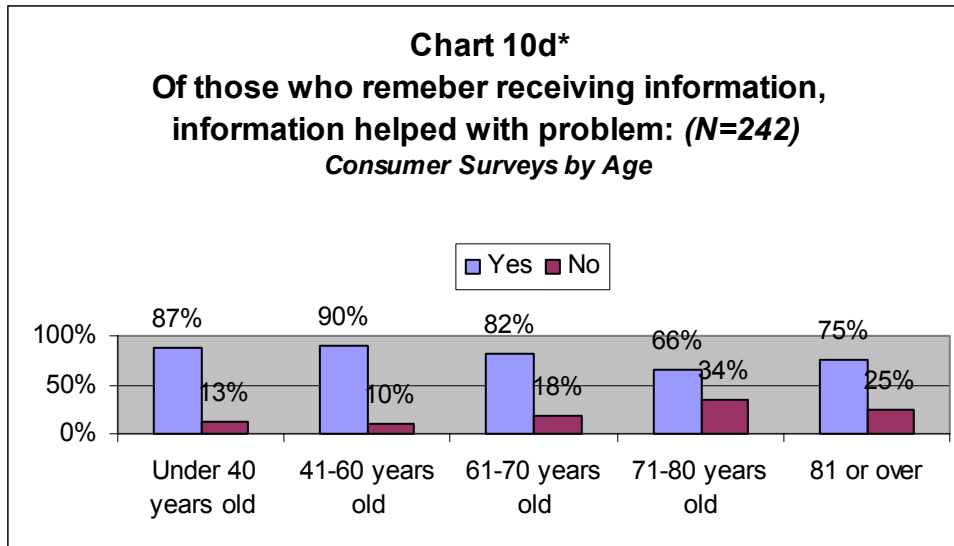
Age related responses to whether the hotline provided any other type of help were similar to the overall responses for the consumer respondents and showed no significant differences among the groups. Ninety percent (60) of the youngest group found the hotline provided other types of help as did 92 percent (86) of the 41-60 year olds, 93 percent (49) of the 61-70 year olds, 93 percent (57) of the 71-80 year olds and 86 percent (18) of those over 81. See Charts 10a and 10b.





A significant difference was noted among the age groups with respect to remembering having received materials from the hotline in the mail, although it is impossible to know whether these differences are due to a program not sending materials to the respondent or because the respondent did not remember receiving them. Seventy-nine percent (52) of the youngest group remembered receiving materials, as did 84 percent (79) of the 41-60 age group, 74 percent (42) of the 61-70 age group, 57 percent (35) of the 71-80 age group and 55 percent (12) of the over 81 age group. Of those who reported receiving the mailed items, 90 percent (70) of the 41-60 year old group found the information helpful vs. 66 percent (29) of 71-80 year old group. This difference is also statistically significant. Charts 10c and 10d.

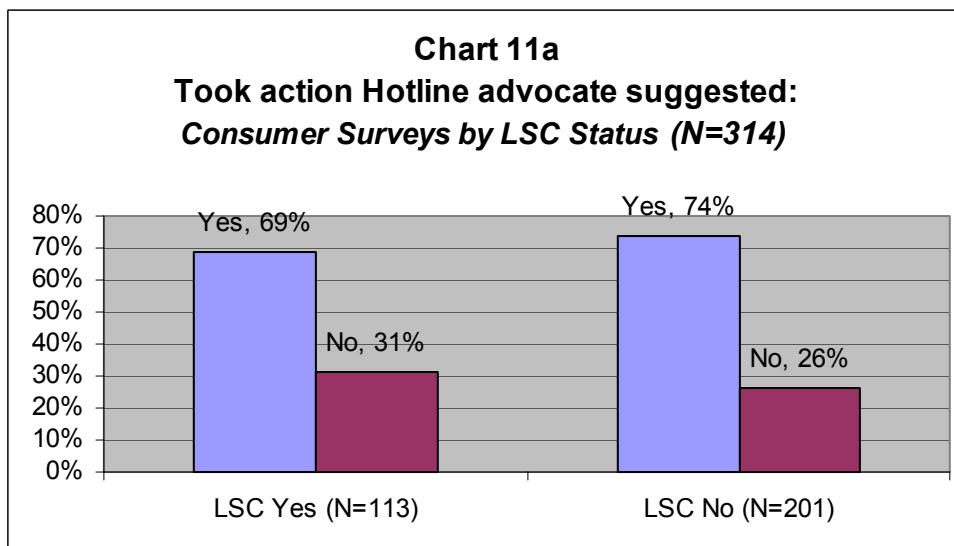


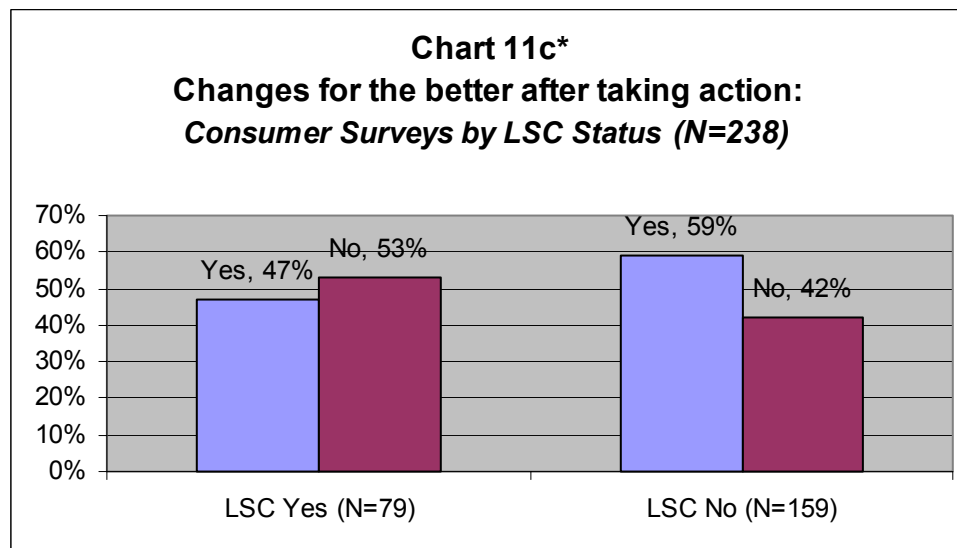
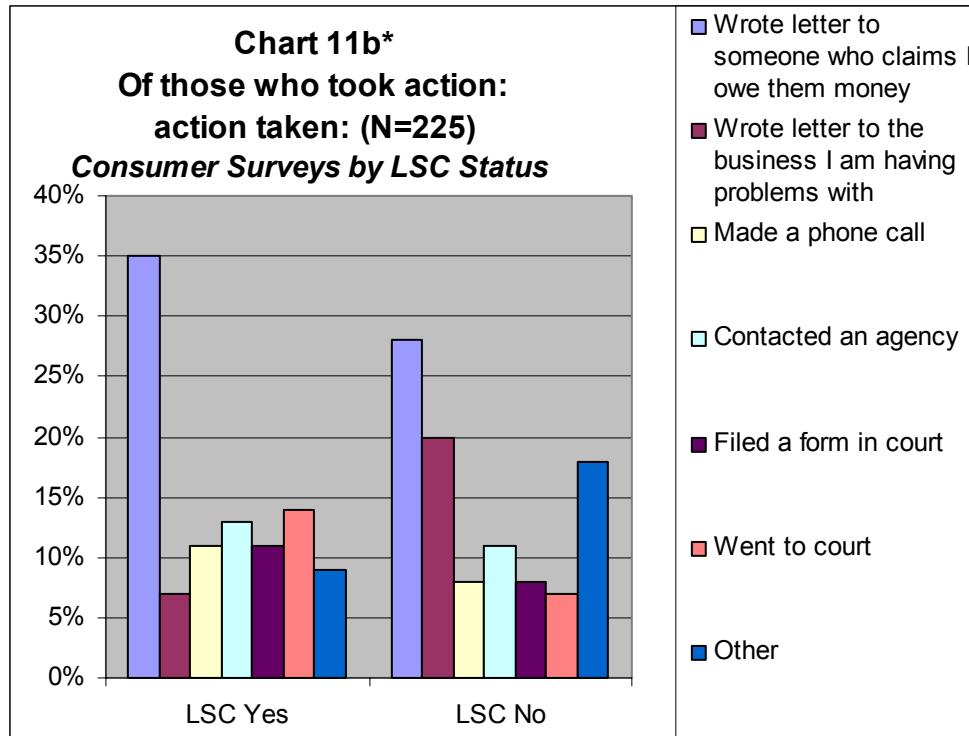


3. Income Findings

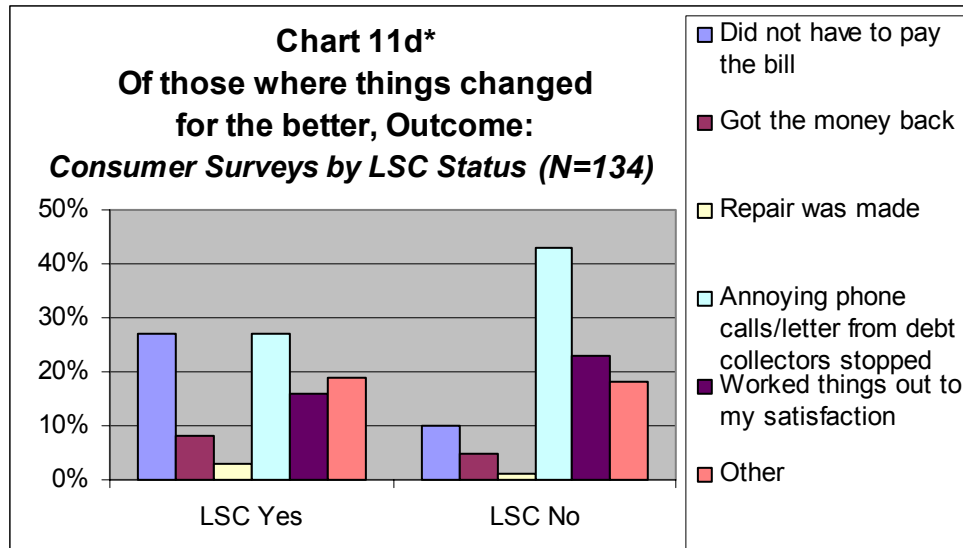
Action Taken and Results Achieved

Charts 11a-11f report responses on action taken and results achieved from Hotline callers based on their LSC income eligibility status. LSC eligibility does not significantly affect the caller's propensity to take action. Sixty-nine percent (77) of LSC eligible callers took action vs. 74 percent (148) of non-LSC eligible callers. However, of those that did take action, the higher income group was significantly more likely to report a change for the better. Fifty-nine percent (93) of the non-LSC group reported a change for the better vs. 46 percent (37) of the LSC- eligible group. Of those who took action, LSC eligible clients were significantly more likely to report writing a letter to someone who claimed the caller owed them money - 35 percent (25) vs. 28 percent (43). See Charts 11a – 11c.

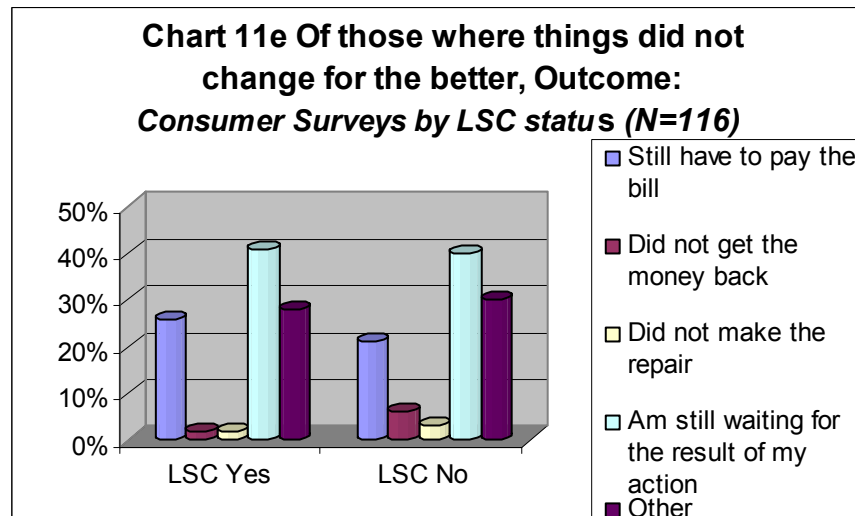




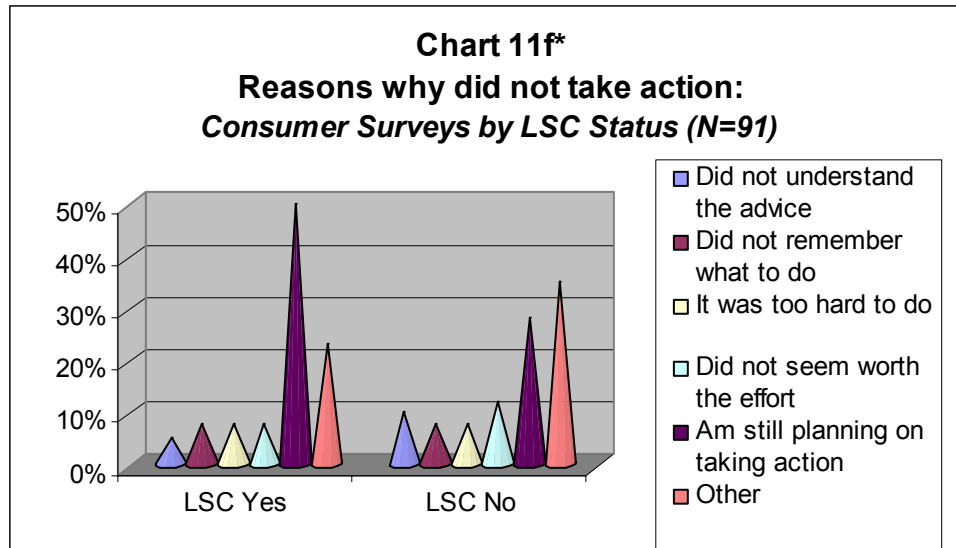
Significant differences in results obtained include: LSC eligible callers are more likely to report not having to pay the bill than non-LSC eligible callers - 27 percent (10) vs. 10 percent (10). The average amount of the bill avoided for LSC eligible clients was \$2,336 and \$1,102 for non-LSC eligible clients. Also a significantly higher number of LSC non-eligible callers reported that annoying phone calls/letters from creditors stopped after taking action: 43 percent (42) vs. 27 percent (10). See Chart 11d.



No significant differences were noted for those clients whose situation did not change for the better. Both the LSC - 41 percent (19) and non-LSC group - 40 percent (28) are still awaiting results of their action at the same rates. Other negative results are also similar. See Chart 11e.

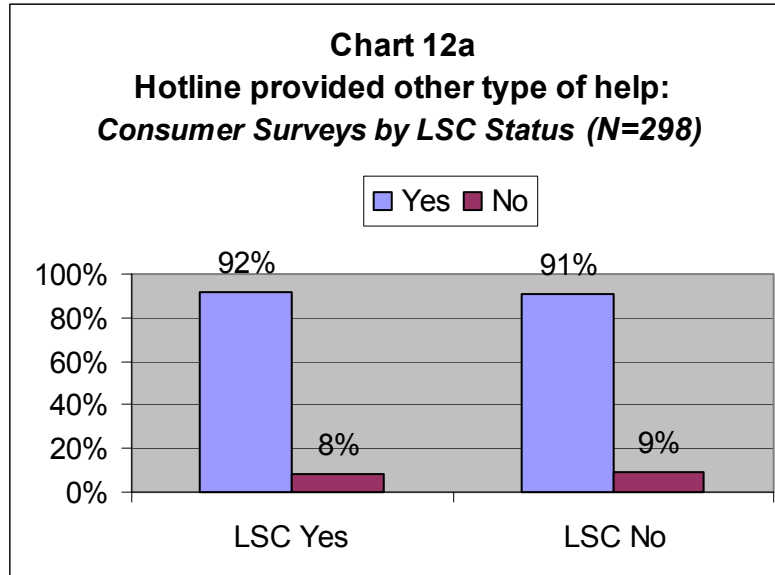


While a similar percentage of LSC – 31 percent (35) and non-LSC eligible callers - 26 percent (52) did not take action, a significantly higher number of LSC eligible callers reported they are still planning on taking action. Fifty percent (20) of non-LSC eligible callers reported that they are still planning on taking action compared with 28 percent (14) of LSC eligible callers. No other differences in reasons for not taking action were noted between the groups. See Chart 11f.

