

**LA FRANCE ASSOCIATES  
CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH LFA SERVICES**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH LFA SERVICES

In July 2005, LaFrance Associates, LLC (LFA) contracted with an independent evaluator to conduct a second evaluation of its consulting services. An on-line Client Satisfaction Survey was sent to 35 individuals whose organizations engaged the services of LFA in the past two years. A total of 30 clients (85.7%) completed the on-line survey.

#### FINDINGS

The following tables summarize clients' level of satisfaction with LFA's services and staff.

Assessment of LFA Services and Staff	Percent "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"
Overall quality of work (n=30)	100.0%
Project coordination and management (n=30)	100.0%
Work products and documentation (n=29)	100.0%
Knowledge and expertise (n=30)	100.0%
Understanding of organization's needs (n=30)	100.0%
Extent to which LFA increased organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems (n=30)	96.7%
Responsiveness and follow through (n=30)	96.7%
Communication skills (n=30)	93.3%
Creativity and flexibility (n=30)	93.3%
Timeliness of project completion (n=29)*	89.7%

\*Respondents who marked "NA/No Opinion" are not included.

*LFA staff got the big picture but also had the detail orientation and skills to do the analysis - and then tie it all together. They were communicative, responsive, and a pleasure to deal with.*

Phil Buchanan, Executive Director  
Center for Effective Philanthropy

*Working with them has transformed us as an agency. Because of what we've learned from them... we can talk intelligently with funders about evaluation, and we're excited about doing it each time... I've worked with many consultants, and my experience with LFA is the best I've ever had.*

Sharon Dolan, Executive Director  
Health Initiatives for Youth

*Their professionalism is tops... and yet they are more than willing to change course when that has to happen.*

Bob Gordon, Project Director  
CA LGBT Tobacco Education Partnership

*LFA staff members: Are extremely conscientious, responsive and flexible. Are visionary yet precise and detail-oriented. Produce high-quality deliverables. Utilize a team approach to give us a variety of skills... Really listen. Are respectful, thoughtful and reflective... and it shows in the dedication and commitment that they bring to their work.*

Christina Linville, Executive Director  
First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

#### CONCLUSIONS

The results of LFA's third Client Satisfaction Survey present a picture of clients who are highly satisfied with most aspects of the work they undertook with LFA. Clients especially noted the skills, knowledge and the flexibility of LFA staff members and were impressed with the quality and accessibility of the team's work and products.

Despite the overall high degree of satisfaction with LFA's staff and services, however, a comparison with surveys conducted in previous years shows a slight decline in client satisfaction. The three broad areas that LFA can focus on to improve client satisfaction are: timeliness of project completion, ongoing

communication and follow-through with clients, and specialization and better understanding of different nonprofit fields.

# EVALUATION REPORT

## CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH LFA SERVICES

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### INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

In July 2005, LaFrance Associates (LFA) sponsored a third evaluation of its consulting services. The goal of the evaluation was to gather feedback from former clients in order to improve its services. This feedback was gathered using a Client Satisfaction Survey, developed by LFA. The survey was posted on an online survey website and emails were sent to 35 individuals whose organizations had engaged the services of LFA during the past year. Respondents were asked to complete the survey online. Cristina Cielo, an independent evaluator, conducted an analysis of the survey results, and compared the results of these surveys to that of LFA Client Satisfaction surveys conducted in 2002 and 2004. This report presents the findings of the evaluation.

### FINDINGS

#### 2005 Survey Results

The Client Satisfaction Survey consisted of three main sections: 1) Satisfaction with the Project and Results; 2) Satisfaction with the Project Team; and 3) Overall Satisfaction with LFA. A total of 30 people returned completed surveys for a response rate of 85.7%. Of the 30 respondents, eighty-three percent were in contract with LFA at the time they completed the survey. Almost half (44.8%) were referred to LFA by another client and sixty percent are repeat customers – clients who have contracted with LFA for more than one project.

The first section of the survey focused on clients' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their organization's project work with LFA, including project coordination and management, work products and documentation, timeliness of project completion, the extent to which LFA contributed to an increase in the organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems, and the overall quality of the work. Respondents rated their level of satisfaction on a four-point scale: 1) very dissatisfied, 2) dissatisfied, 3) satisfied, and 4) very satisfied.

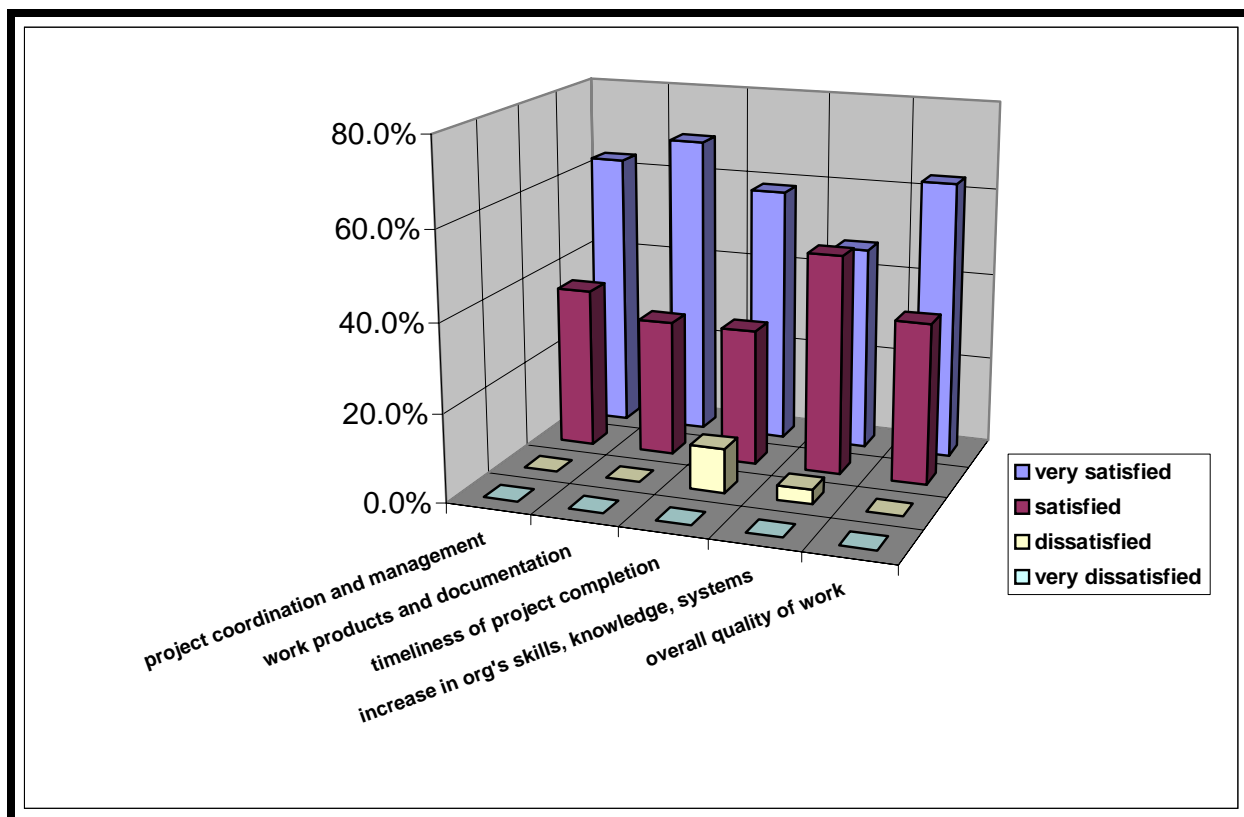
Overall, the majority of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with LFA projects and results. Clients were particularly impressed with project coordination and management, work products and documentation, and the overall quality of the work. The following table and graph reports client satisfaction with all measured aspects of LFA projects and results.

