

Workforce Education and Training MHSA Volunteer Program Report Data from: April 2015 through March 2016

OVERVIEW

The purpose of Workforce Education and Training programs is to create and maintain a public mental health workforce which includes clients and family members, and that has the size, diversity, skills, and resources to deliver compassionate, safe, timely and effective mental health services to all individuals who are in need. Programs need to contribute to increased prevention, wellness, recovery, and resiliency. The intent is to provide programs to address identified shortages in occupations, skill sets, and cultural competencies in public mental health programs. To help meet these objectives, Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) launched the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Volunteer Program in fiscal year 2012-13.

PROGRAM AVENUES

During this reporting period, the volunteer program underwent significant growth and change. There are currently three avenues under the overarching umbrella of the volunteer program: General Volunteering, the Shasta College Student Volunteer Internship Program, and the Shasta MHSA Academy. Each of these areas is slightly different, but they all have the same underlying purpose: to provide individuals training and hands-on exploration of what it is like to work in the public mental health field. Participants may start in any one of the three avenues, may be simultaneously involved with two or all three avenues, and may move back and forth between the avenues (as schedules and interest allow).

GENERAL VOLUNTEERING

This portion of the program provides people with or without lived experience of mental illness a chance to not only give back to their community, but also get a broad introduction into what it is like to work in the mental health field. General Volunteers are provided with orientation to HHS and 16 hours of training. Participants learn about a variety of topics including: wellness and recovery, stigma, ethics and boundaries, communication, strengths-based focus, professionalism, and customer service. General Volunteers, also referred to as 'Navigators', spend their time helping to create a welcoming environment in the waiting area, escorting clients and family members to the offices they need to visit, assisting clients with completing forms and surveys, and assisting staff in completing special projects.

THE SHASTA COLLEGE STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In September of 2015, the MHSA program began partnering with Shasta College (the local community college) to provide students interested in the mental health field hands-on learning and experience through the MHSA Volunteer Program. Each student receives one unit of college credit for spending at least 60 hours volunteering and job shadowing mental health staff.

SHASTA MHSA ACADEMY STUDENTS

The Shasta MHSA Academy is a free 65-hour training program designed to help individuals prepare for careers within the public mental health field and/or equips them to become peer mentors. Participants are provided with opportunities to learn new information, strengthen skills, and network with mental health professionals. The Academy is divided into two main parts: 45 hours of interactive classroom-based learning and 20 hours of hands-on learning. Classroom learning is based on curriculum from the International Association of Peer Specialist (iNAPS) and reflects the national ethical guidelines and practice standards for peer supporters. Hands-on learning covers training in group dynamics, meeting facilitation, stakeholder engagement, peer interaction, and center-based program delivery. Participants spend time volunteering in local wellness centers and the main Shasta County mental health facility, are required to participate in advisory groups and/or stakeholder meetings, and shadow staff.

PARTICIPANTS

All avenues of the MHSA Volunteer Program are open to any individual 18 years of age or over, who desires an introduction to the public mental health system and the opportunity to explore their interest in and suitability for this type of work. Potential participants were selected based on their completed application form, successful interview, and a comprehensive background check including fingerprinting if necessary. For potential participants who were: (1) already employed by HHSa or one of the community wellness centers and had therefor completed background clearance before being hired, or (2) who planned on attending classes and working their hours solely at one of the community wellness centers, fingerprinting and background clearance were not required.

A total of 92 completed, unduplicated applications for participation were received in the most recent 12 months of data available. This is an 80% increase over the number of applications received in the prior report period, which was 27 months in length. Of those 92 applications, five individuals chose not to complete the interview process. Of the remaining 87 applicants, 63 (68%) were fingerprinted during this report period, and an additional 14 applicants (16%) did not require fingerprinting. Two individuals were still in process, but had not completed fingerprinting and background as of the end of this reporting period. Two other individuals were not passed to fingerprinting as they were under 18 years of age and not eligible to participate. The remaining 6 individuals who were not fingerprinted were lost to follow-up or chose not to pursue volunteering further at this time.