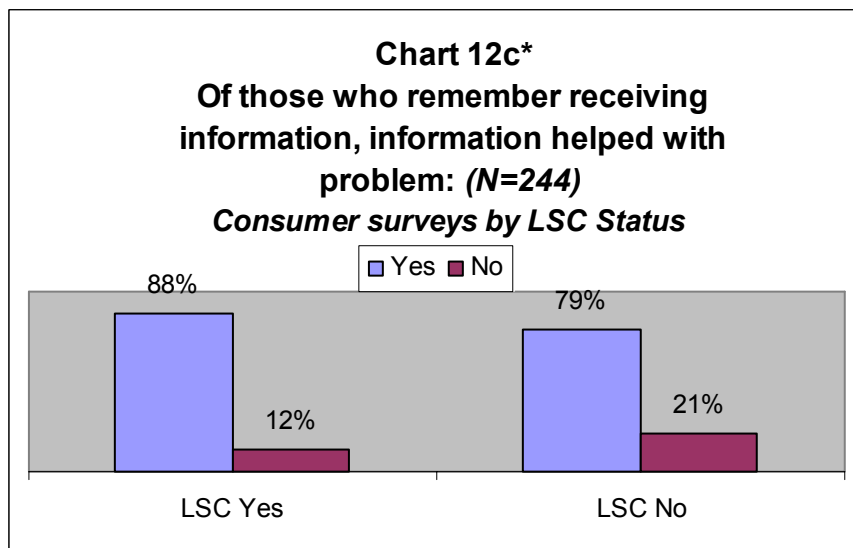
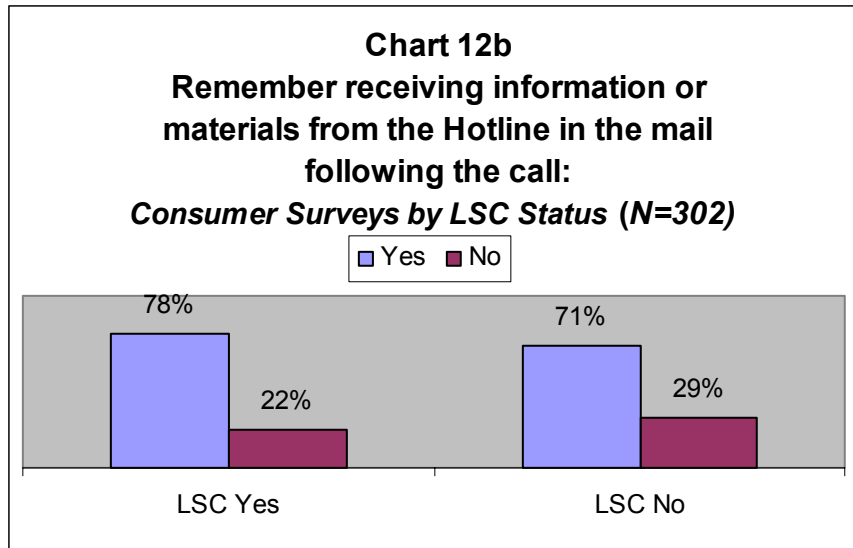


Other Types of Help

Both the LSC - 92 percent (103) and non-LSC - 91 percent (169) groups found that the hotline provided other help at similar rates. No significant differences were noted in the types of help provided, see Chart 12a. Nor were there any differences between the groups for the 25 respondents who found the hotline was not helpful with their problem.



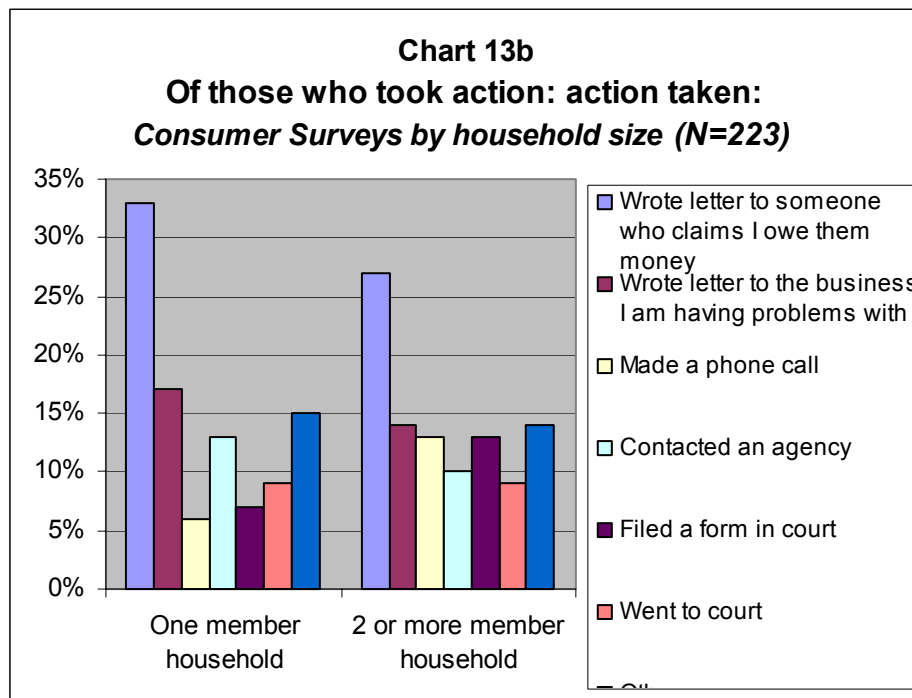
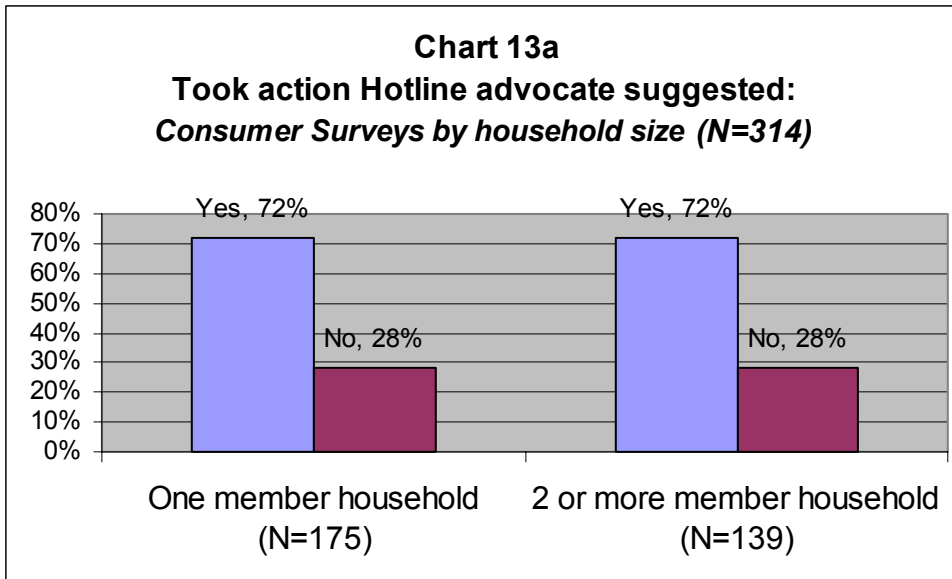
The LSC and non-LSC groups remember receiving mailed materials at similar rates, 78 percent (88) for LSC group and 71 percent (134) for the non-LSC group. However, the LSC eligible group was significantly more likely - 88 percent (79) - to find the information helpful than the non-LSC group - 79 percent (32). See Charts 12b and 12c.



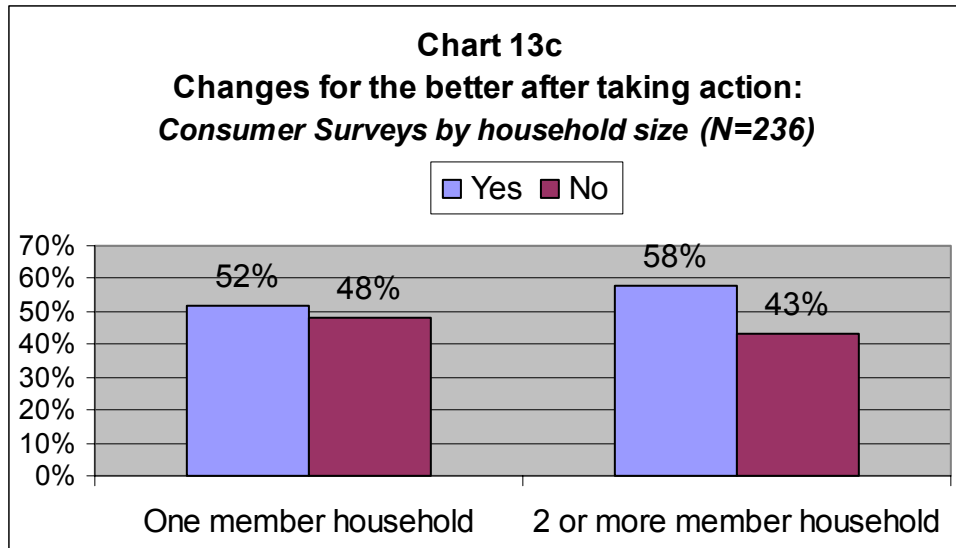
4. Living Alone

Actions Taken and Results Achieved

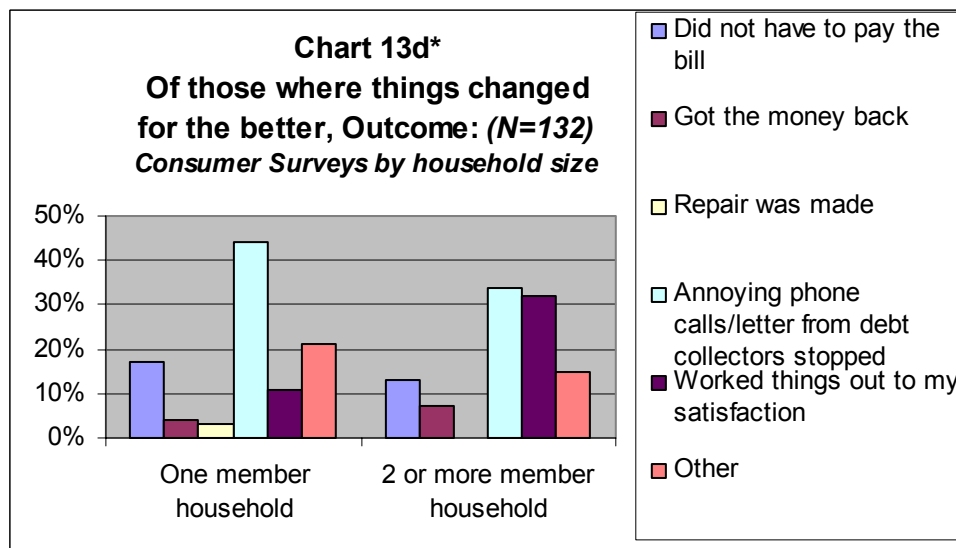
In requesting that data be correlated for people living alone vs. people living with others in a household, the design team sought to discover if living alone created an impediment to following hotline advice or to achieving positive results. In fact, no significant differences were noted in the rate at which these groups took action. Seventy-two percent (124) of the clients living in one member households and 72 percent (99) of clients living in 2 or more member households said they took the action recommended. There were no notable differences in the types of action each of the two groups took. See Charts 13a and 13b.



Furthermore, both groups reported changes for the better at similar rates – 52 percent (68) for people living alone, 58 percent (61) for others. See Chart 13c.

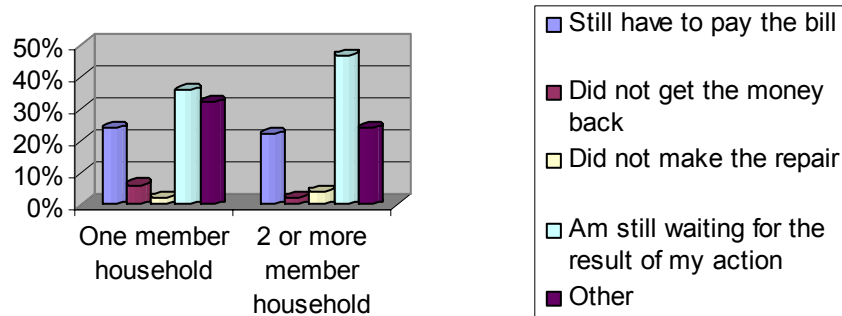


In the group that took action, 17 percent (12) of people living alone did not have to pay the bill in the average amount of \$2,573. Of those living with others, 13 percent (8) did not have to pay the bill in the average amount of \$1,405. Annoying calls/letters from creditors were significantly more likely to cease for one member households - 44 percent (31) vs. multi-member households - 34 percent (21). People in multi-member households were also significantly more likely to report working things satisfactorily - 32 percent (20) than persons living alone - 11 percent (8). See Chart 13d.



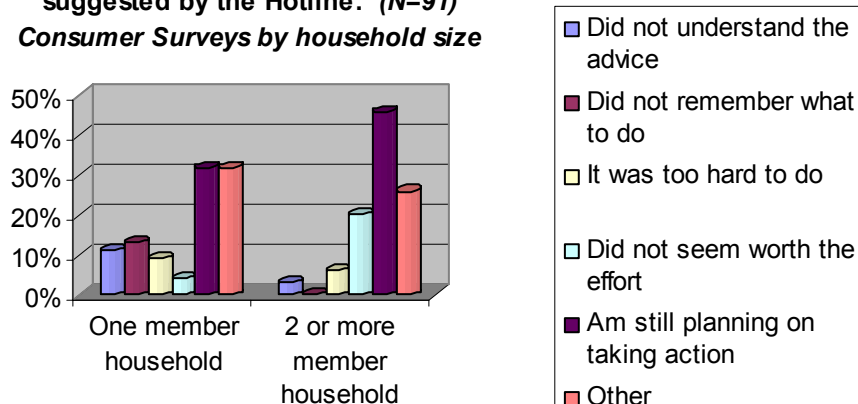
Of those where things did not change for the better, those in multi-member households were slightly more likely - 47 percent (23), still to be waiting for the results of the action than people living alone - 36 percent (24), although this difference is not statistically significant. Rates for other negative outcomes were extremely similar for both groups. See Chart 13e.

Chart 13e
Of those where things did not change
for the better, Outcome: (N=115)
Consumer Surveys by household size



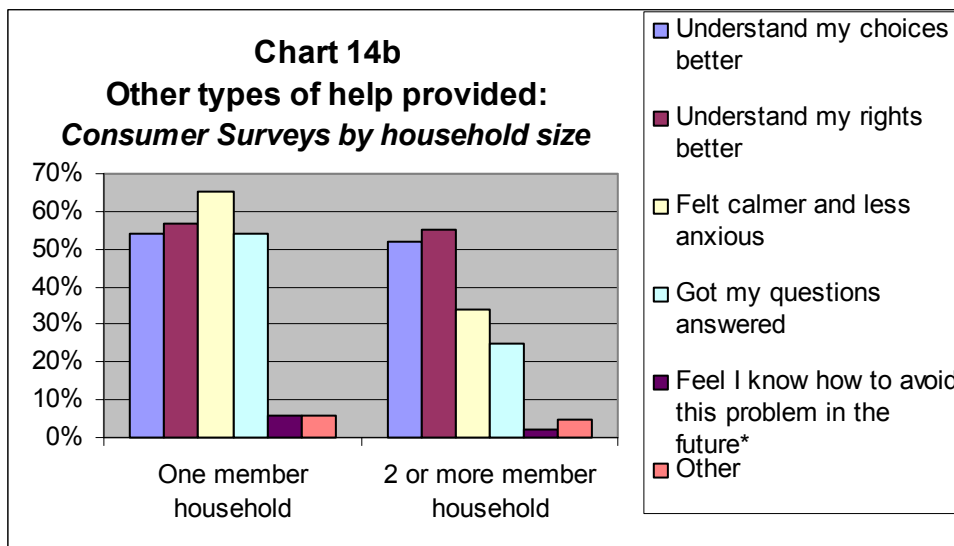
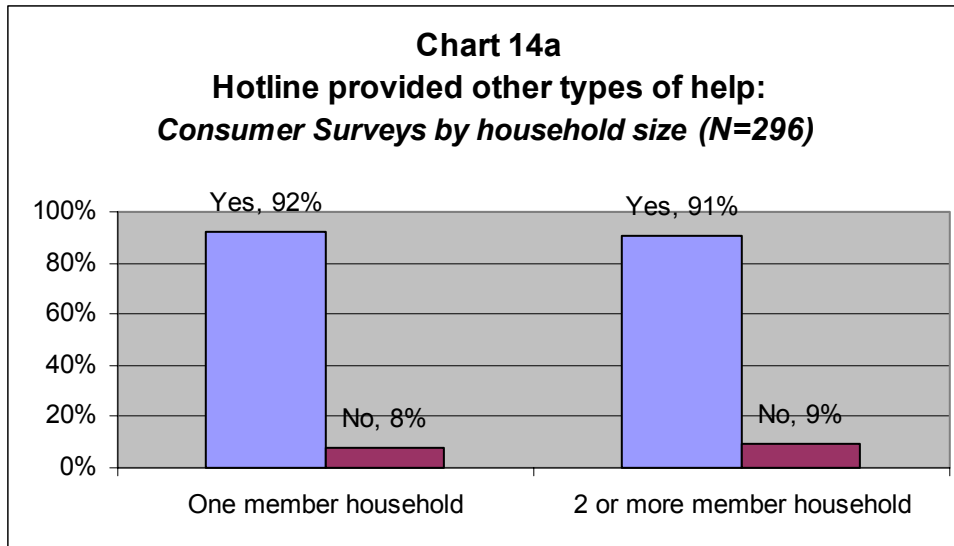
Callers living alone were statistically more likely to say they did not take the recommended action because it was too hard - 11 percent (6) vs. 3 percent (1) or because they could not remember what to do - 13 percent (7) vs. 0), but the numbers are too small to draw this as a conclusion. People in multi-member households were also significantly more likely to report that they were still planning to take the action - 46 percent (16) than people living alone - 32 percent (18). See Chart 13f.

Chart 13f*
Reasons why did not take action
suggested by the Hotline: (N=91)
Consumer Surveys by household size



Other Types of Help from the Hotline

The results for other types of help provided were virtually identical for the living alone - 92 percent (153) and the multi-member household group - 91 percent (117). The reasons that clients reported that the hotline was helpful were also virtually identical for the groups. See Charts 14a and 14b.



Both groups remember receiving written information at the same rates, 74 percent (124) for persons living alone and 73 percent (96) for people living with others. They found the materials helpful at similar rates also - 80 percent (112) for the clients living alone and 85 percent (87) for the clients living with others.