**Table 1. Satisfaction with LFA Projects and Results**

	<b>project coordination and management</b> (n=30)	<b>work products and documentation</b> (n=29)*	<b>timeliness of project completion</b> (n=29)*	<b>increase in org's skills, knowledge, systems</b> (n=30)	<b>overall quality of work</b> (n=30)
<b>very satisfied</b>	63.3%	69.0%	58.6%	46.7%	63.3%
<b>satisfied</b>	36.7%	31.0%	31.0%	50.0%	36.7%
<b>dissatisfied</b>	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	3.3%	0.0%
<b>very dissatisfied</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

\*Respondents who marked "Not Applicable/No Opinion" are not included.

**Figure 1. Comparative Graph of Satisfaction with Aspects of LFA Projects and Results**



All clients were either very satisfied or satisfied with project coordination and management, work products and documentation, and the overall quality of the work. However, client evaluations of LFA's timeliness of project completion and of the extent to which LFA projects contributed to an increase in the organizations' skills, knowledge and/or systems were more variable. Three out of 29 respondents (10.3%) reported dissatisfaction with LFA's completion of projects within expected timeframes. While only one out of 30 respondents (3.3%) reported dissatisfaction with LFA's contribution to their organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems, less respondents (46.7%) reported that they were "very satisfied" with this aspect than with any other aspect of LFA projects and results.

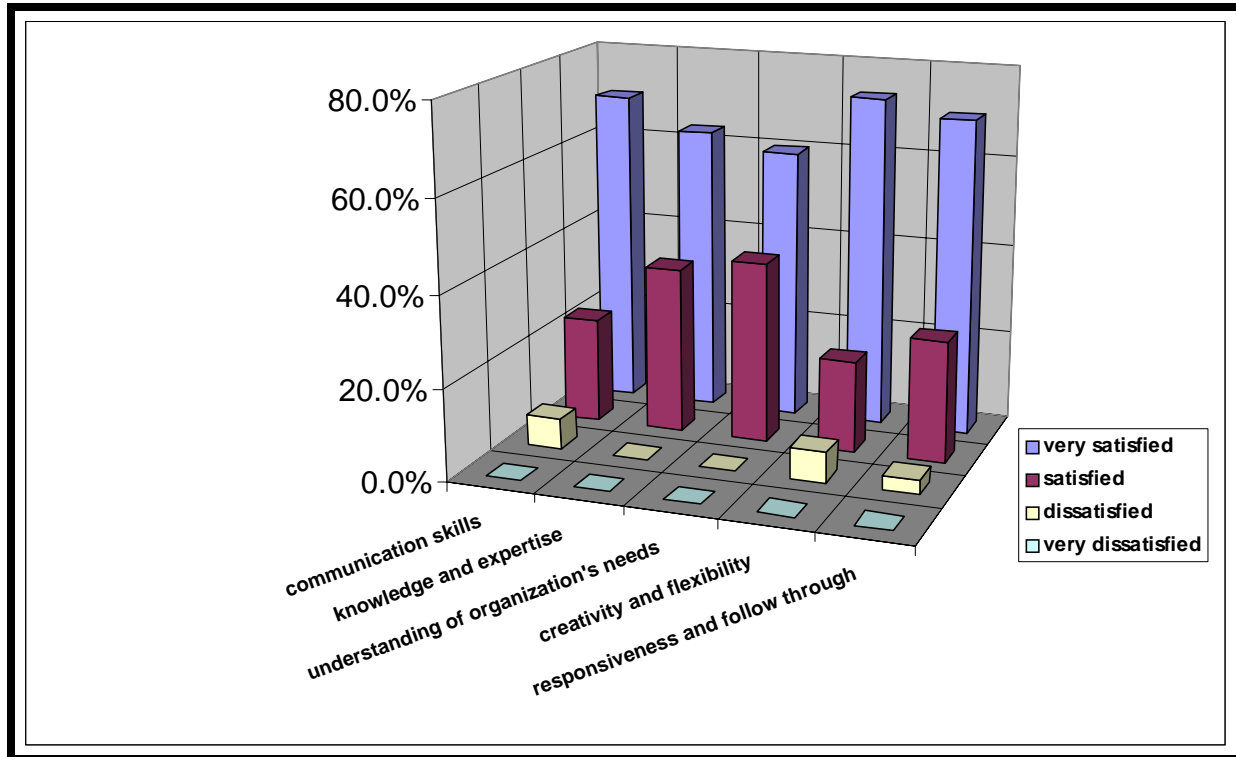
The second section of the survey examined clients' satisfaction with the LFA team members who worked with their organizations on their projects. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with LFA team members' communication skills, knowledge and expertise, ability to understand the needs of the organization, creativity and flexibility, and responsiveness and follow-through. The same four-point rating scale was used in this section.

As with the findings regarding satisfaction with the overall project results, respondents generally reported high levels of satisfaction with LFA team members. Clients were consistently satisfied or very satisfied with LFA staff's knowledge and expertise and ability to understand their organizations' needs. Evaluations of communication skills, creativity and flexibility and responsiveness and follow through were more variable. The following table and graph reports client satisfaction with all measured aspects of LFA projects and results.