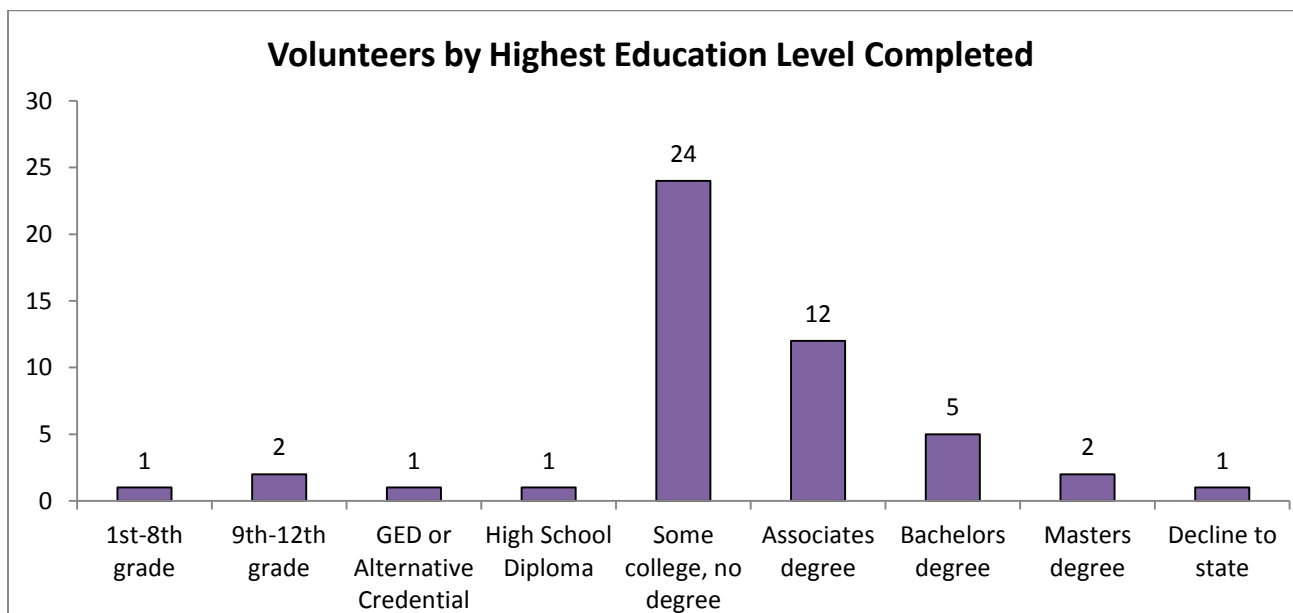
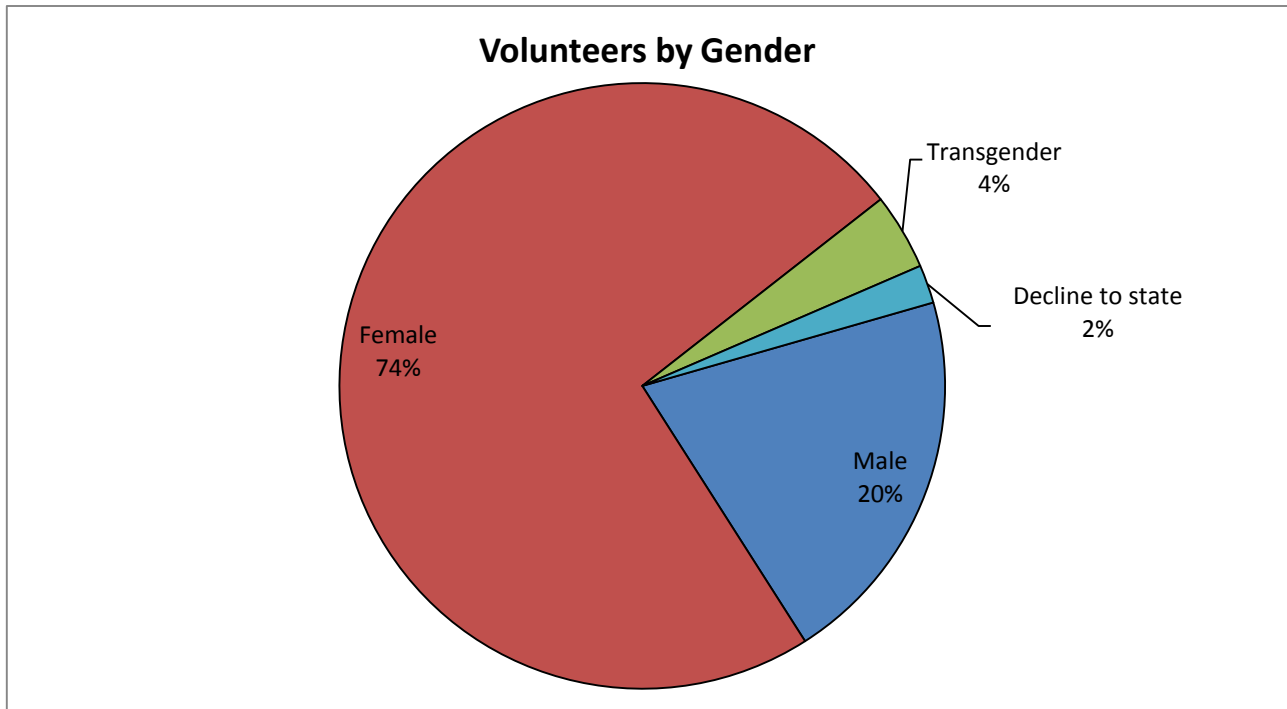
Of the 63 applicants who were fingerprinted, 56 individuals (89%) cleared Risk Management and were approved to be volunteers. Two did not receive clearance, but one of those individuals was later determined to not need clearance as the specific participation they wished to pursue was solely at one of the community wellness centers. Five individuals were still awaiting clearance at the end of this reporting period.