Chart 14c
Remember receiving information or materials
from the Hotline in the mail following the call:
Consumer Surveys by household size (N=300)

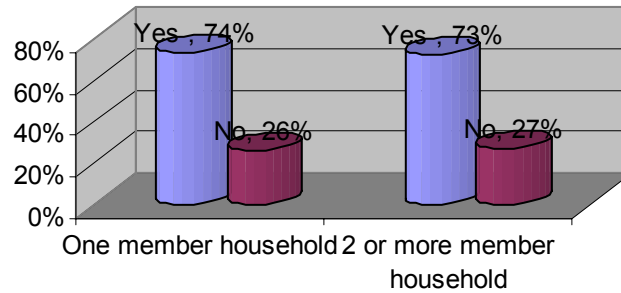
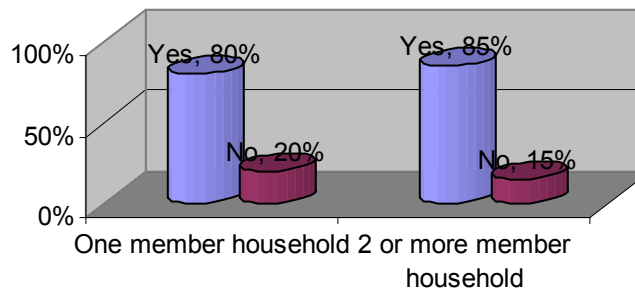


Chart 14d
Of those who remember receiving information,
information helped with problem:
Consumer Surveys by household size (N=242)



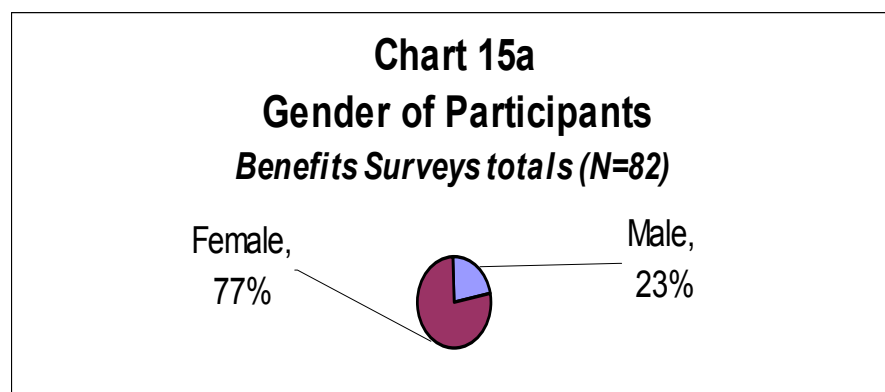
C. Public Benefits Case Findings

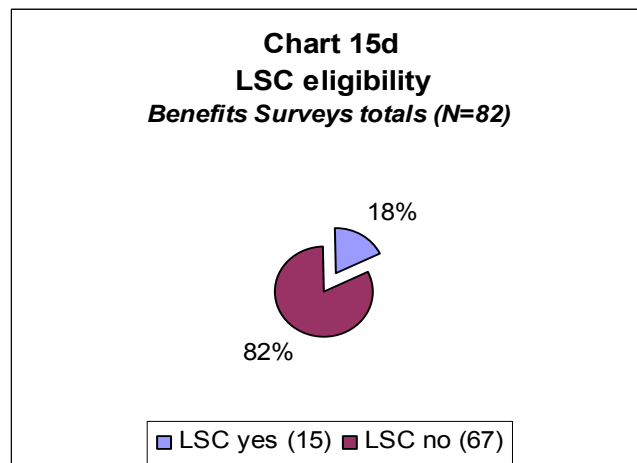
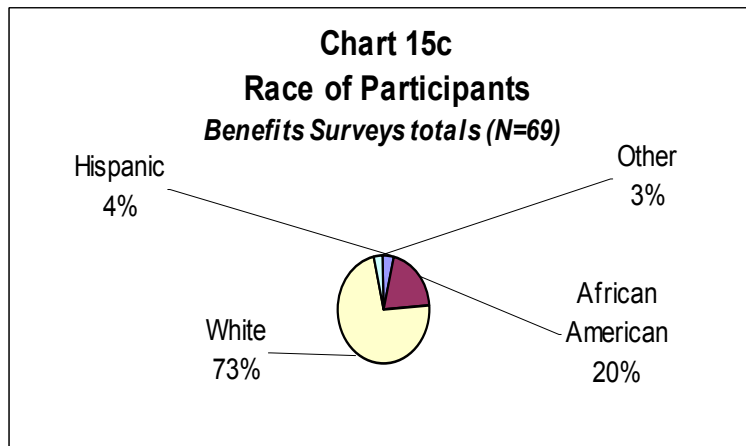
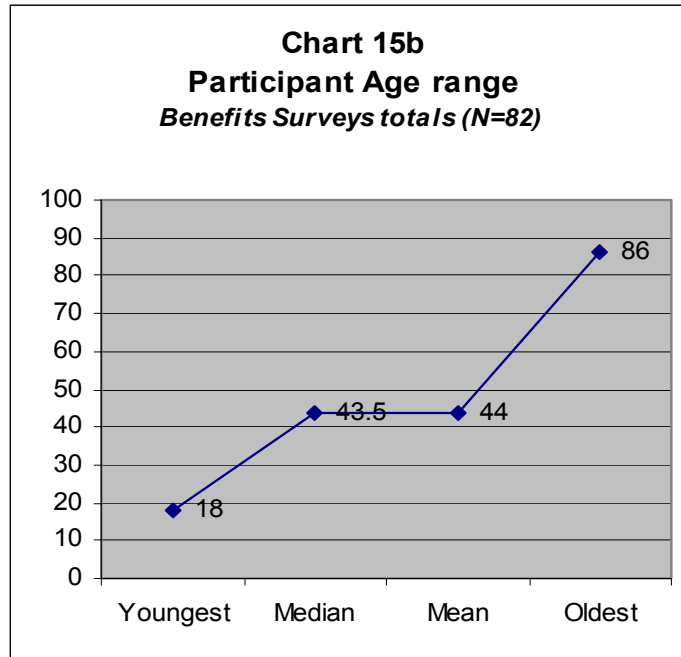
1. Public Benefits Demographics

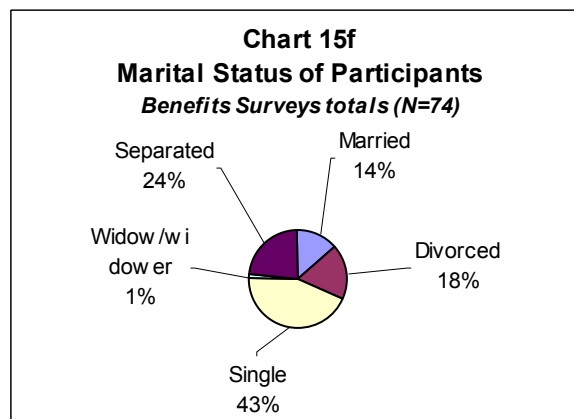
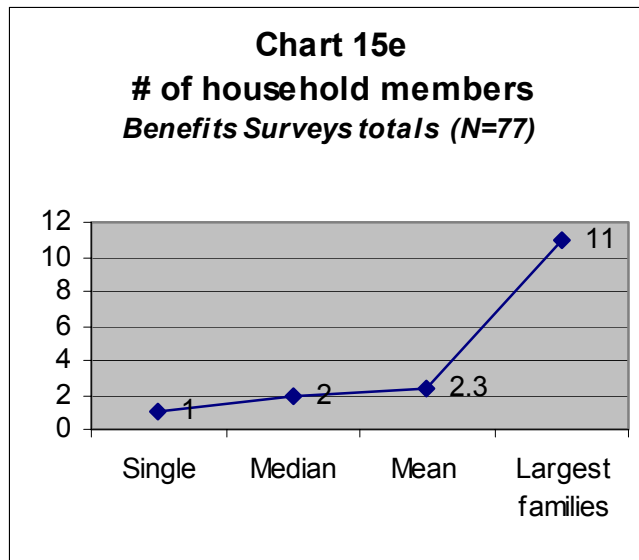
Legal hotlines are usually able to refer public benefits denials and appeals to an in-house full service unit or to another local program. The public benefits cases flagged for this study, however, were not in a posture where intervention by a lawyer was appropriate. Most of the 86 clients who were reached for the public benefits portion of the survey were told to apply for a particular public benefit, because they appeared to be eligible to the hotline advocate. Only four of the participating hotlines flagged clients who were identified as potentially eligible for a public benefit they were not receiving. However, this effort was extremely successful in both the rate at which the clients acted on the advice (78 percent) and the rate of success (65 percent).

Charts 15a-f describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Seventy-seven percent (63) of the respondents were women and 23 percent (19) were men. The median age was 43.5 years. Forty-seven percent (39) were under 40 years of age; 38 percent (31) were between 41-60 years of age; 7 percent (5) were between the ages of 61-70 and 9 percent (7) were over 71 years of age, including 1 respondent who was over age 80.

Seventy-three percent (50) of respondents described themselves as white, 20 percent (14) as African American and 4 percent (3) as Hispanic. Eighteen percent (15) of respondents were identified as LSC income eligible. While the percentage of LSC eligible respondents in this part of the study may seem low, it is not known whether this relatively low rate is a result of LSC eligible clients most likely already receiving the benefits for which they are eligible or for some other reason. The average number in the household was 2.3 and the median number of people in the household was 2. Only 14 percent of respondents were married. Forty-three percent were single, 42 percent were divorced or separated and 1 percent widowed.

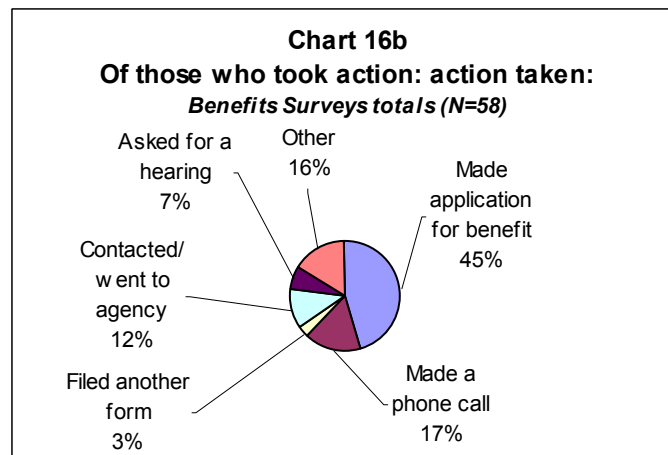
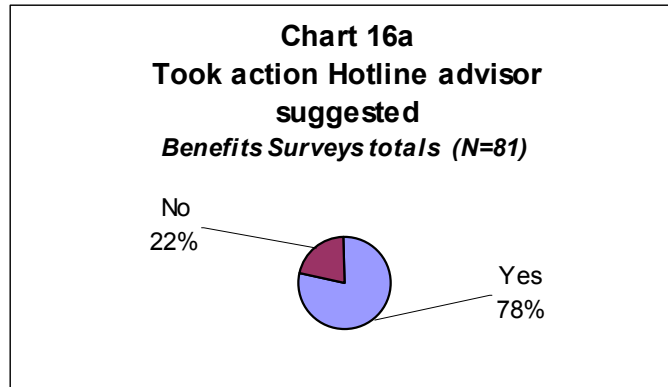






2. Actions Taken By Respondents in Public Benefits Cases

Charts 16a and b report respondents' answers to questions regarding the follow up actions taken in public benefits cases. The vast majority of respondents - 78 percent (63) - took the action the hotline suggested. Of those who took action, almost half - 45 percent (26) applied for a benefit. Seventeen percent (10) made a phone call; 12 percent (7) contacted an agency; and 7 percent (4) asked for a hearing. Sixteen percent (9) reported taking "other" action.



3. Results obtained by Respondents in Public Benefits Cases

Of those who took the recommended action in a public benefits case, 65 percent (40) reported changes for better. A large majority - 60 percent (21) - got the benefit in a monthly average amount of \$1,150 with a range of \$79 - \$3,500. Fourteen percent (5) worked things out to their satisfaction; another 9 percent (3) did not have to pay back money related to a benefit and 17 percent (6) reported a positive change in the “other” category. See Charts 17a and 17b.

Table 17a
Changes for the better after taking
action
Benefits Surveys totals (N=62)

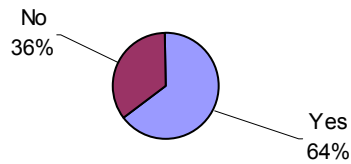
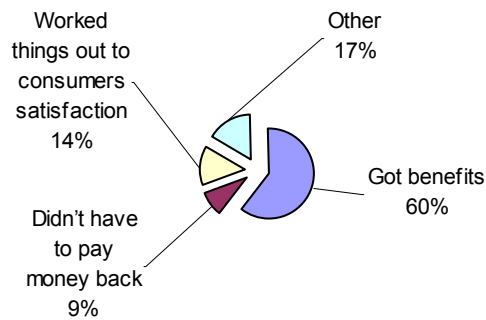
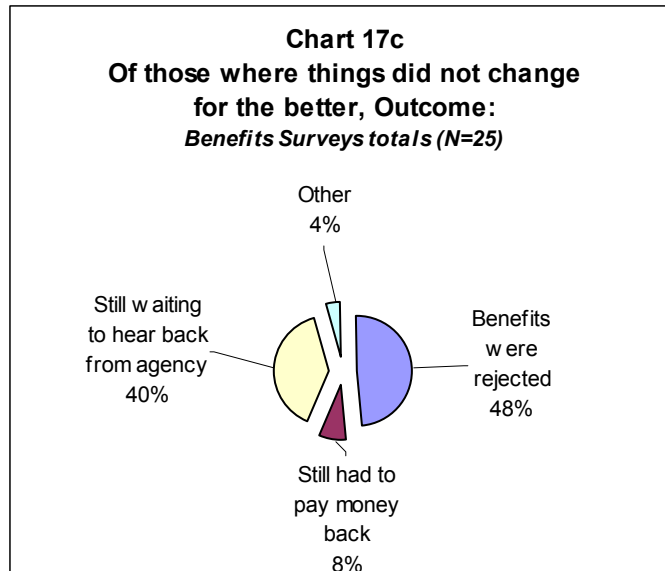


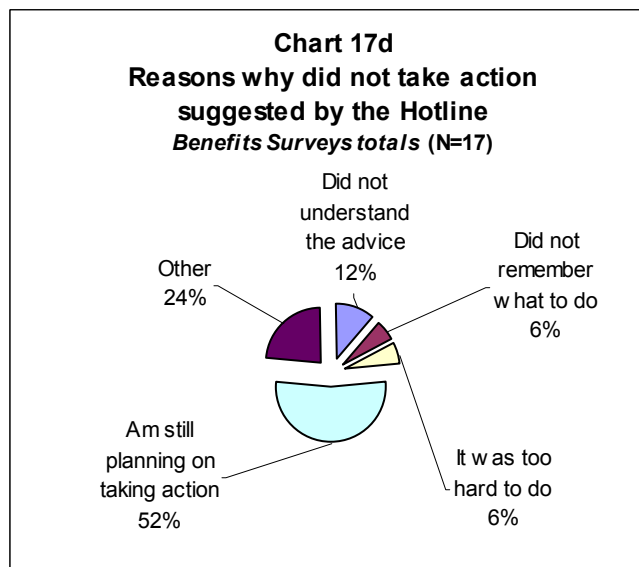
Chart 17b
Of those where things changed for the
better, Outcome:
Benefits Surveys totals (N=35)



For the minority of respondents who did not experience a positive change, 48 percent (12) had their application for benefits rejected while 40 percent (10) are still waiting to hear from the agency. Eight percent (2) were told they still have to pay the benefit overpayment back and 4 percent (1) reported a negative outcome in the “other” category. See Charts 17c and d.

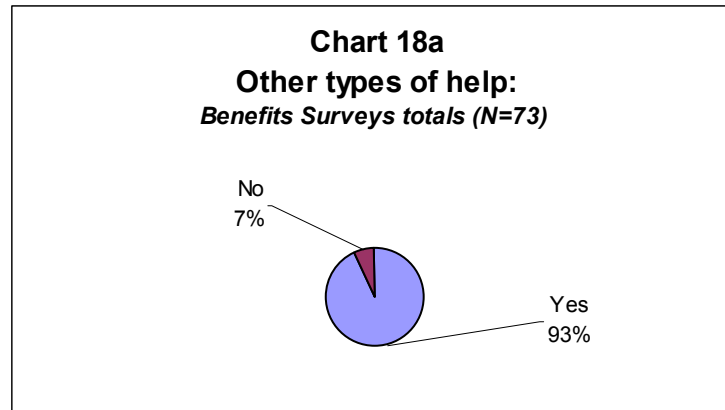


Of the 22 percent (18) who did not take the recommended action, 53 percent (9) still plan on doing so; 12 percent (2) said they did not understand the advice, 6 percent (1) did not remember what to do, 6 percent (1) thought it was too difficult, and 24 percent (4) had some “other” reason for not taking the recommended action. See Chart 17d.