**Table 2. Satisfaction with LFA Project Team**

	<b>communication skills</b> (n=30)	<b>knowledge and expertise</b> (n=30)	<b>understanding of organization's needs</b> (n=30)	<b>creativity and flexibility</b> (n=30)	<b>responsiveness and follow through</b> (n=30)
<b>very satisfied</b>	70.0%	63.3%	60.0%	73.3%	70.0%
<b>satisfied</b>	23.3%	36.7%	40.0%	20.0%	26.7%
<b>dissatisfied</b>	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	3.3%
<b>very dissatisfied</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Figure 2. Comparative Graph of Satisfaction with Aspects of LFA Project Team**



All clients were either very satisfied or satisfied with the LFA project team members' knowledge and expertise and their ability to understand the organizations' needs. However, client evaluations of LFA staff's communications skills, creativity and flexibility and responsiveness and follow-through were more variable. Despite the fact that over 70% of respondents were "very satisfied" with those skills and work styles of LFA team members, two respondents out of 30 (6.7%) were dissatisfied with LFA staff's communication skills and likewise, two respondents out of 30 (6.7%) were dissatisfied with their LFA staff's creativity and flexibility. One respondent (3.3%) was dissatisfied with LFA team members' responsiveness and follow-through.

The final section of the survey asked clients about their overall satisfaction with LFA. In this section, respondents were asked if they would recommend LFA's services to colleagues and if they would hire LFA again. This final section also included four open-ended questions, allowing respondents to comment in their own words about their experiences working with LFA. While not all respondents chose to comment, those who did provided positive encouragement and helpful suggestions.

When asked if they would recommend LFA's services to a colleague, a vast majority of clients (27 out of 29, or 93.1%) indicated that they would. Similarly, when asked if they would hire LFA again, almost all clients (28 out of 29, or 96.6%) responded that they would. While this represents a high degree of satisfaction among clients, it is important to note that this is the first year that *any* respondents indicated that they would not recommend LFA's services or would not hire LFA again; in surveys in both 2002 and 2004 100% of respondents said they would recommend LFA's services and hire LFA for future consultancies. This issue will be explored in the following section, which will further compare this year's survey results to the results from the 2002 and 2004 surveys.

In the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to comment on LFA's strengths, provide any suggestions they might have for how LFA could improve its services, make any additional comments and write in comments they felt comfortable sharing directly with LFA. Not surprisingly, the responses in this section reflect the strengths of LFA as reflected in the quantitative evaluations of the first two sections. The full text of open-ended feedback is included in the appendix.

An impressive 27 out of 30 (93.3%) commented on LFA's strengths and had overwhelmingly positive perspectives on LFA and their working relationships. Clients described LFA staff members as "very skilled," "extremely knowledgeable," and "flexible." In general, they found staff to be "extraordinarily well qualified and wonderful to work with on projects." More specifically, over half of those commenting mentioned the substantial knowledge and skills that the LFA staff brings to bear on their projects. Likewise, over half appreciated the flexibility and adaptability of the LFA team members. Seven clients applauded staff members' "ability to communicate complicated issues," with one client stating commenting on LFA staff's "ability to translate complex evaluation requirements... into comprehensible plans, activities and reports." Another four respondents extolled the professionalism of LFA staff. Representative comments on LFA's staff strengths include:

*Their knowledge of the field in general and their professional expertise has provided tremendous gains in moving [our] work.*

*Ability to talk about evaluation in a lay person's terms - ability to work with nonprofits at all different levels - ability to learn new content areas and apply those learnings to the next project - smart, fun, thorough staff - reasonably priced.*

*The people that work at LFA are very skilled at what they do and have the technical expertise needed. They write well and I have been able to use their work to demonstrate our effectiveness with our clients to grant making agencies and agencies responsible for monitoring us. In addition they are pleasant to work with and extremely flexible. And they are compassionate. This is all very rare to find in evaluators.*

In describing project work, clients were likewise laudatory, describing LFA as "providing exemplary evaluation services" and being both "visionary" and "precise and detail oriented," as well as "a pleasure to deal with." Clients appreciated LFA's:

*Excellent quality of work and products; reliability; communication skills; responsiveness to clients; adaptability*

*Going way above and beyond what is required in order to make our lives simpler.*

When asked what LFA could do to improve its services, 21 out of the 30 respondents wrote in comments. Of these, 4 had either no suggestions or wrote “I think LFA does a great job and responds well to our needs.” The remaining seventeen suggestions focused on ways that LFA might improve its staff’s understanding and skills vis-à-vis the specific needs of the organization, their communication with the organizations and their ability to complete projects within established timeframes.

Eight clients mentioned that it would be helpful if staff members assigned to their projects began with a better understanding of the organizations’ specific fields (ie youth, health, etc) or if staff members were “brought up to speed” more readily. Suggestions along these lines included:

*I’d suggest that the staff get some specific training... or hire folks with specific expertise on any specific population that they’d like to work with (ie education, health, etc)*

*I get the sense that some staff working on our project sometimes are not as up to speed about our needs and our project. As a result we have had to go back and reiterate (sometimes more than once) specific context about our program.*

Five respondents suggested that LFA improve the consistency of its communications and its ability to communicate with different audiences, with one of the clients suggesting that LFA could use “clearer communication, increased competence of... cultural dynamics of communication.” Likewise, another client suggested that LFA seek to “improve their ability to communicate with various audiences.”

Four respondents were concerned with issues regarding time to complete project work, with one client commenting that “many deadlines were missed.” Another client commented that this issue was related to the issue of improving communication, and wanted “more communication about what is needed from me to stay on top of timeliness.” Another three clients suggested that the work products and documents be better edited and proofed, with a client commenting that “there were fairly significant errors in a final report” and another “had to do a great deal of editing and shaping of the report.”

The constructive feedback suggesting areas that LFA could improve its services was rounded out by nineteen additional comments further applauding LFA’s staff and services. Representative comments include:

*Overall, they are excellent*

*The reason I come back to LaFrance is their work ethic, their knowledge about nonprofit/grantmaker capacity building and thus their reach into the field, and their willingness to help us achieve our goals on our terms.*

*We love working with LFA and they have helped us demystify 'evaluation.' We know that working with them will only help our programs become stronger and viewed as a benefit to our communities.*

It is clear that LFA is appreciated and highly regarded by its clients. A comparison of the results of this survey with previous years’ survey results will allow us to contextualize these results within a trajectory of the company’s history.

## Comparisons with 2002 and 2004 Survey Results

The survey results for this year present a picture of clients highly satisfied with most aspects of the work they undertook with LFA. Five of the ten measures show that all clients are either satisfied or very satisfied with LFA's services and staff. The remaining five measures show that clients are mostly impressed with LFA, with close to or more than 90% of respondents reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with LFA services and staff.