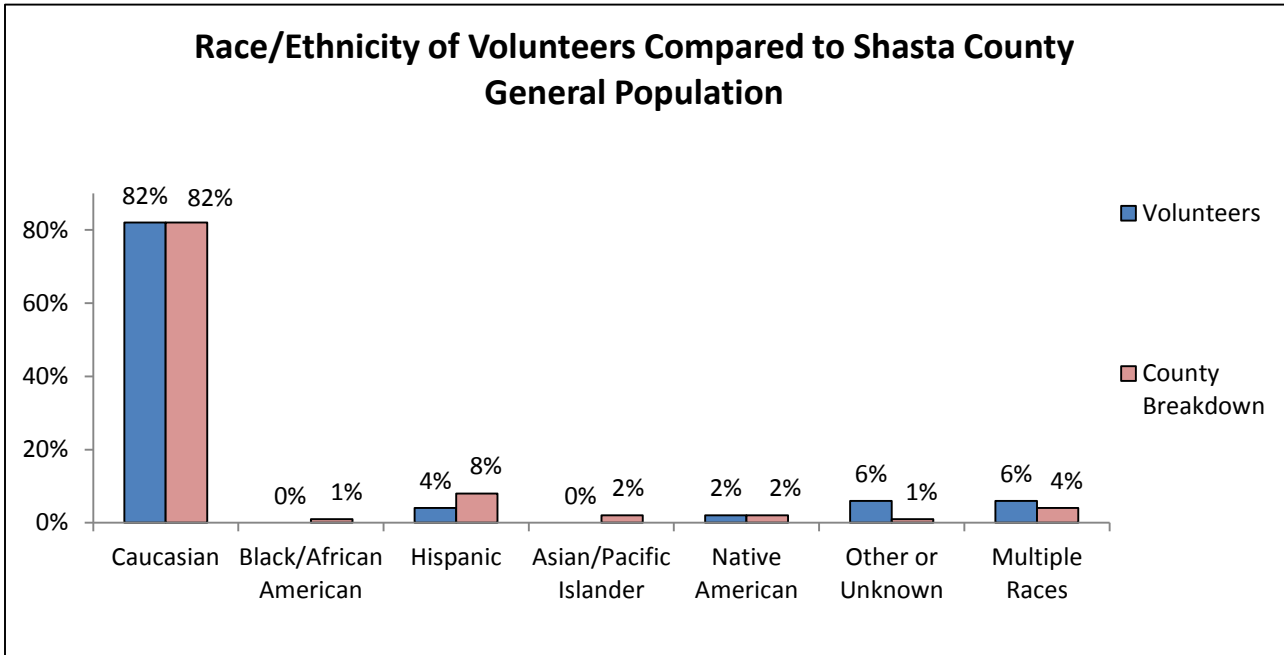
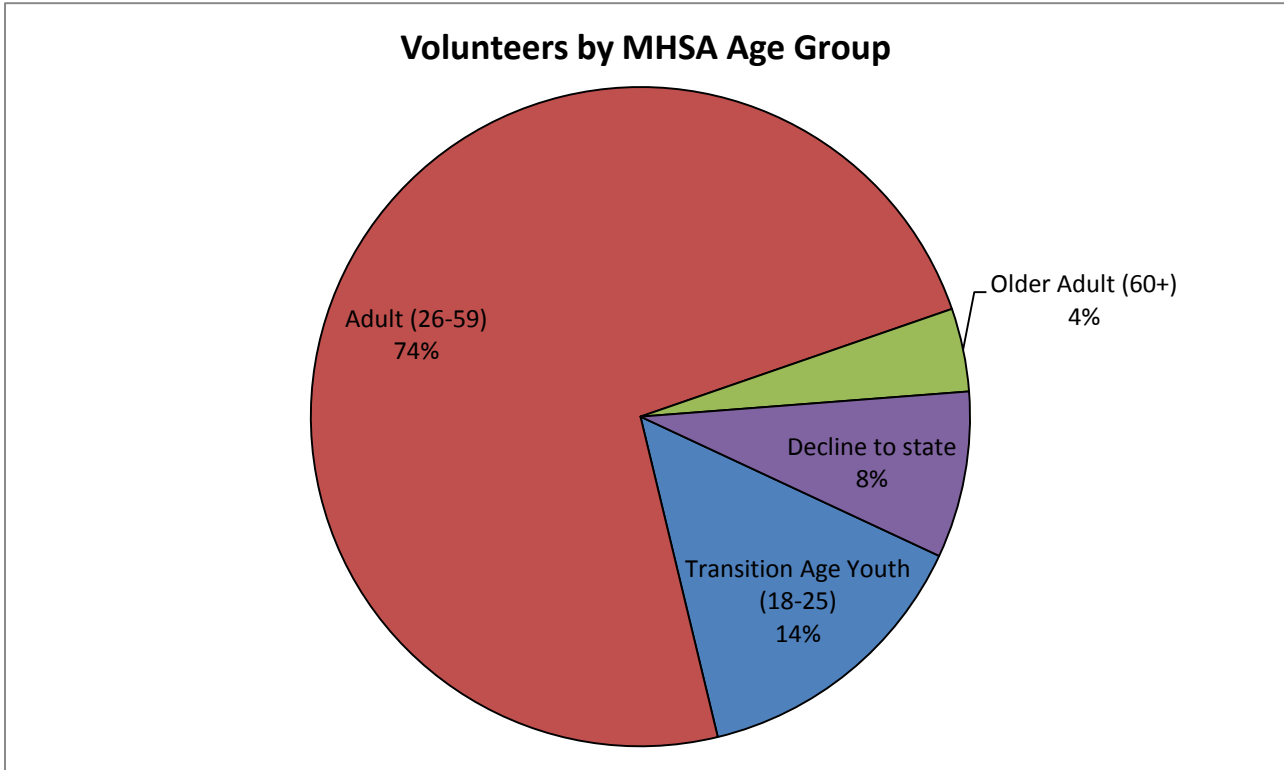
Out of the 71 individuals eligible to participate (the 56 who cleared Risk Management plus the 15 who did not require clearance), 57 (80%) participated in one or more avenues of the MHSA Volunteer Program during this reporting period. Five individuals are on the waiting list for the next Shasta MHSA Academy class and are not currently volunteering in any capacity. One student intern received clearance too late to complete their hours during the spring school semester, but is scheduled to participate during the upcoming summer term. One other individual moved out of the country but would like to participate upon return to Shasta County. Six