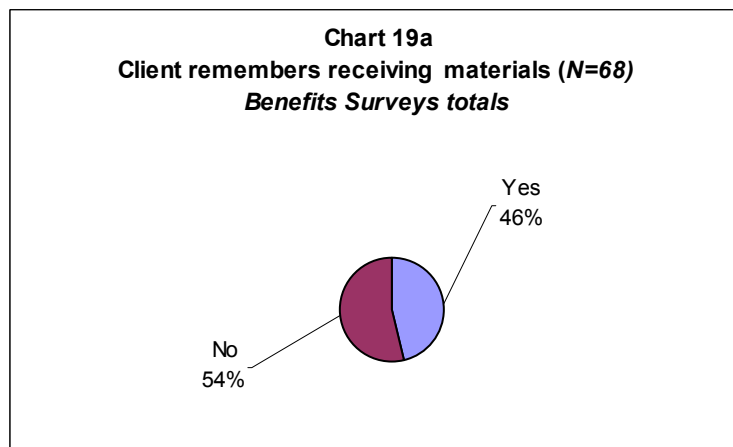
4. Other Help Provided by the Hotline in Public Benefits Cases

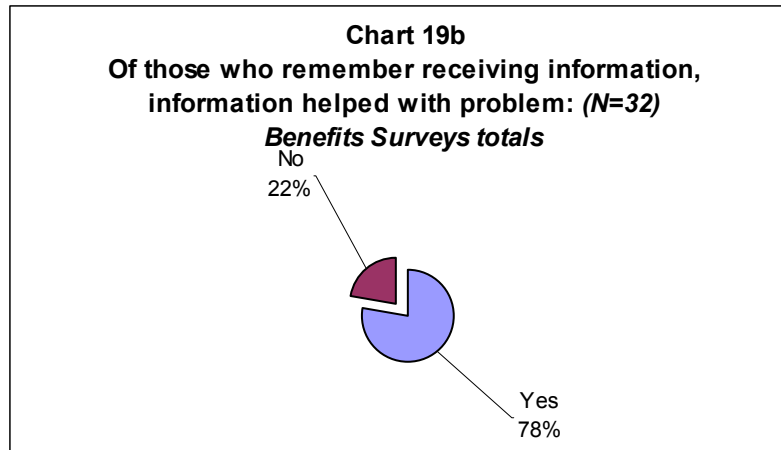
As with the consumer clients, almost all the public benefits clients - 93 percent (68) - said the hotline provided other types of help. Sixty-eight percent (47) understood their choices better; 65 percent (45) understood their rights better; 51 percent (35) felt calmer and less anxious and 7 percent (5) felt they would know how to avoid the problem in the future. See Charts 18a and b.



No responses delineating why the hotline was no help were recorded for the five people who said the hotline did not provide other types of help.

The public benefits callers remember receiving mailed material at a much lower rate - 46 percent (31)) than the consumer callers -73 percent (222). However, of those who did remember receiving information on benefits, 78 percent (25) found the information helpful. As with the consumer respondents, it is not known whether the hotline routinely mailed information that the respondent did not recall, or whether there was no supporting benefits information mailed. See Charts 19a and b.





D. Benefits Cases Results by Demographic Characteristics.

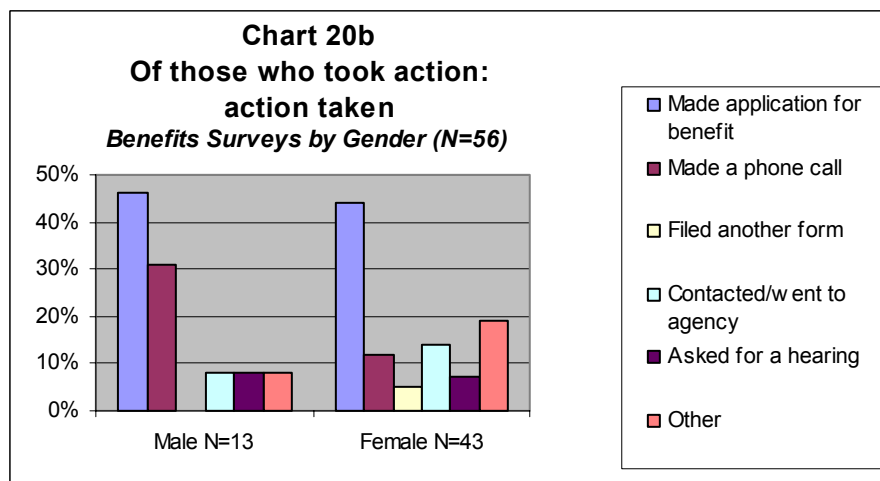
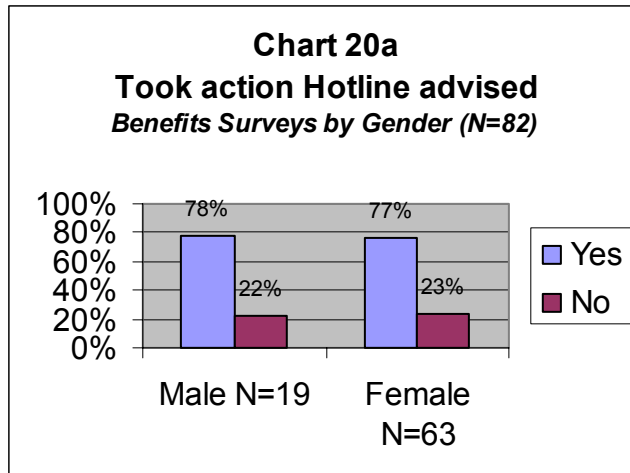
In contrast to the consumer findings, older benefits clients were less likely to follow up than younger groups. While only 43 percent (3) of the over 71 group reporting taking action, 77 percent (29) of those age 40 or younger group took action, 83 percent (24) of the 41- 60 year old group took action, and 100 percent (5) of the 61-70 group took action. There were few other significant differences for benefit case respondents related to demographic characteristics:

- Gender did not affect the rate of follow up or results achieved;
- A significantly higher percentage, 67 percent, of those age 40 and younger selected “Understand my rights better” as a help provided, than those in the oldest group, 14%;
- No significant differences were found between the LSC eligible and non-LSC eligible public benefit case respondents;
- Living alone did not affect whether clients took action or results achieved;
- A significantly larger portion of the respondents living with others, 67 percent, reported that they understand their rights better than the respondents living alone, 40 percent;
- Also significant, 51 percent of those living with others reported they felt calmer and less anxious after the hotline advice than those living alone, 25 percent.

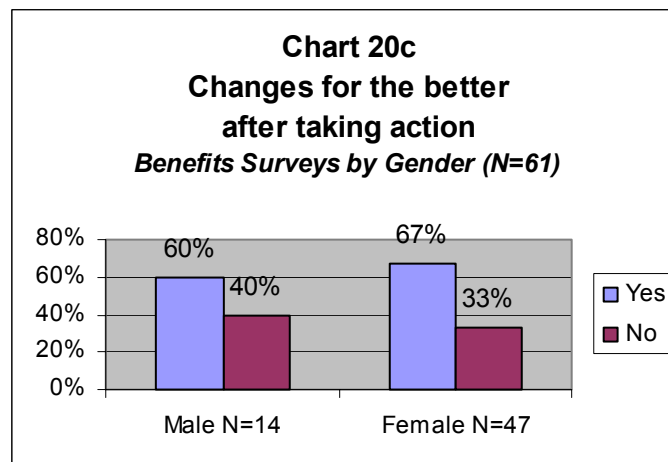
1. Gender Findings

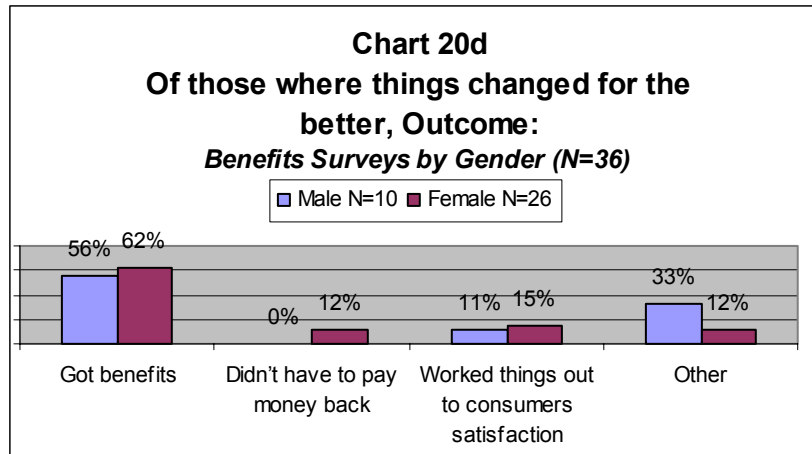
Action Taken and Results Achieved

The benefits cases show no statistical differences between genders in the rate at which men - 78 percent (14) and women - 77 percent (47) took action or in the types of action taken. Almost half of each group, 46 percent of men (5) and 44 percent of women (19) made an application for a benefit. A greater percentage of men - 31 percent (4) than women - 12 percent (5) made a phone call, but the number of responses for each of these choices was so small that no statistically significant inference could be made. Please see Charts 20a and b.

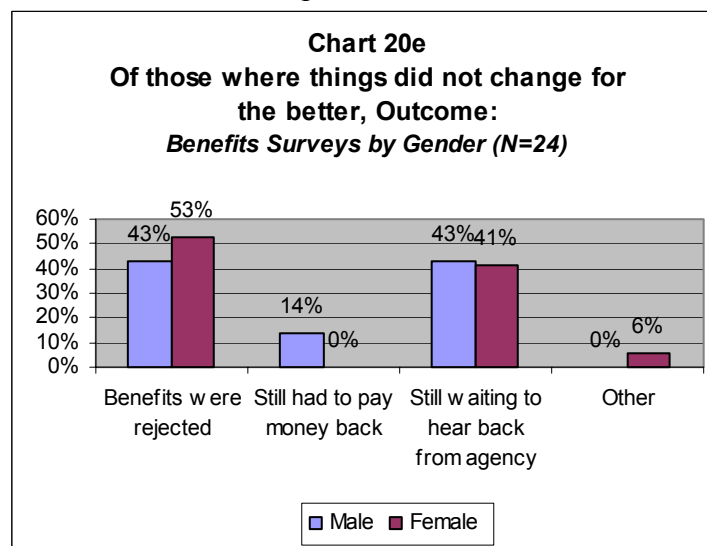


For those who took action, there were no significant differences between men and women in whether a change for the better was achieved. Sixty-seven percent (30) of women reported a change for the better as did 60 percent (9) of the men. Likewise, no significant differences were noted in the type of positive outcome obtained. More than half of both men - 56 percent (5) and women - 62 percent (16) reported that they received the benefits in question. See Charts 20c and 20d.

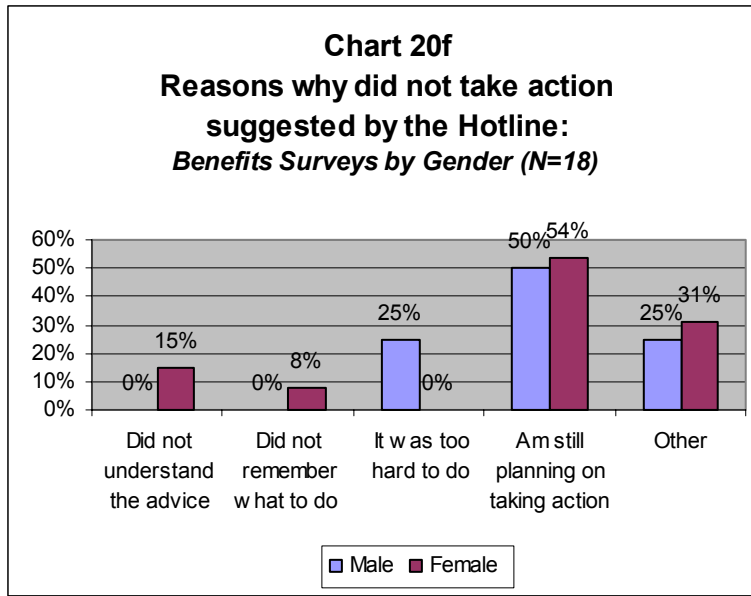




Twenty-four benefits respondents reported things did not change for the better after taking action and no significant differences between the genders were noted. As with the responses from the total benefits group, the vast majority reported that either their application was rejected - men 43 percent (3), women 53 percent (9) or they were still waiting to hear back from the agency - men 43 percent (3), women 41 percent (7). No other choice received more than one response. Please see Chart 7e.

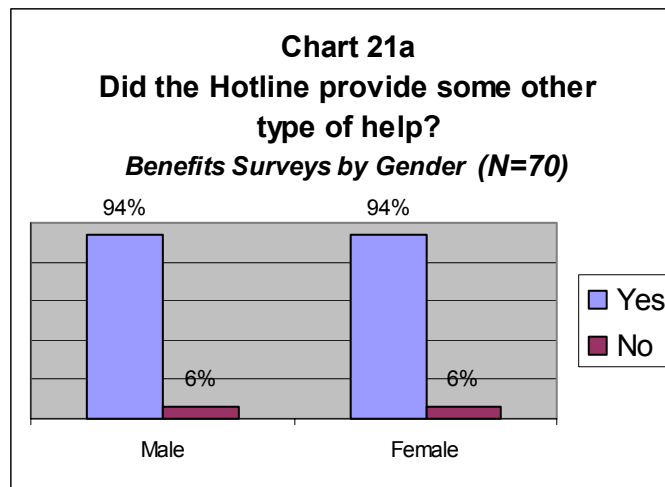


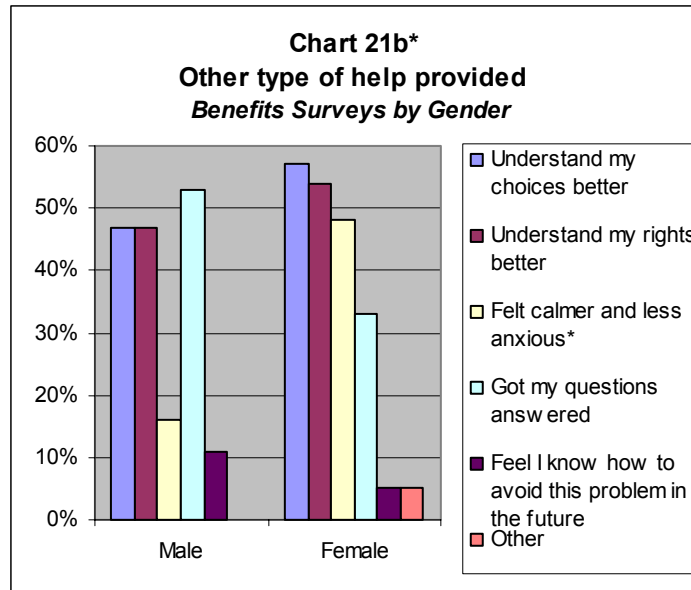
Of the 18 people who did not take action, more than half of both male and female respondents reported that they were still planning on taking action - men 50 percent (2); women 54 percent (7). See table 20f.



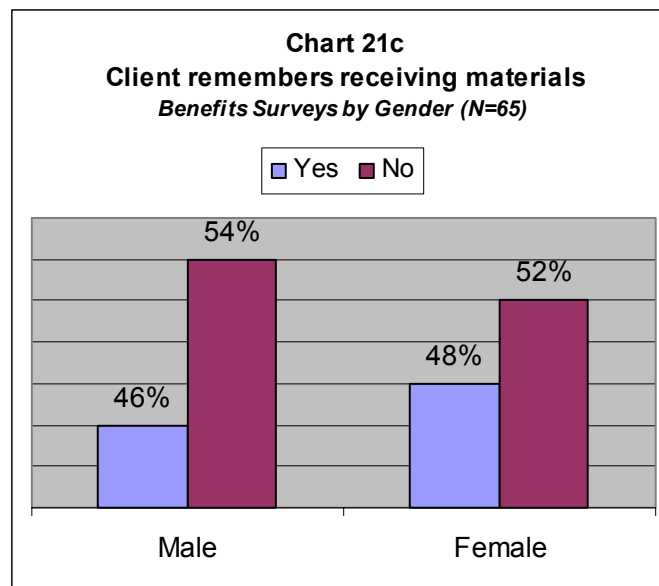
Other Types of Help Provided by the Hotline

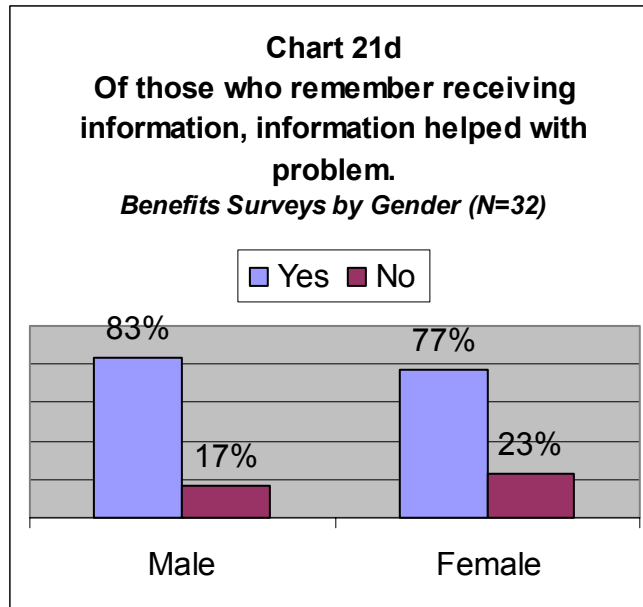
There were no gender differences between male and female respondents who reported that the hotline provided other types of help: 94 percent (15) of men and 94 percent (51) of women. The only statistically significant gender difference for benefits clients was in the type of help provided. A significantly higher proportion of women, 48 percent (30), reported feeling calmer and less anxious after talking with the hotline advocate than did male public benefits clients, 16 percent (3). Only six clients listed reasons why the hotline was no help with most options provided in the survey receiving 0 responses, hence no Chart was created for that tally. See Charts 21a and b.





Men and women remember receiving mailed materials at similar rates to each other and to the total public benefits group. Forty-six percent (6) of men and 48 percent (25) of women remember getting materials after the hotline call. Eighty three percent of men (5) and 77 percent (20) of women found the materials helpful. See Charts 21c and d.

