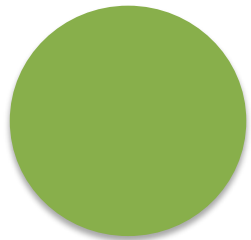


CalSAWS | UCD Initial Field Research – Key Quotes



December 08, 2020

# Theme 1: Cumbersome Application Process

“

With income, we help a lot of families that are day laborers or get paid in cash and need to certify income with a certification or letter from their employer saying how much they work. For them, **entering income if they are self-employed or have cash employment is difficult.**”

Assister, MyBCW

“

The **language that's used in the application portals is sometimes too technical and not colloquial.** The fields that the website is asking for are hard to understand for clients.”

Advocate, MyBCW

“

When entering the total numbers in the household and who needs to be included, rent is pretty high in our county, so **a lot of households have a shared address with multiple families in one household.** **Knowing who to add and who doesn't need to be added is confusing for folks.**”

Assister, MyBCW

“

It would be very **beneficial to everyone if there was something beforehand or after to explain to them what generalized verifications they could use** (IDs, income) **and a step-by-step process of how they can attach [these documents]** so when we review apps we can get the process done smoother.”

Caseworker, C4Y

“

Clients will express that 'I turned this in last month. You already know this about me.' We always have to verify certain pieces of information, such as marital status and income, and the **clients are frustrated about having to repeat this information.**”

Caseworker, C4Y

## Theme 2: Functionality and Usability Obstacles

“

There is no reminder of what your username is or password for that matter, so people have to write it down somewhere. I **have had to reset my password, it was a hassle to get the username to reset the password because I couldn't remember which email I used.**

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

I've tried many times to reset my password and the website asks for secret answer which it says is wrong and [it] doesn't give me any other option to reset it. I haven't been able to login which is very frustrating these COVID days.

”

Customer, C4Y

“

Just even looking at the home page, there is a lot of stuff on the homepage that can be filtered like frequently asked questions list or here is more information and the resources don't need to be on the whole page it could be its own page. It's a little cluttered.

”

Customer, YBN

“

In the beginning I was using my phone all the time, now 80% of the time I use a PC... **it is more difficult to use the phone than the PC. There is so much there on your screen... on your phone it makes everything so much smaller.**

”

Customer, YBN

“

**Uploading documents was a challenge because I didn't know what category my documents belong in, so I just put it in 'Other'.** There are things like my expenses and my school schedule, and monthly attendance sheet. **There's nothing on the website that says where to put certain forms.**

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

Clients, especially the older population, have **problems uploading documents because they don't know about uploading files.**

”

Advocate, YBN

# Theme 3: Lack of Transparency in Process and Benefits Decisions

“

Applying for benefits wasn't difficult, it was more tracking the process or the status that was. **Even though there is a status information there, I always felt like I still ended up having to make phone calls.** There was delayed information that was being put onto the website... It's not updating in real-time.

”

Customer, YBN

“

Just to keep updated... **Just the idea of getting status on things and knowing what is going on...** Just communicating something to make sure something is happening.

”

Customer, C4Y

“

They say you can get those types of notifications sent to you and I check those boxes to get notifications, but it doesn't send it to you that way... **I have to constantly check the website to find out when recertifications happen.**

”

Customer, YBN

“

I don't know when the changes I report are received.

”

Customer, C4Y

“

Reporting changes is **not real clear on what changes to report and when.** There should be an easy way to do this and also a **list of things that need to be reported.**

”

Customer, MYBCW

“

I got denied for benefits once, but then I was able to receive it when I became pregnant. **I did not really know why I got denied, and I was told someone would call me, but then nobody called.**

”

Customer, Non-User

# Theme 4: Confusing Acronyms and Processes

“

A lot of our clients apply for both CalFresh and Medi-Cal, but **our clients are confused about the different processes for each**. Our clients are uncertain what the different processes are for different benefit programs.

”

Advocate, MyBCW

“

Sometimes the customer **wants to apply for GA but ends up applying for CalWORKS**.

”

Caseworker, MyBCW

“

The acronyms are not well explained. The acronyms are being used as if I would understand what they are and what they mean. **Like, what the heck is CalWIN and CalWORKS?** I would suggest that you make this more clear.

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

I would like to see where **EBT food and EBT cash are accepted and the difference between these**.

”

Customer, YBN

“

For a lot of new applicants who have never applied it's like, 'Okay I have this now, What do I do?' **How to utilize [their benefits], a lot of new applicants don't know**.

”

Assister, MyBCW

“

Clients are uncertain about what they qualify for. **It would help the clients to know what to apply for if they have an idea of what they qualify for**. Many clients will come in applying for one program, but don't know if they should apply for other programs.