Comparing these results with the results for the same survey conducted 2002 and 2004, however, shows a trend that may be of some concern to LFA staff. Namely, while assessments of LFA services and staff are still quite high, they are not as overwhelming exceptional as they have been on past surveys. The 2004 and 2005 surveys asked the same questions; the only substantial difference in the 2002 survey was the question that asked the client to rate the "overall quality of work" – the 2002 rating for "overall quality of work" refers to responses for the "extent to which LFA services helped the organization reach its project goals."

**Table 3. Satisfaction with LFA Services and Staff over Time**

Assessment of LFA Services and Staff	Percent "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"		
	2002 (n=24)*	2004 (n=39)*	2005 (n=30)*
Overall quality of work	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Project coordination and management	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Work products and documentation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Knowledge and expertise	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Understanding of organization's needs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Extent to which LFA increased organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems	100.0%	97.2%	96.7%
Responsiveness and follow through	95.5%	100.0%	96.7%
Communication skills	100.0%	100.0%	93.3%
Creativity and flexibility	100.0%	100.0%	93.3%
Timeliness of project completion	95.3%	100.0%	89.7%

\*Respondents who marked "Not Applicable/No Opinion" are not included in the percentage totals.

The drop in client satisfaction becomes more evident if we look at the increase in number of "dissatisfied" responses this year, as compared with 2002 and 2004 (see table 4 below). Notably, however, in none of the three surveys did clients report they were "dissatisfied" with LFA staff's understanding of their organization's needs, in their knowledge and expertise and in the projects' products, coordination and overall quality.

**Table 4. Dissatisfaction with LFA Services and Staff over Time**

Assessment of LFA Services and Staff	Number of responses marked "Dissatisfied"		
	2002 (n=24)*	2004 (n=38)*	2005 (n=30)*
Timeliness of project completion	1 (4.8%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (10%)
Communication skills	0	0	2 (6.7%)
Creativity and flexibility	0	0	2 (6.7%)
Responsiveness and follow through	1 (4.5%)	0	1 (3.3%)
Extent to which LFA increased organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems	0	1 (2.8%)	1 (3.3%)

\*Respondents who marked "Not Applicable/No Opinion" are not included in the percentage totals.

In 2002, the two "dissatisfied" responses were from the same client. In 2004, the two "dissatisfied" responses were from two different clients. In 2005, the nine "dissatisfied" responses were spread out over six different clients.

The slight trend toward lower client satisfaction is also apparent in the lower percentage of "very satisfied" responses over all from 2002 to 2004, and from 2004 to 2005, represented in the tables and graphs below. The first set of figures shows that in assessments of *all* aspects of LFA projects and results, the percentage of respondents who were "very satisfied" has declined. The second set of figures shows that in assessments for *all* aspects of LFA project team, the percentage of respondents who were "very satisfied" has also declined.

The first set of figures (table 5 and figure 3 below) depict the levels of high satisfaction with different aspects of LFA projects and results over time. In 2002, about 85% of clients were "very satisfied" with LFA's work products and documentation, project coordination and management and the overall quality of the work. Despite the drop in percentage of high satisfaction with these measures over time – in 2005, only between 60-70% of clients were "very satisfied" with these measures – products, coordination and overall quality still stand out as aspects of LFA services with which most clients are highly satisfied.

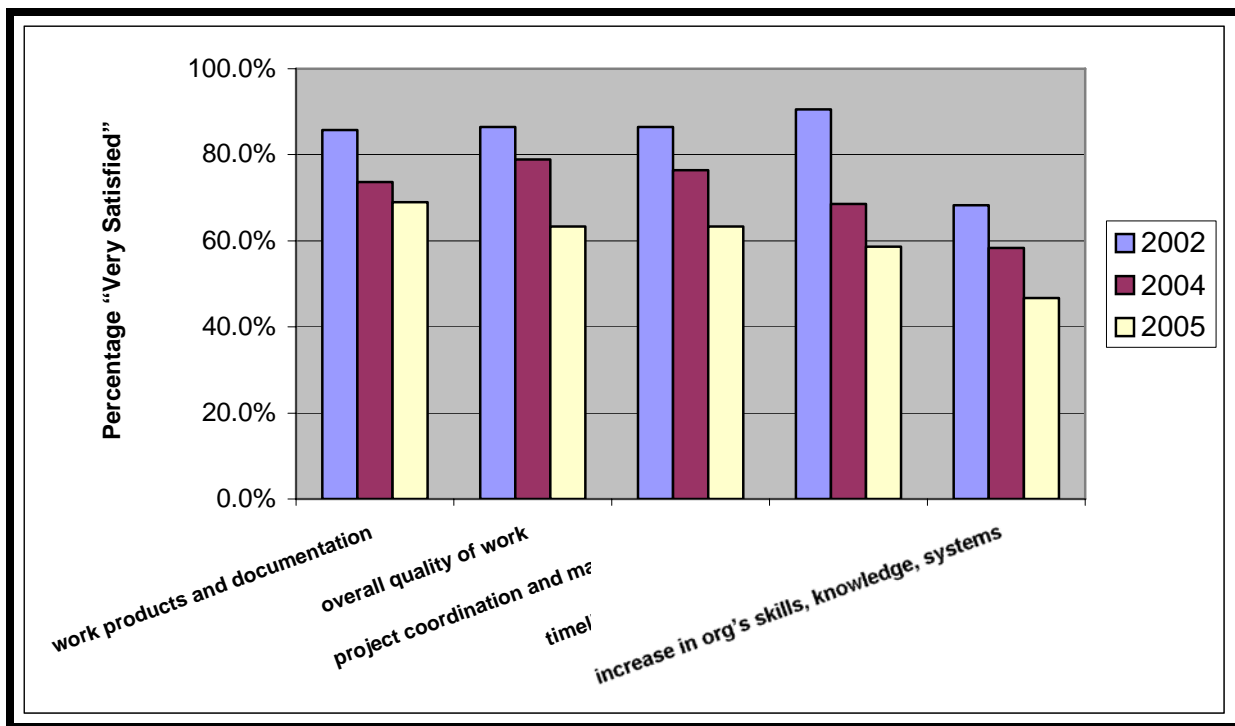
The largest percentage drop of clients who were highly satisfied was in the assessment of timeliness of project completion - in 2002, more than 90% of respondents were "very satisfied" with the timeliness of project completion, while in 2005, less than 60% of respondents were "very satisfied" with this measure. The measure with which fewest clients have been highly satisfied throughout the three surveys is the extent to which LFA contributes to an increase in the organization's skills, knowledge and/or systems. This is the only aspect of LFA projects and results with which less than half the respondents were "very satisfied," and this was only the case in 2005.