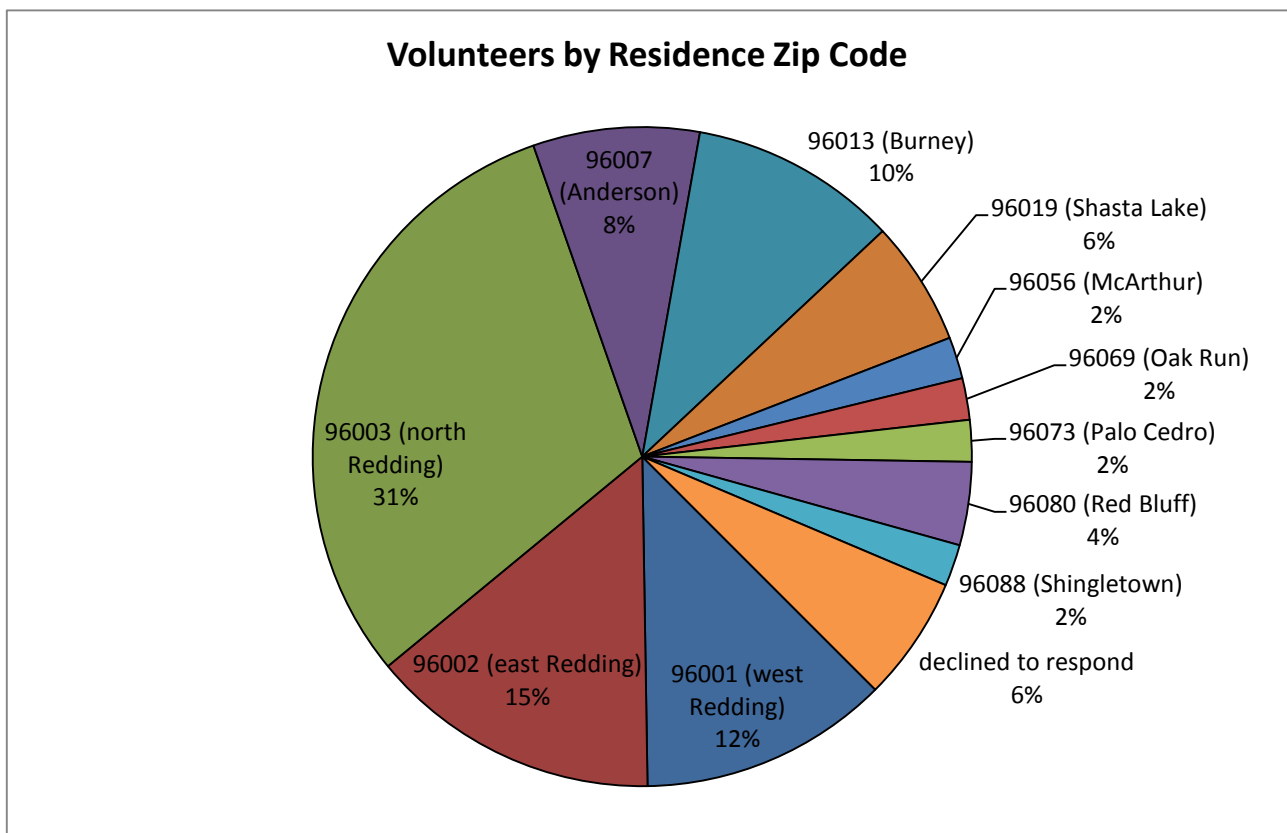
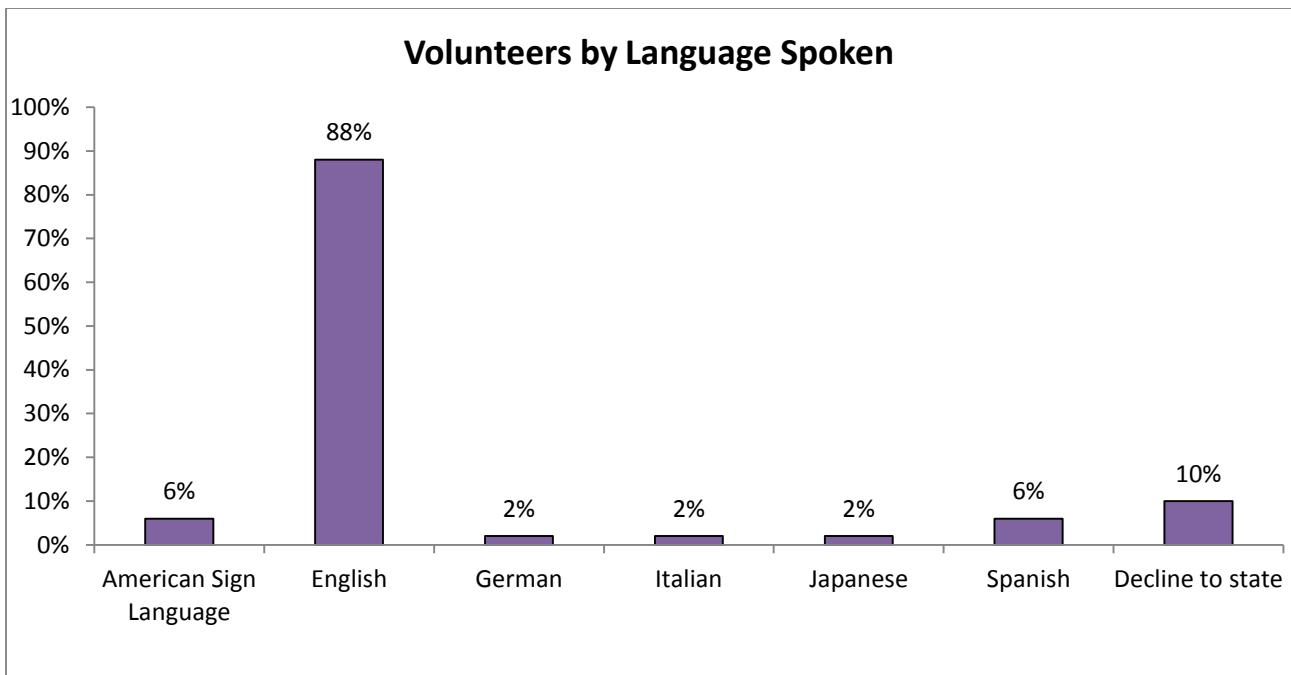
individuals were lost to follow-up (4 of which were interested in the Shasta MHSA Academy but did not clear in time for their desired cohort) and one individual obtained a criminal record subsequent to passing fingerprinting which resulted in their clearance being revoked.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic information was collected on a voluntary basis. There were 49 demographics forms submitted. Because of the relatively low numbers, and because participants could and did move between avenues, all demographics have been consolidated and reported in aggregate.