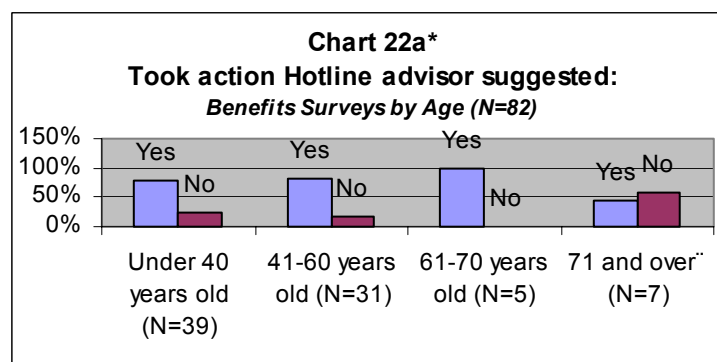


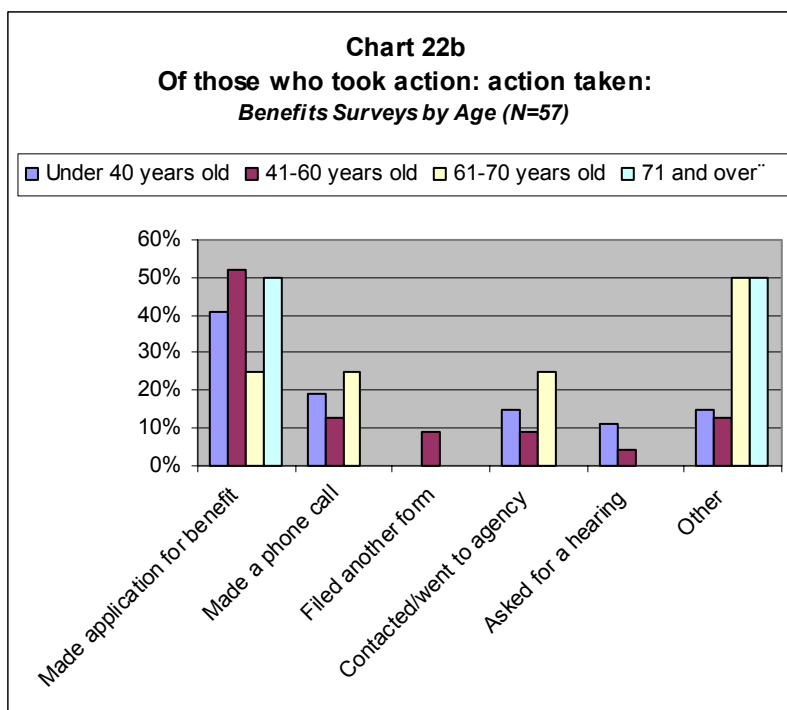


2. Benefits Findings by Age

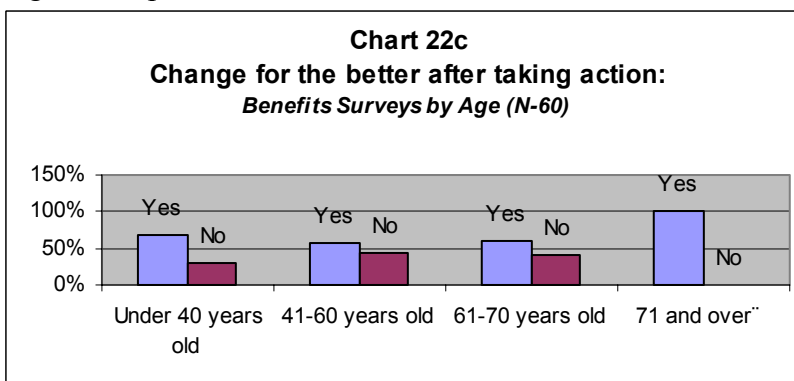
Actions Taken and Results Achieved

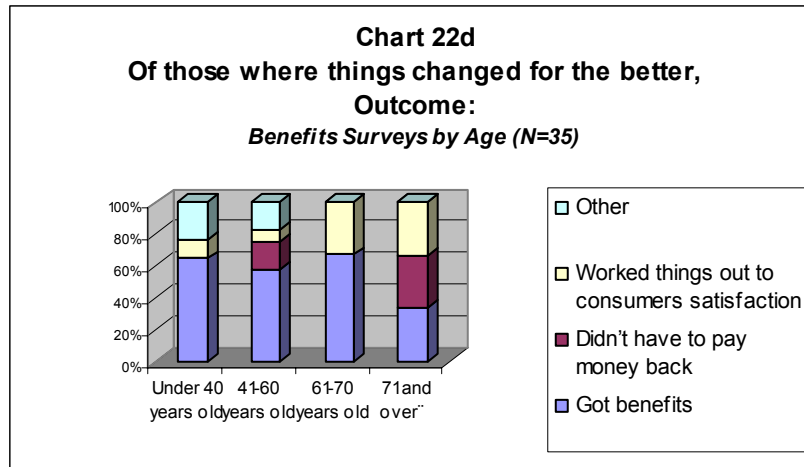
For benefits case respondents, age correlated to a couple of significant differences. The oldest age group (71 and over) was significantly less likely to take the recommended public benefits action than the younger age groups. While only 43 percent (3) of the over 71 group reporting taking action, 77 percent (29) of those age 40 or younger took action; 83 percent (24) of the 41-60 year old group took action; and 100 percent (5) of the 61-70 year old took action. This result indicates that older callers who are advised to take action might benefit from additional assistance or support from hotline staff or volunteers. No significant differences were noted in the types of action taken. Making an application for a benefit was the most common action taken by all the age groups: 41 percent (11) of those age 40 years old or younger reported making an application, as did 57 percent (13) of the 41-60 year olds, 25 percent (1) of the 61-70 year olds and 33 percent (1) of the 71+ group. Charts 22a and b.



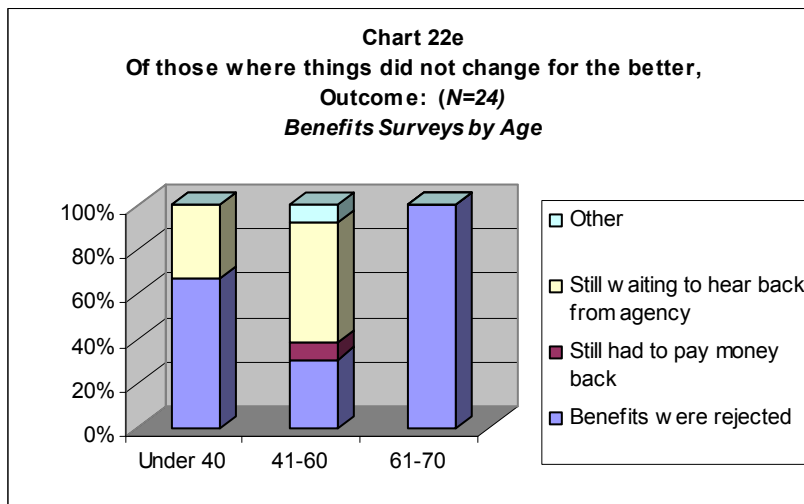


A majority of all age groups reported a change for the better after taking action. Sixty-nine percent (2) of the age 40 and under age group, 57 percent (13) of the 41-60 age group, 60 percent (3) of the 61-70 age group and 100 percent (3) of those age 71 and over reported a change for the better. The most common positive outcome – getting the benefits - was reported by 65 percent (11) of the age 40 and under group, 58 percent (7) of the age 41- 60 group, 67 percent (2) of the age 61-70 group and 33 percent (10) of those 71 years or over. See Charts 22c and d. The monthly amount of the benefit received was reported by 7 people. The average monthly amount was \$797 with one person receiving \$3,500 per month.





Of the 24 respondents who reported a negative benefits outcome, 67 percent (6) of those age 40 and under had their application for benefits rejected and 33 percent (3) of this group were still waiting to hear back from the agency; 31 percent (4) of the 41-60 year old group had their application rejected while 54 percent (7) were still waiting to hear back from the agency. Both of the respondents in this group aged 61-70 had their applications rejected. No responses were received from the over 71 group in this category. See Chart 22e.

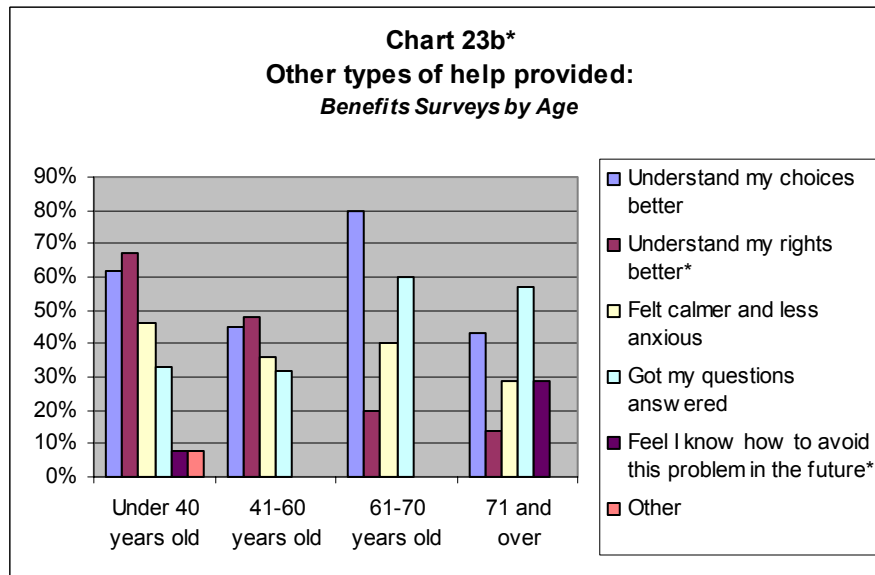
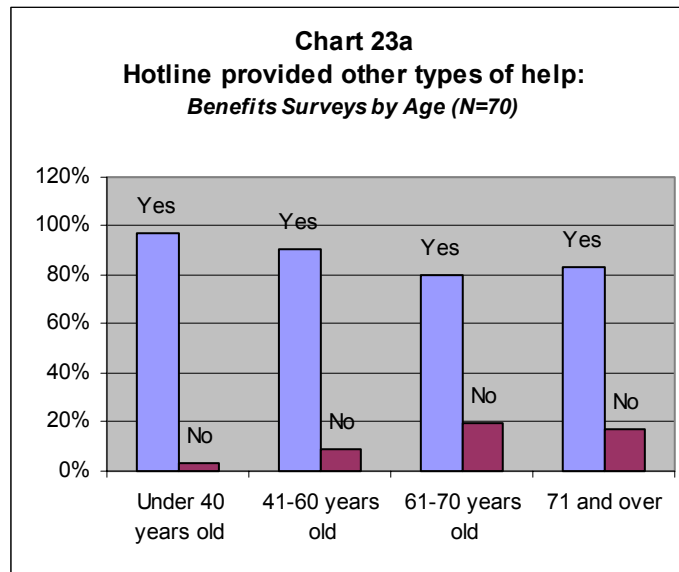


The number of respondents who described the reasons they didn't take action were small: 17. The majority of the 40 and under group, 56 percent (5), and the 41 - 60 year olds, 75 percent (3) were still planning on taking the recommended action. Of the three respondents over age 71, two said they did not understand the advice and one was still planning on taking action.

Other Types of Help Provided

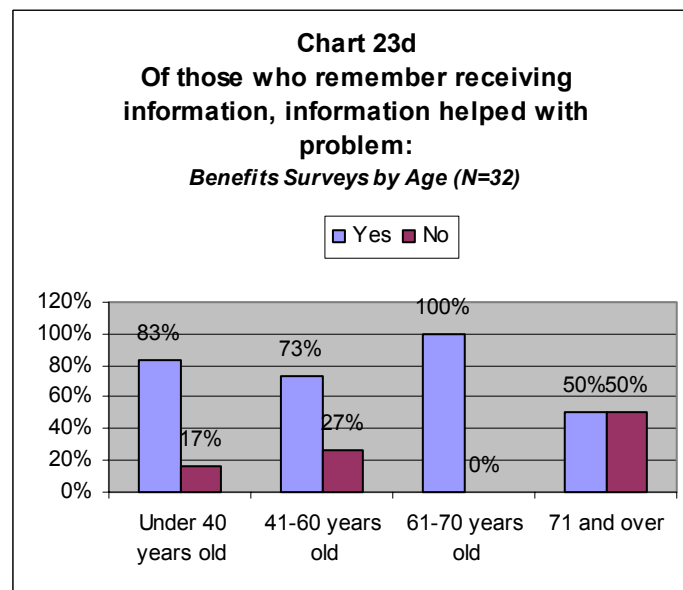
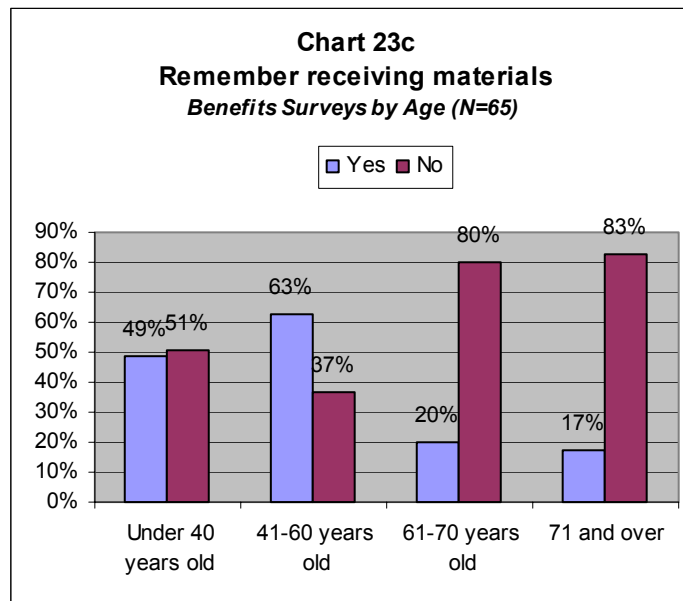
There were no significant differences among age groups responding that the hotline had provided other types of help, 97 percent (36) of the 40 and under group, 96 percent (21) of the 41-60 year olds, 80 percent (4) of the 61-70 year olds and 83 percent (5) of the over 71 group reported that the hotline provided other type of help. One of the few

statistical differences was noted in the type of help provided. A significantly higher percentage - 67 percent (26) of those age 40 and younger selected “Understand my rights better” as a help provided, than those in the oldest groups. Only 20 percent (1) of the 61-70 group and 14 percent (1) of the 71 and over group, selected that response. See Charts 23a and b. Since respondents could choose multiple responses for the question depicted in Chart 23b, percentages exceed 100 percent and no number of responses is given. The number responding that the hotline provided no other help was so small (6) that no Chart was created for that query.



The age group analysis did not result in any significant differences in the number of respondents recalling receiving mailed materials nor in the helpfulness of those materials. Forty-nine percent (17) of the age 40 and under group recalled getting material and 83 percent (15) of those found it helpful; 63 percent (12) of the 41-60 year old recall getting material and 73 percent (8) of them found it helpful. Only one person in the 61-70 age

group and one person in the over age 71 remembered getting mailed information. See Charts 23c and d.