**Table 5. High Satisfaction with LFA Projects and Results over Time**

Assessment of LFA Services and Staff	Percentage “Very Satisfied”		
	2002 (n=24)*	2004 (n=38)*	2005 (n=30)*
Work products and documentation	85.7%	73.6%	69.0%
Overall quality of work	86.4%	78.9%	63.3%
Project coordination and management	86.4%	76.4%	63.3%
Timeliness of project completion	90.5%	68.6%	58.6%
Extent to which LFA increased organization’s skills, knowledge and/or systems	68.2%	58.3%	46.7%

\*Respondents who marked “Not Applicable/No Opinion” are not included in the percentage totals.

**Figure 3. Drop in High Satisfaction with LFA Projects and Results over Time**



The second set of figures (table 6 and figure 4 below) depict the levels of high satisfaction with different aspects of LFA project teams over time. In 2002, over 85% of clients were “very satisfied” with LFA’s staff’s creativity and flexibility, communications skills and responsiveness and follow-through. Despite the drop in percentage of high satisfaction with these measures over time – in 2005, only between 70-75% of clients were “very satisfied” with these measures – the staff’s flexibility, communication and responsiveness still stand out as aspects of LFA services with which most clients are highly satisfied. This was reflected in the open-ended feedback discussed above.

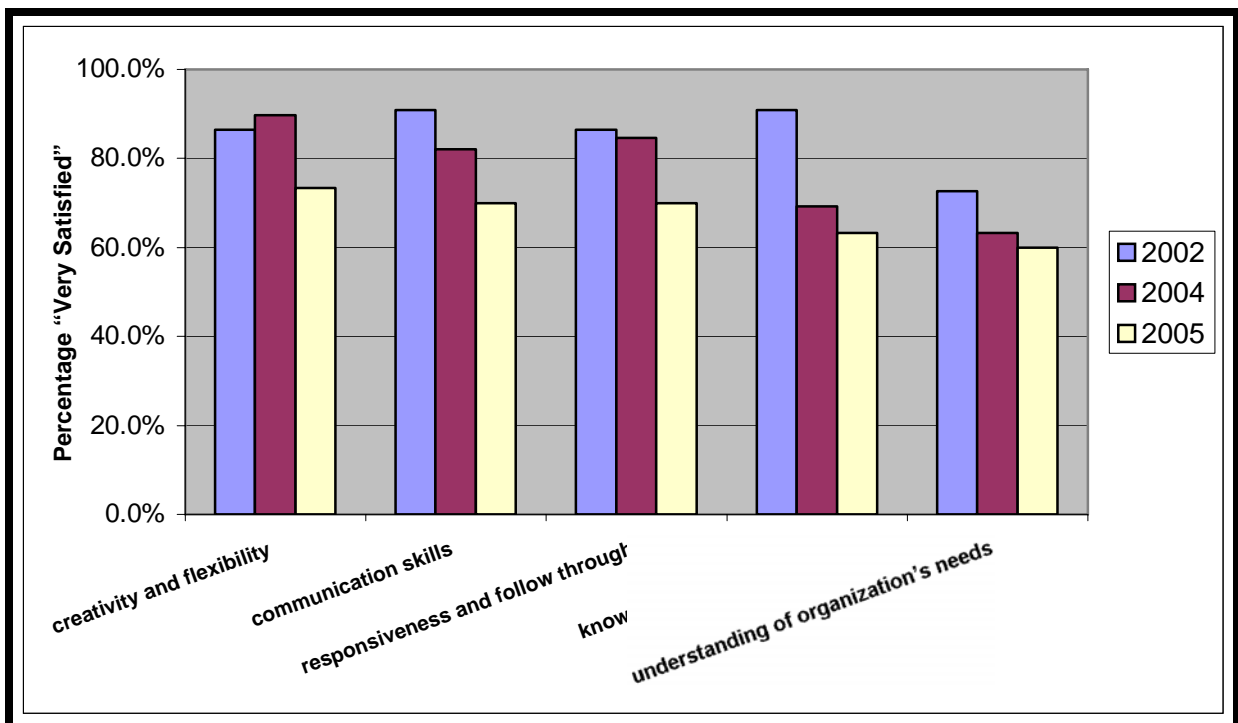
The largest percentage drop of clients who were highly satisfied was in the assessment of staff knowledge and expertise - in 2002, more than 90% of respondents were “very satisfied” with the staff’s knowledge and expertise, while in 2005, less than 65% of respondents were “very satisfied” with this measure. The measure with which fewest clients have been highly satisfied throughout the three surveys is the staff’s understanding of organizations’ needs. This, again, was reflected in the open-ended comments, in which clients suggested that LFA seek to further train and prepare their staff to better understand specific areas of nonprofit work and specific projects.

**Table 6. High Satisfaction with LFA Project Teams over Time**

Assessment of LFA Services and Staff	Percentage “Very Satisfied”		
	2002 (n=24)*	2004 (n=38)*	2005 (n=30)*
Creativity and flexibility	86.4%	89.7%	73.3%
Communication skills	90.9%	82.1%	70.0%
Responsiveness and follow through	86.4%	84.6%	70.0%
Knowledge and expertise	90.9%	69.2%	63.3%
Understanding of organization’s needs	72.7%	63.2%	60.0%

\*Respondents who marked “Not Applicable/No Opinion” are not included in the percentage totals.

**Figure 4. Drop in High Satisfaction with LFA Project Teams Over Time**



The slight trend towards a decrease in client satisfaction that these numbers point to is also evident in a comparison over time of the final section of the survey, which asked clients about their overall satisfaction with LFA. The most notable point in a comparison in this section were the answers to whether the respondents would recommend LFA's services to colleagues and if they would LFA again. While only two clients (6.9%) said they would not recommend LFA to a colleague and only one client would not hire LFA again (3.4%), this represents a stark contrast to responses to these questions in 2002 and 2004. In 2002, clients were only asked whether they would recommend LFA services to a colleague; 100 % responded that they would. In 2004, clients were asked both about recommending LFA and hiring LFA again. 100% of respondents said they would recommend LFA's services as well as hire LFA for future consultancies.

Finally, this trend is reflected in the open-ended comments that clients made. In 2002, there were 5 suggestions for improvement, which represented 21% of total respondents. In 2004, 19 out of the 39 respondents (48.7%) made suggestions for improvement. About half of those suggestions were qualified by such positive statements as "I can't think of anything, you guys are so far above everyone else already. I suppose if you were going for perfection instead of mere excellence..." and "It is difficult to answer this question since they are such a talented group. Maybe one thing..." In 2005, in contrast, 17 out of 30 respondents (56.7%) had suggestions for improvement, with only two comments qualified by positive sentiments.