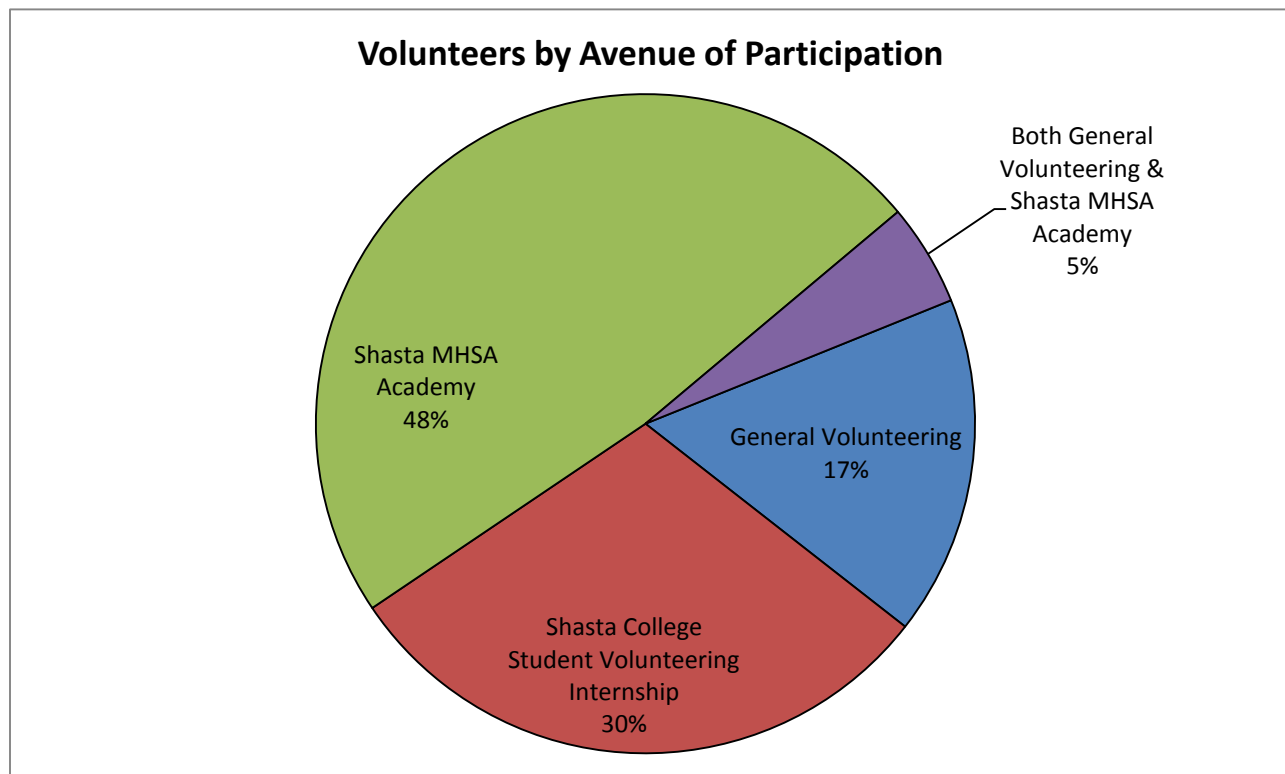


Thirty-nine percent of volunteers identified as consumers of mental health services, and another 39% identified as family members of consumers. Other cultural identifications reported were Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2%), LGBTQ (8%) and Veteran (10%).

PARTICIPATION LEVEL

All individuals who cleared background check were provided with an orientation to HHSa programs and services, and were asked to participate in mandatory trainings. The mandatory trainings required were tailored to each specific avenue of volunteering, but all covered the main topics of boundaries, professionalism, and confidentiality (including HIIPA training).

Each General Volunteering participant was also required to complete at least two one-on-one navigator trainings with a Community Mental Health Worker employed by the Volunteer Program. During these trainings, volunteers received hands-on skill building and instruction. Before navigating alone, a volunteer needed to demonstrate competency as verified independently by Volunteer Program staff members.



GENERAL VOLUNTEERING

Of the 57 applicants who were approved to be volunteers, 13 (23%) participated in General Volunteering. Six of these volunteers were still currently active at the end of the reporting period, and three of these six were also on the waiting list for the next Shasta MHSa Academy class. Three volunteers stopped General Volunteering in order to begin participating in the Shasta MHSa Academy classes which occurred in this reporting period, and are also reflected in the numbers for that avenue below. One volunteer was forced to withdraw from volunteering due to significant personal health issues. The remaining 3 volunteers were participating as part of their CalWORKs employment activities engagement, and completed the required number of hours they needed.

THE SHASTA COLLEGE STUDENT VOLUNTEERING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Of the 57 applicants who were approved to be volunteers, 18 (32%) participated in the Shasta College Student Volunteering Internship Program. Five of the students completed all 60 hours of participation during this report period, and an additional 7 students were in the process of completing their hours at the end of this reporting period. Two students were dropped soon after applying as a result of scheduling conflicts, and 4 more were not a good fit for the program.