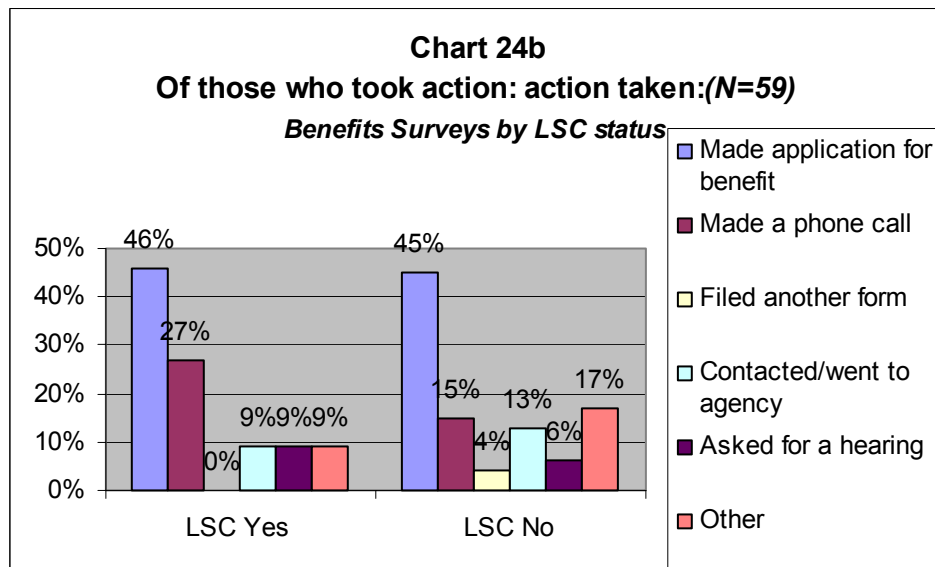
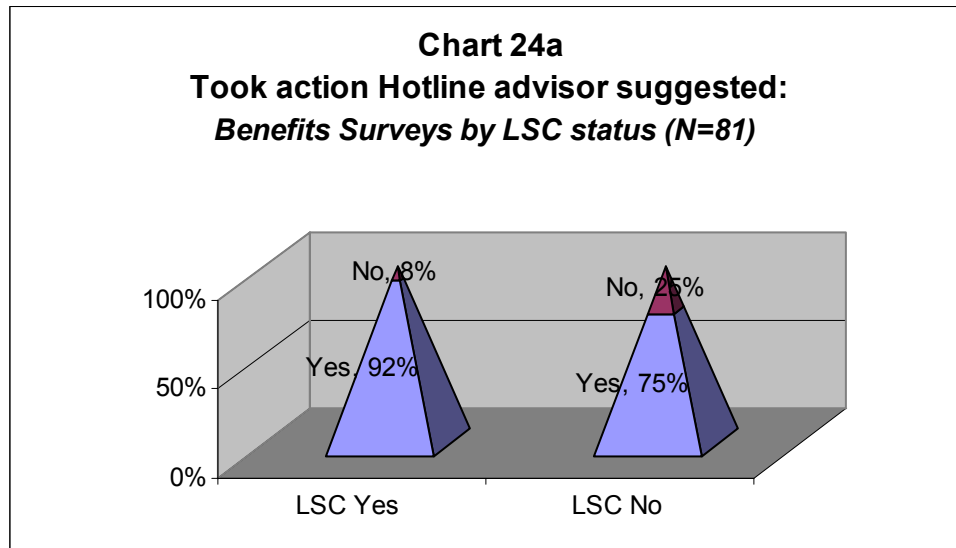


3. LSC Income Eligibility Findings

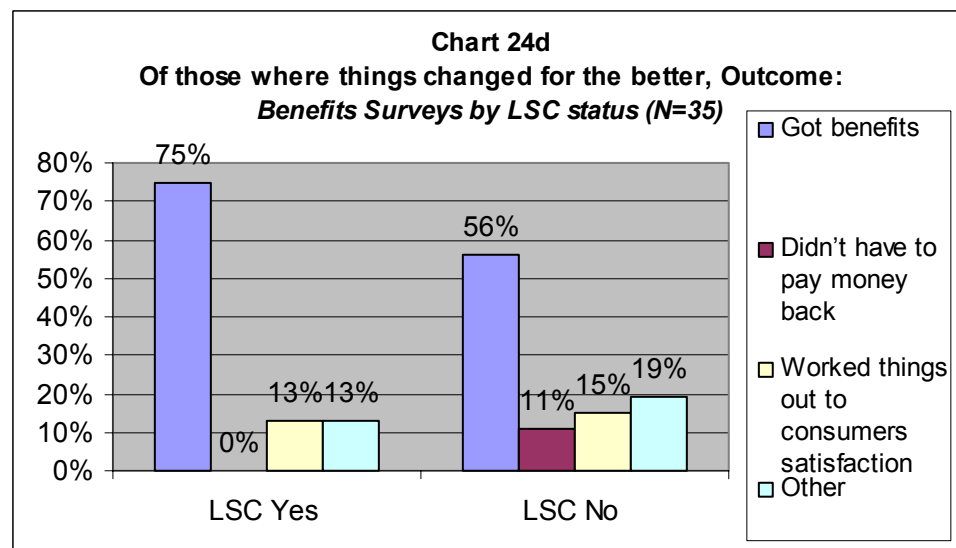
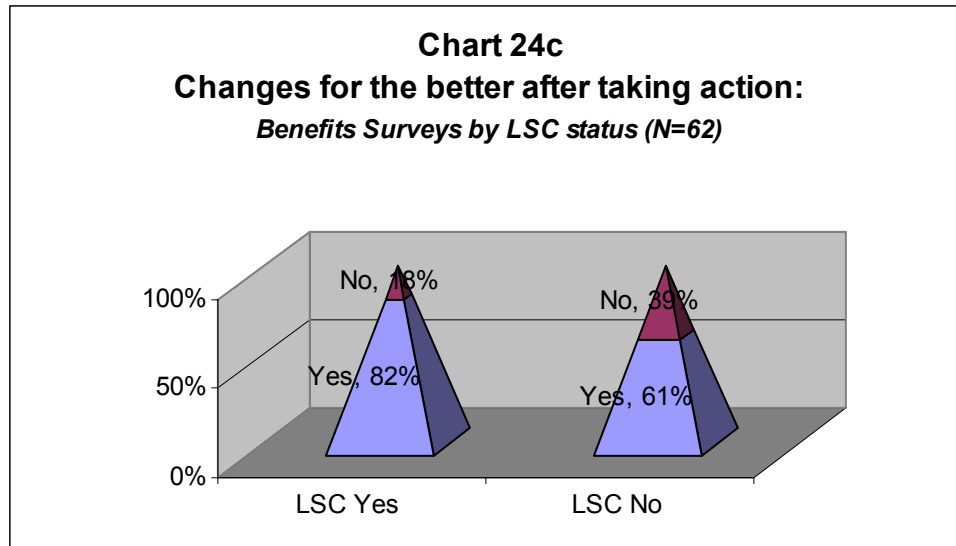
Actions Taken and Results Achieved in Public Benefits Cases

When the hotline experience was analyzed for differences between LSC eligible callers and over-income callers, almost no statistically significant differences were noted for Public Benefits clients, in contrast to Consumer clients. Ninety-two percent (12) of LSC eligible clients reported taking the action suggested vs. 75 percent (51) of the non-eligible clients, although the difference was not statistically meaningful. About half of those in both groups, 46 percent (5) of the LSC group and 47 percent (22) of the non-LSC group, made an application for a benefit. Thirty-three percent (4)

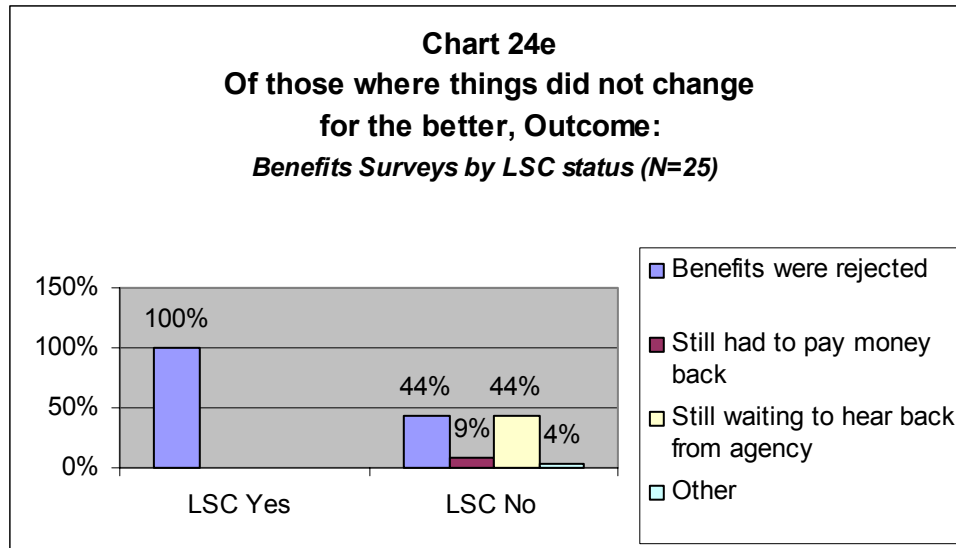
of the LSC eligible group and 15 percent (7) of the higher income group made a phone call. See Charts 24a and b.



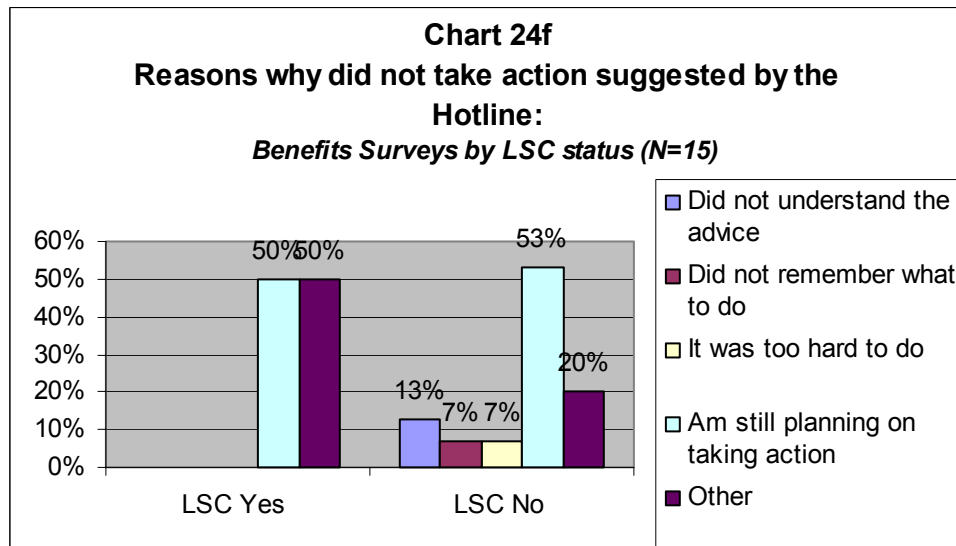
The LSC group was somewhat more successful, achieving a change for the better for 82 percent (9) of respondents compared to 61 percent (31) of non-LSC eligible, but the difference was not statistically significant. Seventy-five percent (6) of the LSC eligible clients were successful in getting benefits. The average monthly benefit received for the three LSC eligible clients reporting this figure was \$931. Fifty-six percent (15) of non-LSC eligible clients got benefits. Of the four reporting, the average monthly benefit was \$1,315. See Charts 24c and d.



Where things did not change for the better, both reporting LSC eligible clients said they did not get their benefits while 44 percent (10) of these higher income clients reported being rejected and another 44 percent (10) were still waiting to hear back from the agency.
 See Chart 24e



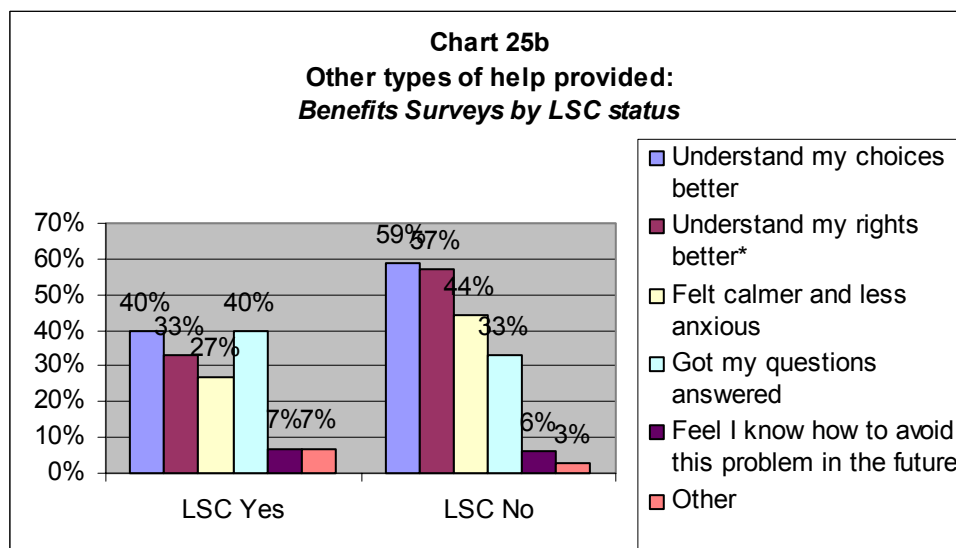
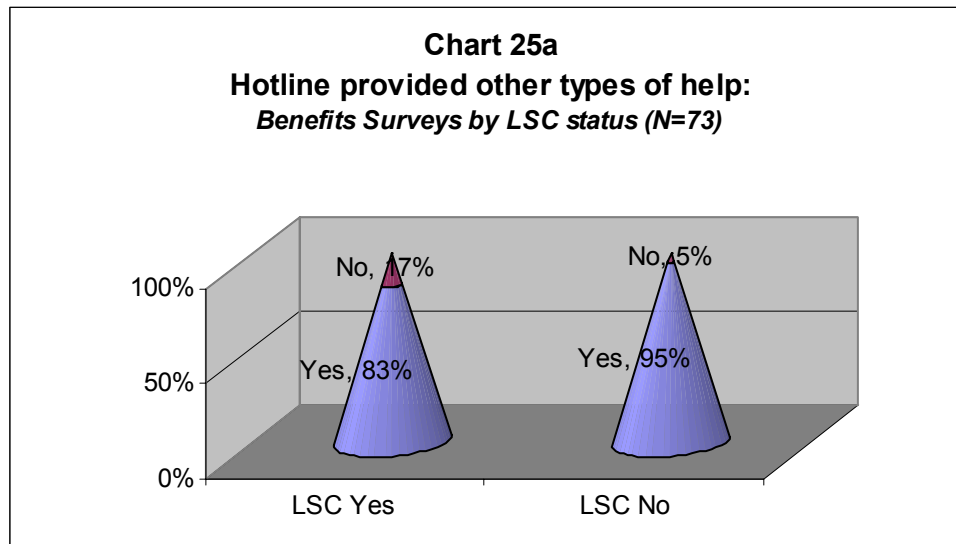
Where clients did not take the recommended action, about half of both the LSC - 50 percent – (1) and non-LSC - 53 percent (8) groups still planned on taking the action. Thirteen percent (2) of the non-LSC group reported not understanding the advice. Again, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. See Chart 24f.



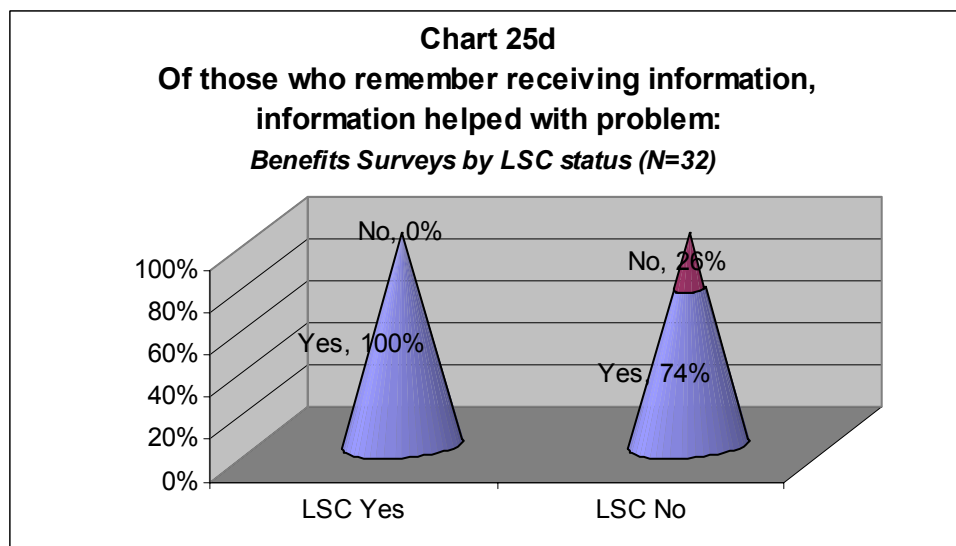
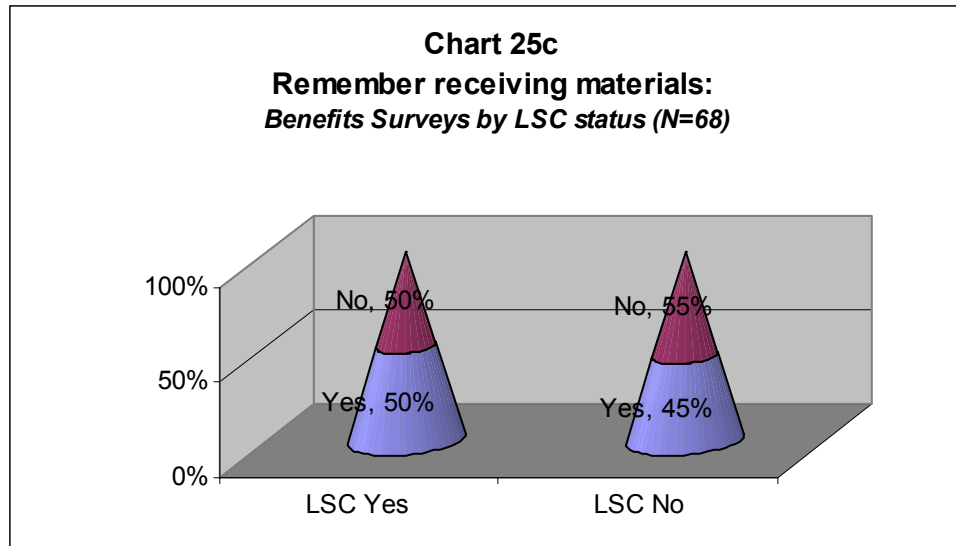
Other Help Provided in Public Benefits Cases

As with the total benefits group, the two income groups agreed overwhelmingly that the hotline provided other types of help, in addition to the advice to take a follow up action. Ninety-two percent (11) of the LSC eligible group and 95 percent (58) of the non-LSC group reported the hotline provided other types of assistance. The only statistically significant difference in the income group analysis is that the non-LSC group reported understanding their rights better at a higher rate - 57 percent (40) than the LSC group - 33 percent (5). The non-LSC group also reported feeling calmer and less anxious after the call than the LSC group, but this difference was not significant:

LSC 44 percent (31) vs. non-LSC 27 percent (4). See Charts 25a and b. Only six people gave a reason as to why the hotline was not helpful, hence no chart was created for that query.