In this section, I have emphasized the increase in dissatisfaction and decrease in high satisfaction in order to highlight a slight downward trend in client satisfaction to LFA services and staff. *We must not forget, however, that most clients continue to be overwhelmingly satisfied or very satisfied with LFA services and staff* (see table 3 above). Attention to trends in the extreme responses, however, may help point to areas that LFA staff can focus on to continue providing outstanding service to its clients. These include: timeliness of project completion, ongoing communication and follow-through with clients, and specialization and better understanding of different nonprofit fields. This will be further discussed in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the report.

### **Correlations between Different Measures**

A final aspect of the analysis of the survey involves understanding the correlations between levels of satisfaction and the different aspects of LFA services and staff. For these analyses, I combined the data from the 2002, 2004 and 2005 surveys. For a summary evaluation of each client's assessment of LFA, I also created the variable "summary evaluation" – equal to the average of all ratings of the different aspects of LFA services and staff. I then used multiple regressions to gauge the effect of each measure on the client's ratings for "overall quality of work" and for "summary evaluation."

There are statistically significant correlations between "overall quality of work" and levels of satisfaction with project coordination and management work products and documentation understanding of organization's needs responsiveness and follow through (see table 7 below). A higher rating of project coordination and management is correlated with the largest increase in rating of the overall quality of work. Equivalent changes in the ratings of work products, understanding organization's needs, and responsiveness are correlated with an increase of about half that in rating of the overall quality of work.

**Table 7. Variables Correlated with “Overall Quality of Work” Rating**

	(n=88)	Coefficients
Project coordination and management		0.309 ***
Work products and documentation		0.174 ***
Understanding of organization's needs		0.144 **
Responsiveness and follow through		0.126 *

Significance: \*=p<.01, \*\*=p<.05, \*\*\*=p<.01

There are even more statistically significant correlations between the summary evaluation” and levels of satisfaction with the different aspects of LFA services and staff (see table 8). Of special note for their relatively higher correlation with increases in “summary evaluation” ratings are: the staff’s communication skills, understanding of work and responsiveness and follow-through.

**Table 8. Variables Correlated with “Summary Evaluation” Rating**

	(n=88)	Coefficients
Project coordination and management		0.035
Work products and documentation		0.075 ***
Timeliness of project completion		0.077 ***
Extent to which LFA increased organization's skills, knowledge, and/or systems		0.037 *
Overall quality of work		0.004
Communication skills		0.196 ***
Knowledge and expertise		0.111 ***
Understanding of organization's needs		0.171 ***
Creativity and flexibility		0.066 **
Responsiveness and follow through		0.169 ***

Significance: \*=p<.01, \*\*=p<.05, \*\*\*=p<.01

Interestingly, there was no statistically significant correlation between overall levels of satisfaction (measured by “overall quality of work” and “summary evaluation” ratings) and whether an organization had worked with LFA before or not nor between levels of satisfaction and whether an organization had been personally referred to LFA or not. This was tested through a multiple regression for the 2005 survey (n=30), and for the 2004 and 2005 surveys combined (n=70).

Finally, since there were so few negative answers to “Would you recommend LFA to a colleague?” and “Would you hire LFA again?” it was not possible to gauge correlations between those answers and ratings of different aspects of LFA services and staff. Of interest, however, may be the specific ratings of the two clients who would not recommend LFA to a colleague. One client was “dissatisfied” with LFA’s responsiveness and follow through; the client commented that LFA “needs better follow through and a broader base of skills.” The other client, also the only client who would not hire LFA again, was “dissatisfied” with both the communication skills and the “creativity and flexibility” of the LFA project team. The client commented that LFA could “improve their ability to communicate with various audiences... They

need to demonstrate more initiative and consistency with follow-through and communication with their clients.”

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of LFA's third Client Satisfaction Survey present a picture of clients who are highly satisfied with most aspects of the work they undertook with LFA. Clients especially noted the skills, knowledge and the flexibility of LFA staff members and were impressed with the quality and accessibility of the team's work and products.

Despite the overall high degree of satisfaction with LFA's staff and services, however, a comparison with surveys conducted in previous years shows a slight decline in client satisfaction. This was particularly the case for timeliness of project completion, ongoing communication and follow-through with clients, and understanding of organizations' needs. The report's focus on areas of decreased satisfaction do not in any way imply that there is general dissatisfaction with LFA's projects and team members; instead it is hoped that such a focus might help LFA continue to provide the outstanding service that clients consistently comment on.

Based on the findings in the previous section and the open-ended comments (see Appendix for full text of comments), LFA may want to focus some extra attention in a few areas:

- Be careful about taking on too much work. One client thought that, “perhaps they get overcommitted.” Another client wrote that staff might want to “monitor the number of clients they take on at one time and the reality of how much time projects take.” While the staff may very well be able to take on a high number of projects, the LFA executive should decide carefully how that number might impact client satisfaction. Time constraints not only affect ability to meet deadlines, but more importantly affect staff's ability to conduct ongoing communication, which in turn affects the staff's understanding of the organizations needs and his or her ability to be responsive and follow through. These three criteria are critical in client's overall evaluations of LFA services and staff.
- Spend more time communicating with the client up front in order to better understand the organization's specific needs and contexts. A number of clients commented on the fact that new staff were less knowledgeable than senior staff about different organizations' situations. Provide new staff with the support and orientation they need so they can be better equipped to take on the projects more effectively. Also formalize ongoing communication and follow-through with client and provide time for staff to carry this out.
- Invest in training or specialized staff for better understandings of the specific contexts of different nonprofit fields. One client writes that “It would be helpful to have more insights and connectivity to the [specific] field/arena.” Several clients make similar comments, suggesting that more experience and knowledge of different nonprofit fields (such as education, health, etc) would increase the ability of staff to understand and work with the organizations. This might also help increase the relatively lower rating of LFA's contribution to increasing organizations' skills, knowledge and/or systems. With a better understanding of the field as a whole, LFA will be able to have a better impact on the organization's effectiveness.

It is evident that LFA can feel proud of its professional, personable and highly skilled staff. Clients clearly value the skills, knowledge and flexibility of LFA team members, and appreciate the results of this hard work. Given the organizational structure to effectively employ these outstanding qualities, LFA staff will continue to make significant contributions to organizations through its consulting services.

## **OPEN-ENDED SURVEY FEEDBACK CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH LFA SERVICES**

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### **What are LFA's strengths?**

Wonderful customer service, real understanding of philanthropic field and relevant issues.

Applied research - ability to talk about evaluation in a lay person's terms - ability to work with nonprofits at all different levels - ability to learn new content areas and apply those learnings to the next project - smart, fun, thorough staff - reasonably priced.