”

Advocate, YBN

# Theme 5: Represent Me!

“

People in my situation [homeless] are just kind of disconnected and we lose that overall knowledge of what is going on in the world everyday. [Knowledge about how my benefits are changing] would be one of those connections that would matter. **I want to do things independently and get notifications so I could do things by myself.**”

**Customer, MyBCW**

“

E-signature is difficult if **customers have trouble entering the number fast enough for the system.** Entering a date of birth and password code give the elderly or disabled a hard time hitting numbers fast enough because they have limited mobility in their hands.”

**Call Center Staff, C4Y**

“

There are **not enough languages available on the websites.** Some of the key populations require Russian, Hmong, Tagalog, and Armenian.”

**Advocate, MyBCW**

“

**My biggest challenge is with public charge.** I have a green card and my husband is out of the country. A lot of my family is in the same situation. **I have trouble understanding how the public charge will affect me and my family** [as it relates to benefits].”

**Customer, Non-User**

“

I help a lot of with immigrants, **they may not have their verifications for their immigration status or don't have the affidavit of support if they are sponsored and they needed it...** that is one of the most difficult things is when they don't have satisfactory immigrant status.”

**Caseworker, MyBCW**

“

As I recall, **it asked for gender identity and it said male, female, or transgender. And I think those were the only options.** A lot of people now [have] other identities... [like] non-binary, etc. I think that comes into play. If it's there that's great if not maybe it should be for those individuals' sake. **Also adding preferred pronouns.**”

**Customer, YBN**

# Theme 6: What Website?

“

I think a lot of people would use [the website] if they knew it was an option. **Until my friend told me you could apply online, I didn't know. I thought you had to go in.**

”

Customer, Non-user

“

**I was not aware [that] there was a website or an app.** And, having to go to the county office would also mean I would have to change my whole day around to follow up... **If I can find information on the website, then I would feel comfortable doing everything myself [online].**

”

Customer, Non-user

“

**We try to let our clients know, even if they are new or have been here before,** about C4Y. So we give them the pamphlets and talk to them at the intake time and how they can use that and reapply or do additional forms in that way.

”

Caseworker, C4Y

“

I got the information for MyBCW from Department of Rehabilitation because I was trying to recertify for EDD and **my caseworker is the one who gave [me] the [name of the] website.**

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

There is a **whole bunch of 'noise' on the website.** No idea if I should be interested or even if I should be using any of those [features]. **Trial and error got me to apply and renew. It is not intuitive.** Confirmations and acknowledgements are too generic, [and it is] not clear if I completed [the application] properly or not, or if I missed anything.

”

Customer, YBN

# Theme 7: Inability to Access Support

“

I keep trying to contact the county and call a number, and I haven't gotten a call back.

”

Customer, C4Y

“

In CalWIN, if there is an issue with the application, and I have a question, it lands me to the homepage of Alameda Alliance. **It doesn't say who to contact, should I contact the Alliance contacts or CalWIN?**

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

I started online on C4Y, but I couldn't figure out how to get it to work, so I [called] the office. Even [going to] the office is confusing [because] **nobody answers the phone**. The county office is far away and I don't have transportation to get there.

”

Customer, C4Y

“

I wish I could use the website to get more information about my caseworker... **I want a direct way to reach out to my county worker.**

”

Customer, MyBCW

“

[A] messaging feature or some way to communicate [with a caseworker] or an online chat to check the status rather than go through the long wait times on the phone that would be good. **I call usually, and it takes forever to get through to somebody on the phone.**

”

Customer, YBN



## Theme 8: Partner Feedback; Recommendations

“

It would be really nice to get **real-time updates with the applications**, for example what documents need to be submitted, what has been submitted, what is needed, knowing that interviews have been completed, and knowing exactly what stage we're at is really important.

”

Assister, GCF

“

We have no way of seeing that **customers aren't following through with the necessary steps until they're actually dropped off their benefits**. Many customers do not understand why they are losing their benefits.

”

Assister, MyBCW

“

As a CBO user, it's difficult to check the status of cases. The **statuses shown to me are inaccurate so we track this separately**. We found that the CBO application tracker not been accurate so we moved away from it.

”

Assister, MyBCW

“

We are trying to help people to become able. **We don't want to hand feed them everything, so they can understand their own process and handle it themselves.**

”

Assister, C4Y

“

It is important to teach clients how to do it, that is something I struggle with because I want them to get the benefits, so **I find myself doing everything for them, but encouraging them.**

”

Assister, C4Y

“

**I wish it were easy to request access as a CBO in other counties...** I would love to submit all of my applications online for other counties.

”

Assister, MyBCW