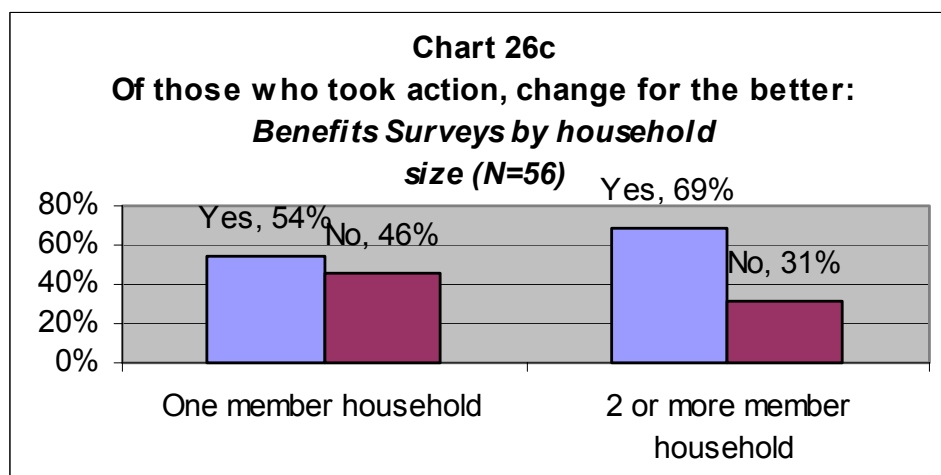
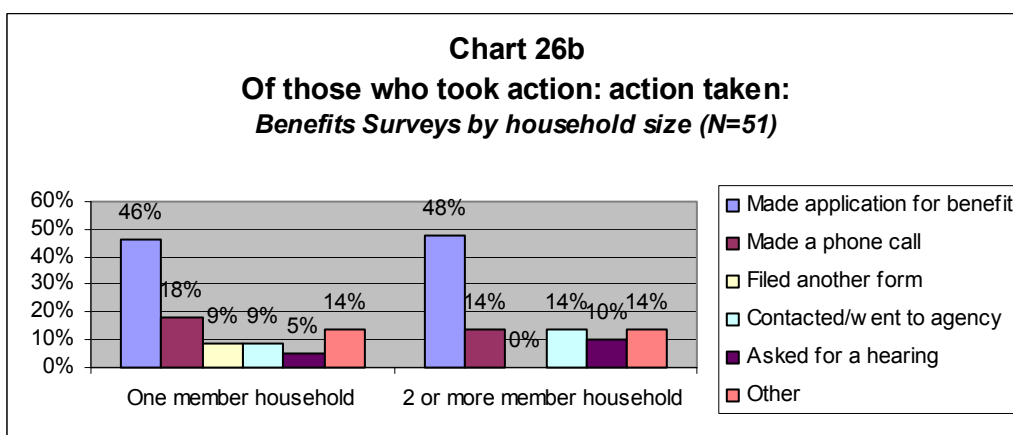
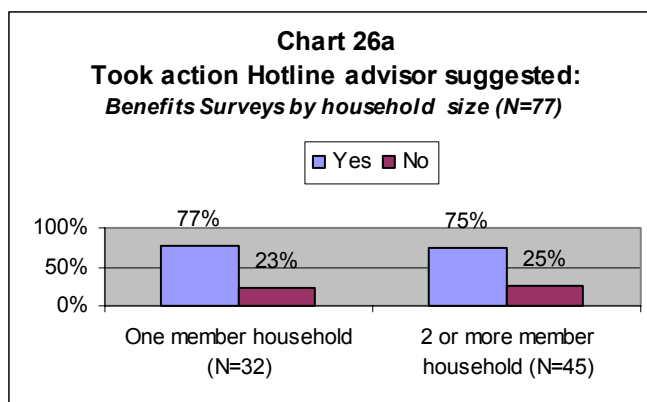
About 50 percent of both the LSC and non-LSC group remember receiving information in the mail. All five LSC eligible respondents found the information useful while 74 percent (20) of the non-LSC group found the information useful. Again, no statistical inferences can be drawn from this difference. See Charts 25c and d.

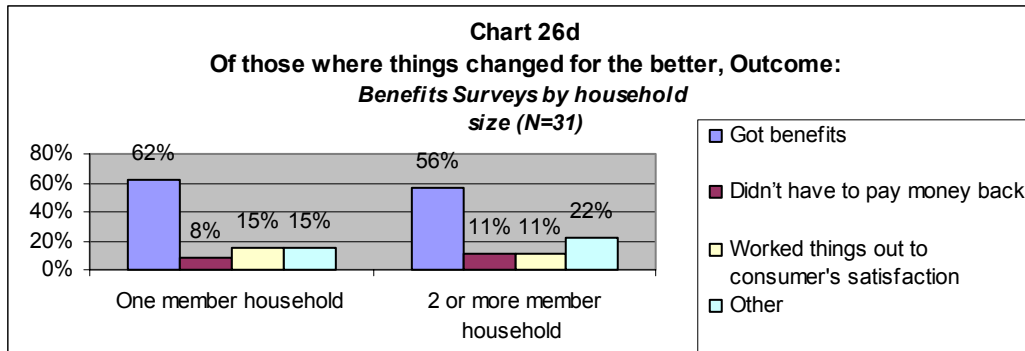


4. Living Alone

Actions Taken and Results Achieved by Public Benefits Clients

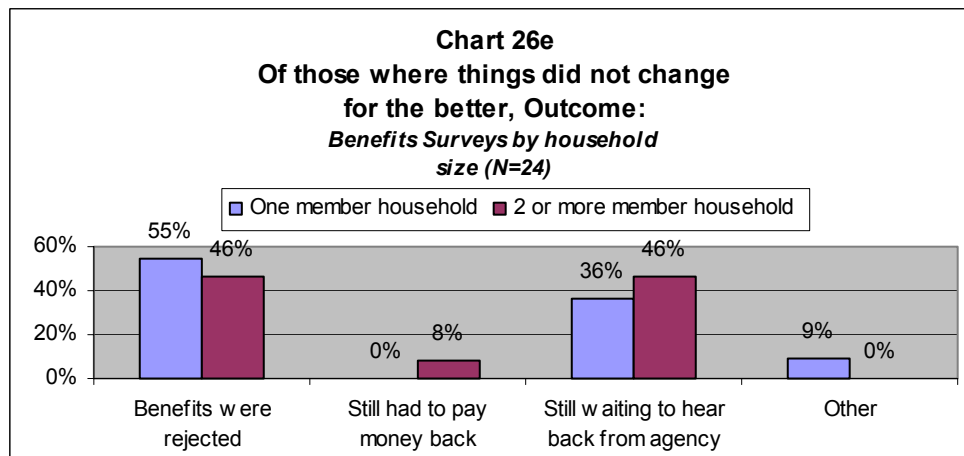
Analysis of the hotline experience with regard to whether the client lived alone or with others indicates that it makes little difference if the caller is living alone or with others. None of the following comparisons reveal statistically significant differences. Callers living alone took action at the same rate as callers living with others - 77 percent (23) vs. 75 percent (33). Callers living alone or with others made application for a benefit at the same rates: 46 percent (10) vs. 48 percent (14). More than half of both groups reported a change for the better after taking the action. Fifty-four percent (13) of the single household group reported a positive outcome while 69 percent (22) of those living with others reported a positive outcome. A majority of both groups got the benefits they applied for: 62 percent (8) of the single member household group and 56 percent (10) of the multiple member household group. The average amount of monthly benefits for the one member household was \$1,592 (3) and was \$797 for those in larger households (2). See Charts 26a-d.

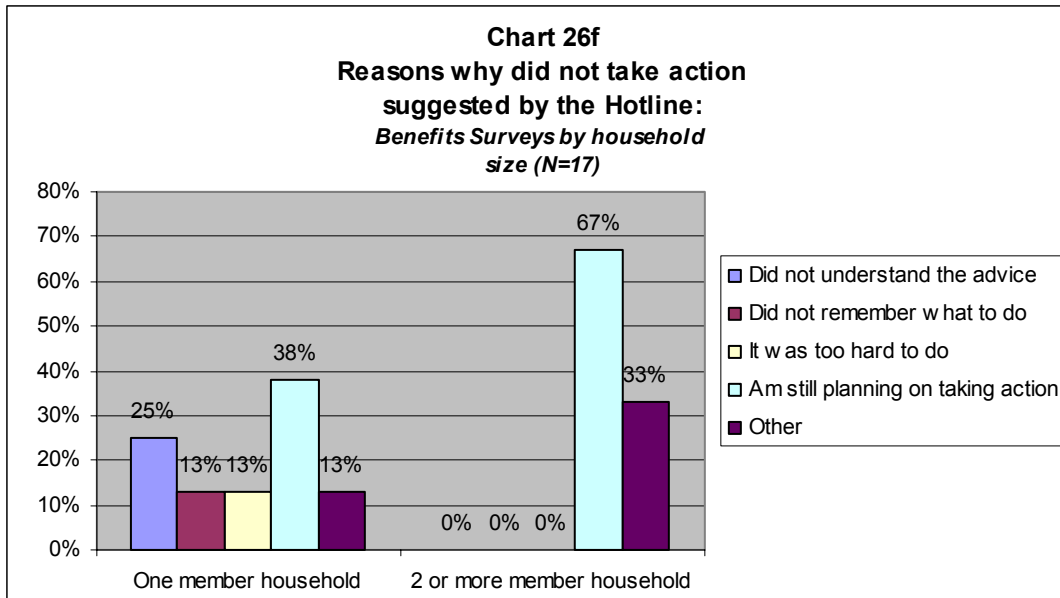




For those who reported that things did not change for the better, 55 percent (6) of respondents living alone had their application for benefits rejected compared to 46 percent (6) of the respondents living with others. Thirty-six percent (4) of those living alone were still waiting to hear from the agency while 46 percent (6) of those living with others were still waiting.

Of those who did not take action, 38 percent (3) of those living alone and 67 percent (6) of those living with others still planned on taking action. None of these differences is significant. See Charts 26e and f.

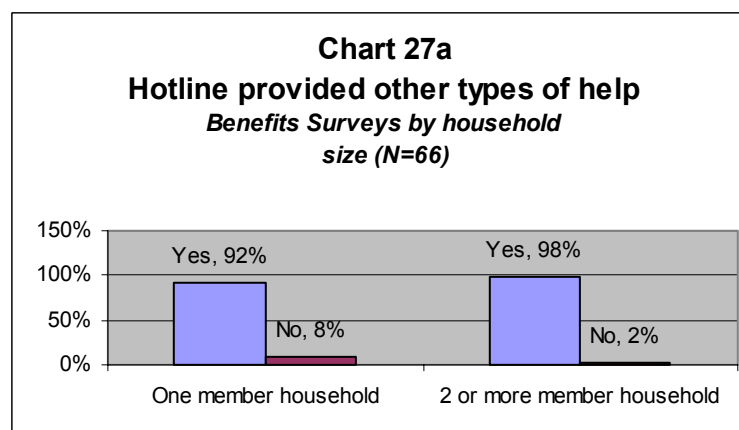


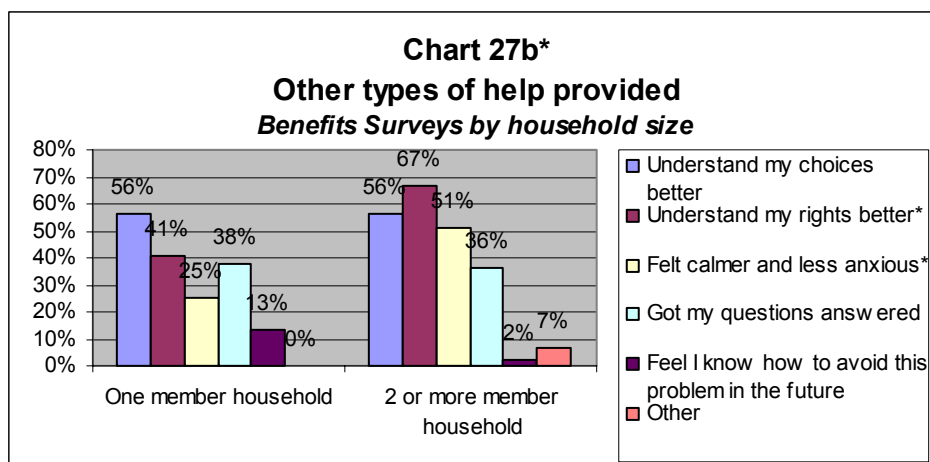


Other Help Provided By the Hotline

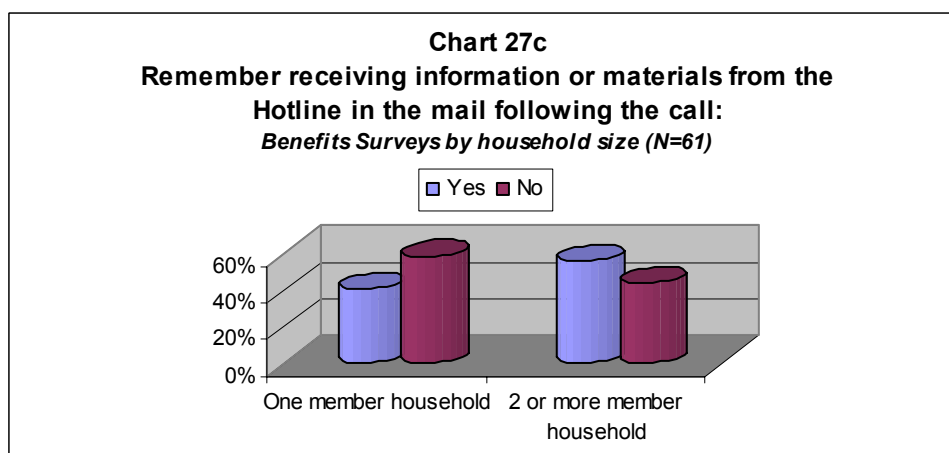
Living Alone

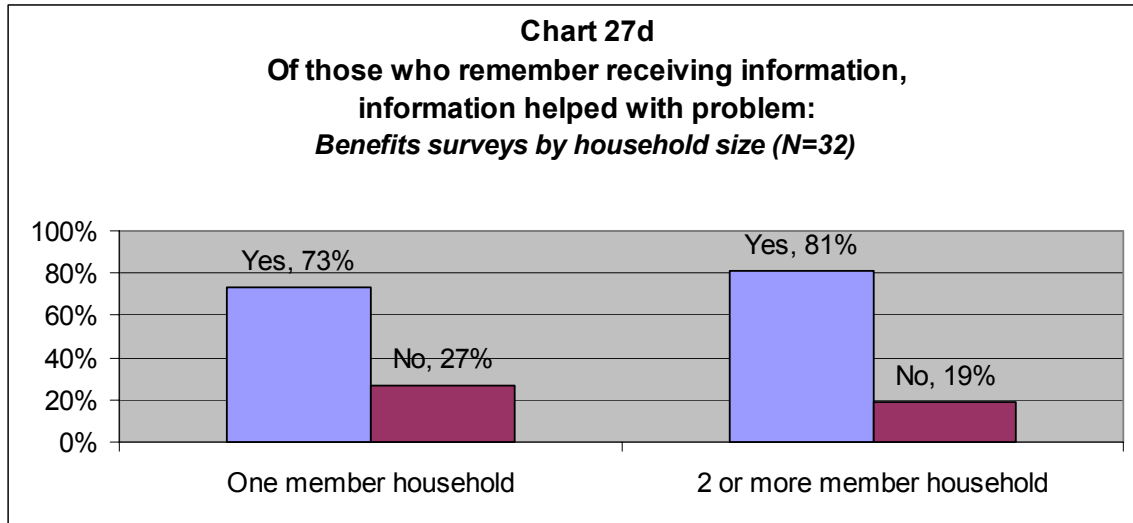
Almost all of the respondents in both groups reported that the hotline provided other help: 96 percent (23) of the persons living alone and 98 percent (41) of the persons living with others. The type of help they reported receiving is the only statistically significant finding between the groups. A significantly larger portion of the respondents living with others, 67 percent (30), reported that they understand their rights better than the respondents living alone, 40 percent (13). Also significant, 51 percent (23) of those living with others reported they felt calmer and less anxious after the hotline advice than those living alone, 25 percent (8). However, identical percentages of both groups (56 percent) reported understanding their choices better. See Charts 27a and b. Only six people reported that the hotline was no help and no Chart was created for that query.





There were no significant differences between the two groups with respect to whether they remembered receiving materials in the mail or whether they thought the material was helpful. Forty-one percent (9) of the respondents who lived alone remember receiving mailed information as do 56 percent (22) of the respondents living with others. Seventy-three percent (8) of respondents living alone who remembered receiving materials thought they were helpful while 81 percent (17) of those living with others did so. See Charts 27c and 27d.





IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSUMER CASES:

- **Follow up Action Taken: Seventy-two percent of callers with consumer cases surveyed took the action the hotline advised.** Of those callers who did not take action, 34 percent of them reported still planning on taking action. Only 24 percent of the minority who didn't take action said they either did not remember what to do, it was too hard to do or they did not understand the advice. This follow up rate is quite high and most likely due to the fact that the flagged callers were advised to perform one discreet manageable task. Writing a letter to a creditor was the most frequent action taken (30 percent of those who took action). Sixteen percent wrote a letter to a business with whom they were having problems; 12 percent contacted an agency; 9 percent filed a form in court; another 9 percent went to court and 15 percent reported taking "other" action.
- **Results Obtained: A majority of consumer case respondents (55 percent), reported a change for the better after taking the action;** Forty-five percent reported no change. However, of those who reported "no change" 41 percent were still awaiting the results of the action at the time of the survey. Had more time passed between the hotline call and the survey, we expect that a higher proportion of clients would report a change for the better and a smaller percentage would still be waiting for results. The most common improvement (39 percent) was the cessation of annoying contacts from debt collectors; fifteen percent did not have to pay a disputed bill. The average amount of the avoided bill was \$1,924. Twenty-one percent reported working things out to their satisfaction and 18 percent reported "other" changes for the better.
- **Other Help Received from the Hotline: Ninety-one percent of consumer case respondents reported receiving other types of help from the hotline in addition to advice to take the follow up action.** These included understanding their choices better (60 percent); understanding their rights better (65 percent); feeling calmer and less anxious (38 percent); getting their questions answered (27 percent); and 5 percent feeling they would know how to avoid the problem in the future. Seventy-four percent remember receiving materials in the mail after the hotline call and 90 percent of those reported the information helped with the problem.
- **Demographic Correlations: data was analyzed with regard to clients' gender, LSC- income eligibility, age, and whether they lived alone.** Gender, LSC eligibility or whether the client lived alone did not affect the clients' propensity to take action. However, younger clients were significantly less likely to take action when compared to older clients. While 74 percent of those between 41-60 years, and 78 percent of those 61 and older, reported taking the advised action, only 55 percent of those under 40 reported taking action. With regard to results achieved, men were more likely to report a change for the better after taking the action (66 percent) than women (50 percent), and callers who were not LSC eligible reported a change for the better at a higher rate (59 percent) than LSC eligible clients (46

percent); neither age nor living alone significantly impacted results achieved. No significant differences were found among the demographic groups for other types of help provided by the hotline.