Flexibility. Ability to translate complex evaluation requirements by our funders into comprehensible plans, activities, and reports to disseminate to our community and back to funders. Professionalism.

The LFA staff is very knowledgeable about research methodologies and statistical analyses especially presenting data in a user friendly way. I appreciate the willingness I have experienced by LFA staff to incorporate different ideas and data into our report to enhance and strengthen the overall picture of the programs our department offers.

Their close proximity to our office. Their personal attention to issues.

Flexibility in evaluating our many different kinds of programs with many different types of evaluation; helping us balance our program's needs with our funders' needs; teaching us to do whatever we can on our own; responsiveness to last minute requests; going way above and beyond what is required in order to make our lives simpler.

The people that work at LFA are very skilled at what they do and have the technical expertise needed. They write well and I have been able to use their work to demonstrate our effectiveness with our clients to grant making agencies and agencies responsible for monitoring us. In addition they are pleasant to work with and extremely flexible. And they are compassionate. This is all very rare to find in evaluators.

Team is fun to work with and professional; flexibility; knowledge and expertise of nonprofit sector; ability to bring outside research into reports.

Very responsive, quick to understand scope of work, flexible and extremely knowledgeable.

LFA provides exemplary evaluation services particularly in the realm of youth and organizational development. Their knowledge of the field in general and professional expertise has provided tremendous gains in moving the work of the SF Juvenile Probation Department and its service provisions.

Good understanding of the philanthropic infrastructure. Good group facilitation skills.

Professionalism, presentation skills, team has good depth of experience, fun to work with, well read and willing to take on the work.

Knowledgeable, can put theory into practice, give great feedback for improvement.

Knowledge, ability to communicate complicated issues in English, flexibility to address our specific needs, cost.

They got the big picture but also had the detail orientation and quant skills to do the analysis -- and then tie it all together. They were communicative, responsive, and a pleasure to deal with.

Quick studies - understand our business. Easy to work with. Meet deadlines. Flexible. Professional.

They are flexible and try to understand the individual project they are working on.

Their professionalism is tops in terms of delivering what was promised, and yet they are more than willing to change course when that has to happen. I really appreciate their teamwork approach.

Extremely conscientious/responsive/flexible. Visionary yet precise/detail-oriented. Quality of Deliverables Team approach gives us a variety of skills. Able to work successfully with a wide variety of people/orgs.

Strong customer service and willingness to listen to the client. Steven's genuine interest in performing a top-notch job.

Good ability to model evaluation on the needs of the project.

Good grasp of evaluation issues; ability to meet deadlines.

Experience with the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. Ability to listen and communicate effectively. Ability to learn from and transfer experience to new endeavors. Clear about deliverables. Flexible.

Steven is an excellent facilitator. He responds to client input in a very positive way. It also seems that the crew back in the office is good at the quantitative work. Surveys, etc.

Availability, intelligence and passion for the work we do.

Writing and analytical skills. Broad set of skills/expertise within the consultant pool.

Excellent quality of work and products; reliability; communication skills; responsiveness to clients; adaptability.

### **How could LFA improve its services?**

On the two projects I worked with LFA on this year many deadlines were missed, one of LFA's staff is not as courteous or responsive as the rest of their wonderful team -- I felt like he had a hard time understanding that we were his client. Also, there were some fairly significant errors in a final report that was turned in this year.

Sometimes it would be great to have staff with some of the program content knowledge already - like in addition to their evaluation etc. skills - to have folks with direct nonprofit experience in various programs and capacities - subject matter (like education, health, etc.) as well as management/capacity building.

I think LFA does a great job and responds well to all of our needs.

Improve their ability to communicate with various audiences. Their more laid back nature does not serve them well in this competitive environment. They need to demonstrate more initiative and consistency with follow-through and communication with their clients.

I've heard them say they'd like to train people how to evaluate (youth, for example), in which case I'd suggest the staff get some specific training on working with youth or that they hire some folks who have specific expertise in that area. Same goes for any specific population they'd like to work with.

I have not one suggestion.

When reassigning work to newer staff, make sure they are brought up to speed. Liaison with agency staff when data questions arise and try to respond a bit quicker.

It would be helpful to have more insights and connectivity of the juvenile justice field (arena) to further promote best practice, enhance service delivery systems and linkages to national/international models.

This is a small comment, but better proofing of materials before sharing with the client would be helpful.

I believe the Commission and its collaborators might better understand materials with more county specific examples and less evaluation theory.

No suggestions.

I get the sense that some staff working on our project sometimes are not as up to speed about our needs and our project. As a result we have had to go back and reiterate (sometimes more than once) specific context about our program. perhaps having a couple of more senior staff members might help? I think that perhaps they get overcommitted.

I think their billing needs to be improved. There have been two mistakes we have caught this year. Hasn't happened in the past. May be new billing software or glitches in the system.

I can't think of anything at the moment.

Sometimes the staff have not turned in the best products to us and we have had to do a great deal of editing and shaping of the report. Steven comes in usually then and is wonderful, so we end up getting what we want in the long run, and the process feels very collaborative.

Need better follow-through and broader base of skills.

Clearer communication; increased cultural competence of CBO perspective, racial minority issues and cultural dynamics of communication.

Monitor the number of clients it takes on at one time and the reality of how much time projects take. In the earlier days, it appeared that clients were able to deal more directly with Steven. Delegating to new staff makes sense, but we have been a bit disappointed in results until Steven stepped in again. I understand the tension between keeping sufficient projects in the works to keep folks employed, but I hope the firm doesn't become so big that it loses the initial vision and quality that Steven brought to the enterprise.

There's a fit issue some times. Some of LFA's consultants are better suited for specific types of clients and less well suited for others. Same goes for roles on the project team. It's a specific skill to be a good facilitator. Not everyone has that skill, so LFA could benefit from playing to each individual's strengths.

Circle back to the client to see how materials/information were used.

More communication about what is needed from me (client) to stay on top of timeliness -this is the first time we have used an evaluator in this large, ongoing capacity - need feedback on how some decisions impact our future outcomes/ goals / direction.

### **Please share any additional comments.**

Overall, they are excellent.

Steven is extraordinarily well-qualified and wonderful to work with on projects. He's quick, easy-going and flexible and has terrific interactions with staff and contractors. I'd hire LFA again for work on new projects--he's a resource for brainstorming solutions in many different areas!!

At this stage, LFA has analyzed our needs and designed an evaluation plan. Opportunities for greater interaction and satisfaction are coming as staff and LFA work with the nuts and bolts of the individual elements of that evaluation plan.

Very pleasant to work with, responsive to issues as they arise, flexible when confronted with delays or obstacles

The reason I come back to LaFrance is their work ethic, their knowledge about nonprofit/grantmaker capacity building and thus their reach into the field, and their willingness to help us achieve our goals on our terms.

We will work with them going forward.

Communication decreased during Gaylon's maternity leave - which was understandable.

## NON-CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS

### CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH LFA SERVICES

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**Are there comments you feel comfortable sharing directly with LFA?** *Please use the space below to provide any feedback to be separated from the confidential questions and shared directly with LFA. Please note that this feedback may be published with your name on the LFA website.*

I have worked with LFA to evaluate several of our foundation's initiative, and they have always had a great and timely product. I will continue to recommend them to my philanthropic and nonprofit colleagues.

*Cassandra Benjamin, formerly program officer, Schwab Foundation*

We love working with LFA and they have helped us demystify 'evaluation.' We know that working with them will only help our programs become stronger and viewed as a benefit to our communities.

*Roxanna Bautista, Chronic Diseases Program Director,  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum*

Sarah Barengo has been excellent to work with. Sarah demonstrates a high level of professionalism and is always available for feedback and 'planning'. In addition, she has been terrific in working with some of our more difficult contractors which has been much appreciated. I have enjoyed working with Sarah and would recommend her and LFA very strongly!

*Kristen Lee, Department Analyst, Sonoma County Probation Department*

I'm proud to say HIFY was LFA's first client! Working with them has transformed us as an agency. Because of what we've learned from them about evaluation in general and our programs in specific, we can talk intelligently with funders about what we are trying to measure and what the limits are to what we can measure with the resources we have. The data and reports we get from them are clear and easy to understand, so we can actually use them in program development and improvement. We never think about developing a new program without thinking about how we're going to evaluate it at the same time--that's the LFA influence. Evaluation makes some people want to take a nap, but they make it easy for us and not so overwhelming, so we're excited about doing it each time. I've worked with many consultants, and my experience with LFA is the best I've ever had.

*Sharon Dolan, Executive Director, Health Initiatives for Youth*

The LFA team was knowledgeable, professional and a pleasure to work with. We look forward to working with them again on future projects.

*Linda Min Program and Evaluation Officer Community Foundation Silicon Valley*

You can use the previous comments or edit as needed for the website!

(repeated from confidential answers above) Very responsive, quick to understand scope of work, flexible and extremely knowledgeable.

Steven is extraordinarily well qualified and wonderful to work with on projects. He's quick, easy-going and flexible and has terrific interactions with staff and contractors. I'd hire LFA again for work on new projects--he's a resource for brainstorming solutions in many different areas!!

*Michele Jackson, Executive Director, Shelter Network*

Evaluation is the method for continuous improvement. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your process.

*Liz Jackson-Simpson, Director, Community Programs Division, Juvenile Probation Department*

Any of the above can be shared. I have said it all directly to them, however, so it won't be news. (repeated from confidential answers above) They got the big picture but also had the detail orientation and quant skills to do the analysis -- and then tie it all together. They were communicative, responsive, and a pleasure to deal with. We will work with them going forward.

*Phil Buchanan, Executive Director, Center for Effective Philanthropy*

Their professionalism is tops in terms of delivering what was promised, and yet they are more than willing to change course when that has to happen. I really appreciate their teamwork approach.

*Bob Gordon, Project Director, CA LGBT Tobacco Education Partnership*

LFA staff: Are extremely conscientious/responsive/flexible. Are visionary yet precise/detail-oriented. Produce high-quality deliverables. Utilize a team approach to give us a variety of skills. Are able to work successfully with a wide variety of people/orgs. Are creative. Are both encouraging and able to help us see ways to improve. Really listen. Are respectful, thoughtful and gently humorous in their approach. Are undefensive and reflective and always working to improve their work even through the quality is already very high. Really care about children and families and it shows in the dedication, commitment and they bring to their work.

*Christina Linville, Executive Director, First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission*

Yes.

(repeated from confidential answers above) Strong customer service and willingness to listen to the client. Steven's genuine interest in performing a top-notch job.

*Carol Gray, Executive Director, Peninsula Community Foundation*

You can share anything that I've said in the above survey directly with LFA.

(repeated from confidential answers above) Steven is an excellent facilitator. He responds to client input in a very positive way. It also seems that the crew back in the office is good at the quantitative work. Surveys, etc.

*Kathleen Enright, Executive Director, GEO*

I feel confident about LFA's work, knowledge of the field, flexibility and commitment/ values to community empowerment/advocacy.

*ManChui Leung, HIV Program Director, Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum*

**LFA CLIENT EVALUATION SURVEY**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this survey is to gather your feedback to improve LFA services. This survey is being analyzed by an independent evaluator, Cristina Cielo. Cristina will present all information **confidentially**. If you have any questions, please contact Cristina at [mccielo@berkeley.edu](mailto:mccielo@berkeley.edu) or 510-847-2166.

**Your Name:**

**Date:**

**Your Title:**

**Your Organization:**

**Your Project with LFA is:**    Ongoing    Completed

**SATISFACTION WITH THE PROJECT AND RESULTS**

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with LFA's work.

How satisfied are you with...	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	NA/No Opinion
1. LFA's project coordination and management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Work products and documentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Timeliness of project completion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The extent to which LFA services increased your organization's skills, knowledge, and/or systems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The overall quality of the work performed by LFA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SATISFACTION WITH THE PROJECT TEAM**

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the LFA team member(s) who worked with your organization.

How satisfied are you with the LFA team member's...	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	NA/No Opinion
6. Communication skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Knowledge and expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Understanding of your organization's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Creativity and flexibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Responsiveness/follow through.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>1</sup> Developed by LaFrance Associates, LLC. This survey is a modified version of a client satisfaction survey LFA developed for CompassPoint Nonprofit Services.



**OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH LFA**

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- 11. Would you recommend LFA's services to a colleague?  Yes  No
  
- 12. Would you hire LFA again?  Yes  No
  
- 13. What are LFA's strengths?
  
- 14. How LFA could improve its services?
  
- 15. Please share any additional comments.

**(continued on next page)**

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by LaFrance Associates, LLC. This survey is a modified version of a client satisfaction survey LFA developed for CompassPoint Nonprofit Services.



**LAFRANCE ASSOCIATES**

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**LFA CLIENT FEEDBACK FORM**

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*Are there comments you feel comfortable sharing directly with LFA?*

Please use the space below to provide any thoughts, suggestions or feedback to be separated from the confidential questions and shared directly with LFA. Please note that this feedback may be published with your name on the LFA website. Thank you for your time.

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**Your Name:**

**Date:**

**Your Title:**

**Your Organization:**