BENEFITS CASES:

- **Follow up Action Taken: Seventy-eight percent of benefits cases reported taking the action suggested; making an application for a benefit (45 percent) was the most common action taken.** Seventeen percent made a phone call; 12 percent contacted an agency and 7 percent asked for a hearing; 16 percent reported taking “other” action. Of those that did not take action, 53 percent still plan on doing so; twelve percent did not understand the advice; 6 percent did not remember what to do, 6 percent thought it was too hard to do, and 24 percent (4) had some “other” reason for not taking action.
- **Results Obtained: Sixty-five percent of benefits cases reported a change for the better with 52 percent of that group receiving an average benefit of \$1,150 per month with the range being \$79 - \$3,500.** Fourteen percent worked things out to their satisfaction, another 9 percent did not have to pay back money related to a benefit and 17 percent reported an “other” positive change. For the minority of respondents who did not experience a positive change, 40 percent are still waiting to hear from the agency while 48 percent had their application for benefits rejected. Eight percent still have to pay the benefit-related money back and 4 percent reported “other” as a negative outcome.
- **Other Help Received from the Hotline: As with the consumer clients, almost all the public benefits clients (93 percent) said the hotline provided other types of help.** Sixty-eight percent understood their choices better; 65 percent understood their rights better; 51 percent felt calmer and less anxious and 7 percent felt they would know how to avoid the problem in the future. The public benefits callers remember receiving mailed material at a much lower rate, 46 percent, than the consumer callers, 73 percent. Of those who did remember receiving information on benefits, 78 percent found the information helpful.
- **Demographic Correlations: For benefits cases the age of the respondent affected whether they were likely to take action.** The older age group (71 and over) was significantly less likely to take the recommended public benefits action than the younger age groups. While only 43 percent of the over 71 group reporting taking action, 77 percent of the under 40 age group took action, 83 percent of the 41-60 year old took action, and 100 percent of the 61-70 year old took action. No significant differences were noted in the types of action taken. Making an application for a benefit was the most common action taken by all the age groups. Gender, LSC eligibility, and living alone did not significantly affect the client’s propensity to take action nor the results achieved. No differences were found among the groups for other types of help received from the hotline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Identifying clients who are likely eligible for a benefit they are not receiving is an extremely successful use of hotline resources resulting in an increase in monthly payments to or on behalf of the client in a substantial number of cases.** Hotline efforts to train staff to screen, identify, and counsel clients through the application process for benefits would likely lead to more clients receiving benefits at little additional cost to the hotline for providing this adjunct to the legal consultation.
- **Providing advice regarding the performance of a discreet act to solve a legal problem also showed mostly positive results both in the number of clients who took action and the number whose situation changed for the better.** Hotlines could increase the chances for performance of the follow up action and rate of success even further by expanding the number of mailed or emailed materials they deliver to clients with detailed instructions on as many situations as possible; a library of form letters that can be quickly personalized for the client by hotline staff during or after the call should be developed and expanded to situations as they arise; protocols should be developed and resources allocated for providing brief services to those clients who seem unlikely to be able to take the follow up action on their own. In cases where follow up is important to the client's well being, the hotline should flag the case and contact the client later to determine the status.
- **Training staff to identify clients who may not follow up would strengthen hotline services.** The demographic analysis noted some differences in gender, age, and income, related to the rate at which clients performed the follow up tasks and the success they achieved. However, the differences are not of a type that can be addressed through change in services to a whole demographic group. Rather, the differences point out the need for the hotline advocate to try to determine whether the particular client is likely to follow up, with membership in one of these groups being a factor to consider in the likelihood for success. For example, is the caller a younger individual whose time is consumed by work and/or child care and who will therefore be less likely to have time to complete the follow up action? Does the client sound too frail or timid to make a phone call on his own? Does the client's educational level seem too low to successfully write a letter? Hotlines could be more effective by training advocates to identify those clients not likely to follow up and providing additional means of assistance for them through in-house brief services, volunteers, law and paralegal student participation, and other means.

Appendix A Consumer Case Survey

PART 1: Demographic Information

Case No. _____ Gender _____ Age _____
Race: Hispanic _____ Eligibility:
African American _____ OAA (> 60): _____
White _____ LSC: _____
Asian _____ Other: _____
Native American _____
Other _____ No. in household _____
Marital Status _____

[Advocates: Please fill out both Part 1 above and reenter the case number on the top of the survey (next page.) Also, please fill out the Introduction section on the next page at the time of your initial consultation with the client and note in the top right corner a follow up date approximately 45-60 days from your initial conversation with the client. The first blank in the Introduction 1 should include a one phrase description of the client's problem. The second blank in the Introduction section should include a brief statement of the follow up action you suggested. If you mailed the client information, please check the "information sent" box on the next page
Clip this page to the survey pages and deliver it to your supervisor for survey assignment.]

Appendix A

Consumer Case Survey

Case No: _____
Information Sent: _____

Hello,

I am calling from _____ (Marie will fill in your program name here) to follow up on your recent call to our hotline. We hope that you will take a minute talk with me about our services. Your answers are all confidential, and will be used to improve our services.

Introduction.

About two months ago you called _____ (Marie will personalize with your program name here) to get help with a problem about (advocate will fill in this part at time of initial call) _____
_____ ; At that time, we suggested that you _____
_____.

Question 1

After you talked to us, did you take the action that the Hotline advocate suggested?
_____yes _____no _____

Question 2

If yes, what did you do? (please pick the closest one or fill in other below)

Wrote a letter to someone who claims you owe them money _____

Wrote a letter to the business I am having a problem with _____

Made a phone call to _____

Contacted an agency _____

Filed a form in court _____

Went to court _____

Other _____

Question 3

Did things change for the better after you took action?

Yes _____ No _____

Question 4

If yes, how did things change?

(Please pick the closest answer or fill in another below)

I didn't have to pay the bill _____ amount _____

I got the money back _____ amount _____

The repair was made _____ approx amount _____

The annoying phone calls/letters from debt collectors stopped _____

We worked things out to my satisfaction _____
Other _____

Question 5

If things did not get better for you after taking the hotline advice,
Why not? (pick closest one or write in other below)

I still have to pay the bill _____

I didn't get the money back _____

They didn't make the repair _____

I am still waiting for the result of my action _____

Other _____

Question 6

If you did not take the action suggested by the hotline, why not? (please pick closest one or write in other below)

I didn't understand the advice _____

I didn't remember what to do _____

It was too hard to do _____ because _____

It didn't seem worth the effort _____

I am still planning on doing it _____

Other _____

Question 7

Whether or not you took a follow up action, did the hotline help you in any other way? yes _____ no _____

If yes, how? (please pick closest one or fill in other below)

I understood my choices better _____

I understood my rights better _____

I felt calmer and less anxious _____

I got my questions answered _____

I think I know how to avoid this problem in the future

Other _____

Question 8

If the hotline was no help, why not? (please pick closest one or fill in other below)

They didn't answer my questions _____

They weren't able to give me a free lawyer _____

I didn't understand what they told me _____

What they told me made me feel more worried _____

Other _____

Question 9

Do you remember receiving information or materials from the Hotline in the mail after your call? Yes _____ No _____

Question 10

If you got some information from us in the mail, did it help you with your problem?

Yes _____ No _____

Thank you for taking the time to help us by answering these questions. Your answers will help us to make our program better.

Appendix B Benefit Cases Survey

PART 1: Demographic Information

Case No. _____ Gender _____ Age _____
Race: Hispanic _____ Eligibility:
African American _____ OAA (> 60): _____
White _____ LSC: _____
Asian _____ Other: _____
Native American _____
Other _____ No. in household _____
Marital Status _____

[Advocates: Please fill out both Part 1 above and reenter the case number on the top of the survey (next page.) Also, please fill out the Introduction section on the next page at the time of your initial consultation with the client and note in the top right corner a follow up date approximately 45-60 days from your initial conversation with the client. The first blank in the Introduction should include a one phrase description of the client's problem. The second blank in the Introduction should include a brief statement of the follow up action you suggested. If you mailed the client information, please check the "information sent" box on the next page. Clip this page to the survey pages and deliver it to your supervisor for survey assignment.]

Appendix B Benefit Cases Survey

Case No: _____
Information Sent: _____

Hello,

I am calling from _____ (Marie will fill in your program name here) to follow up on your recent call to our hotline. We hope that you will take a minute talk with me about our services. Your answers are all confidential, and will be used to improve our services.

Introduction

About two months ago you called _____ (Marie will personalize with name of program here) to get help with a problem about (advocate will fill in this part at time of initial call) _____

At that time, we suggested that you _____

Question 1

After you talked to us, did you or take the action that the HL advisor suggested?

_____yes no _____

Question 2

If yes, what did you do? _____

Made application for benefit _____

Made a phone call to _____

Filed another form (ex. Asked for overpayment waiver) _____

Contacted/went to agency _____

Asked for a hearing _____

Other _____

(Please check the closest action or write in a different one)

Question 3

Did things change for the better after you took action?

Yes _____ No _____

Question 4

If yes, how did things change?

Please pick the closest answer or fill in other below

I got _____ (name of benefit) in the amount of _____ per month

I didn't have to pay the money back _____ amount _____

We worked things out to my satisfaction _____

Other _____

Question 5

**If things did not get better for you after taking the hotline advice,
Why not? (pick the closest one or write in other below)**

I was rejected for the benefit _____

I still have to pay back the money _____

I am still waiting to hear back from the agency _____

Other _____

Question 6

**If you did not take the action suggested by the hotline, why not?
(pick the closest one or write in other below)**

I didn't understand the advice _____

I didn't remember what to do _____

It was too hard to do _____ because _____

It didn't seem worth the effort _____

I am still planning on doing it _____

Other _____

Question 7

**Whether or not you took a follow up action, did the hotline help you in any other
way? yes _____ no _____**

If yes, how? (pick closest one or write in other below)

I understood my choices better _____

I understood my rights better _____

I felt calmer and less anxious _____

I got my questions answered _____

I think I know how to avoid this problem in the future _____

Other _____

Question 8

If the hotline was no help, why not? (pick closest one or fill in other below)

They didn't answer my questions _____

They weren't able to give me a free lawyer _____

I didn't understand what they told me _____

What they told me made me feel more worried _____

They told me I would lose my case, that I should not go forward _____

**They told me that their office had no appointments before my benefits would be cut
off or before my hearing _____**

**They told me they were not taking new cases at the time or that they don't represent
that type of case _____**

**They told me that they would need to refer my case to the private bar, and they gave
me the names of two lawyers to call _____**

Other _____

Question 9

Do you remember receiving information or materials from the hotline in the mail after your call? Yes _____ No _____

Question 10

If you got some information from us in the mail, did it help you with your problem? Yes _____ No _____

Thank you for taking the time to help us by answering these questions. Your answers will help us to make our program better.

Appendix C

Legal Hotline Outcomes II Program Profile Form

Submit by January 31th 2006

Name of Program: _____ Your name _____
Hotline Start Date: _____

Hotline Type:

Definitions: A stand alone hotline provides at least legal advice and referrals after analysis. It may also provide brief services such as document review or preparation, phone calls and letters, pro se form help, but does not have an in-house full service unit. If you are an "intake" hotline for one or more offices, that means you open the case and provide the advice component of the services for the full service office(s) rather than just refer those clients to the offices.

Stand Alone _____ Single-Office Intake _____ Multi-Office Intake _____
Multi-program intake _____ Other (describe) _____

Briefly Describe: _____

Service Area: Local (one city area) _____ Regional (several counties) _____ Statewide _____

Service Area Type: Mostly urban _____ Mostly rural _____ Mixed urban and rural _____

Briefly Describe: _____

Client Profile: LSC income eligible _____ Over 60 _____ Special Issue _____

Briefly Describe: _____

Hotline Staffing: Who handles the calls (provides the legal advice) at your hotline?

Attorneys:	_____ Full-time	_____ Part-time	_____ Volunteers
Paralegals:	_____ Full-time	_____ Part-time	_____ Volunteers
Law Students	_____ Full-time	_____ Part-time	_____ Other (describe)

Who performed the follow up survey call? _____

For example: for example attorney staff, paralegal staff; receptionist; non attorney volunteer?

Average Number of Cases handled by the hotline yearly _____

Approximate % of cases where you send follow up written material after the hotline call.

Please give 3-5 examples of types of consumer cases that were flagged:
e.g.. Client had home repair problem; hotline told client to write letter to company
demanding refund or repair.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

If you also flagged benefits cases, please give a couple of specific examples of cases that were flagged.

e.g. client was identified as possible food stamp eligible and told to apply.

1. _____
2. _____

Date range you flagged cases: _____

Date range for follow up calls and/or mailing: _____.

How are brief services handled at your program?

By the hotline _____

By an in-house full-service unit _____

By an in-house brief services unit _____

They are sent to another program _____

We have no capacity for handling brief services _____

Other _____

Briefly Explain _____

NOTE: Because the number of cases per site is small, we will not be publishing site by site data, only aggregate data. Do you agree to have your program identified as one of the participants in the study? If you do not unanimously agree to be named, we will not publish the name of any participants, only general descriptions of your hotlines. Remember, no one will know what you your own specific results were.

My hotline agrees to be identified as a participant _____

My hotline does not agree to be identified to be identified as a participant _____

Please feel free to add any comments below that you think might be helpful for our analysis or to include in the final report:

Thank you all for your hard work and participation!

Appendix D

Hotline Outcomes Phase II Study Surveyor Guidelines

Part 1: Administering the Survey

1. Making the survey call

You will receive partially completed survey sheets from your supervisor either in a hard copy or as a computer file. Obtain the telephone number (if there is one), from the client case file.

Attempt to contact the client via phone during the survey period marked at the top right corner of the survey.

Follow the script located on the survey and fill in the answers as appropriate. The survey will ask that you select the closest answer based on the client's statements. If none of the choices is appropriate, use "other" and fill in an appropriate short answer. If you have questions, please ask your supervisor.

When you have successfully completed the survey, deliver it to your supervisor as instructed.

Part 2. Problems with delivering survey by phone

If you are unable to reach the client by phone, please complete initial information and mail to the client the mailed version of the survey, along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope instructing the client to send the survey back to your office.

If the client information is no longer accurate (telephone number has changed, client no longer lives at same address, etc.), make a note and return the survey to your supervisor.

If the client indicates that they still need help on the same problem, please let your supervisor know.

If a client chooses not to participate in the follow up survey via phone, thank them for their time and make a note on the survey.

If you have any questions or encounter unforeseen problems as you administer the survey, please contact your supervisor for guidance.

Please be sure to thank all clients who agree to complete the survey.

Appendix E

Hotline Outcomes Phase II Study Advocate Guidelines

Part 1: Actions at the Initial Call

1) Selecting Appropriate Cases

From April 15, 2005 – July 15, 2005, all HL advocates should identify cases among regular calls that should be included in the outcomes study. Please keep either a stack of phone/mail surveys beside your workstation or keep the template for the surveys open on your computer. As you begin to handle the call, identify whether the call is appropriate for inclusion in the survey. If you have any questions about appropriateness, fill out the initial part of the survey (part 1 and question 1), and flag it for your supervisor to review later.

Appropriate cases for inclusion in the survey are as follows:

A. Consumer Cases: Calls in which clients are advised to take some follow up action on their own to resolve the problem. Such action could involve advice that a client write a letter, make a phone call, or complain to another agency, among other things. Do not include cases in which the caller was referred for legal help (free or paid) to another law office or to another part of your program.

B. Public Benefits Cases: Calls in which a client was identified as potentially eligible for a benefit, and advised to apply, as well as calls in which a client was advised to take self-help action to resolve a problem with a benefit. Do not include cases in which the caller was referred for legal help (free or paid) to another law office or to another part of your program.

Again, if you are unsure about whether the case is appropriate for inclusion, fill out the information sheet and flag the case for your supervisor to decide whether the case is appropriate for the study.

2. Obtaining Initial Information

Obtain initial information and note it on the appropriate survey sheet (either Consumer or Public Benefits) under Part 1 (demographics info) and Question 1 (where you will fill in the client's problem and summarize the advice provided and follow up action suggested).

Make a note in the top right corner of the hard copy or template of the survey, a date between 45 and 60 days out that follow up will be performed.

Provide the completed survey sheet or computer template to your supervisor.

Appendix F
HOTLINE OUTCOME PHASE TWO TALLY SHEET FOR (PROGRAM NAME)

Number of Cases Flagged for Follow-up	
Number of Follow-up Calls Completed	
Number of Clients not reached by phone	
Number of Surveys Mailed	
Number of Surveys Returned	
Total Number of Completed Surveys	