THE SHASTA MHSA ACADEMY

Of the 57 applicants who were approved to be volunteers, 29 (51%) participated in the Shasta MHSA Academy. Fifteen of them successfully completed the entire curriculum and graduated, while another 10 were currently participating and on track to graduate after this reporting period. Of the 4 who did not graduate, 2 withdrew due to personal mental health set-backs, 1 decided this course did not match his educational goals, and 1 had religious objections to the curriculum.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Due to staffing changes and program tracking refinement, not all volunteer hours were captured. Records are only available from July 1, 2015 forward during this reporting period. In that time, there were 98.5 hours recorded for General Volunteering participation, 279.75 hours of Shasta College Student Volunteering Internship participation (this includes hours volunteered both at the Shasta County HHSA Adult Services office and other locations such as the 2 community wellness centers), and 36.5 hours of Shasta MHSA Academy participants volunteering outside classroom time. This adds up to over 400 hours of volunteer time in a 9-month period.

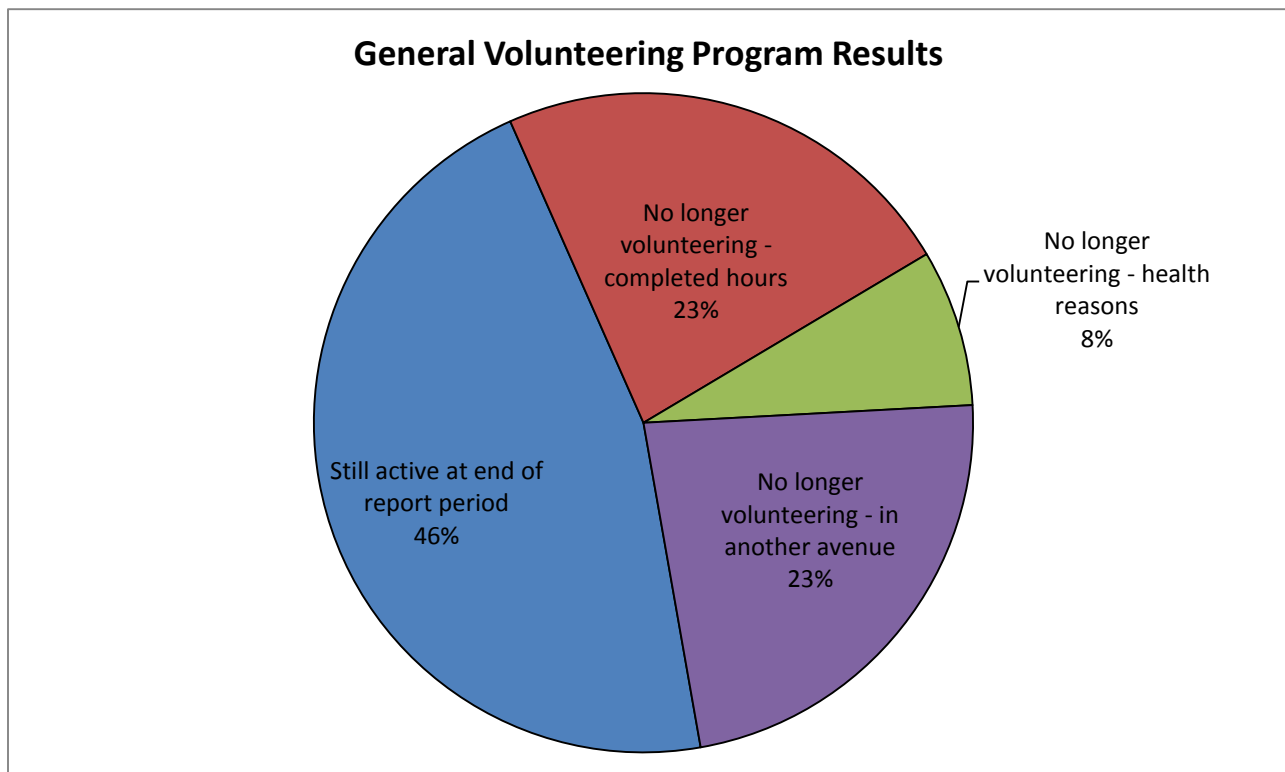
OUTCOMES

PROGRAM RESULTS

It appears from the numbers of applicants and participants tracked that both new avenues of the program, namely the Shasta College Student Volunteering Internship Program and the Shasta MHSA Academy, have been very well received. The overall drop-out rate has continued to decline, and participation has improved since the last report.

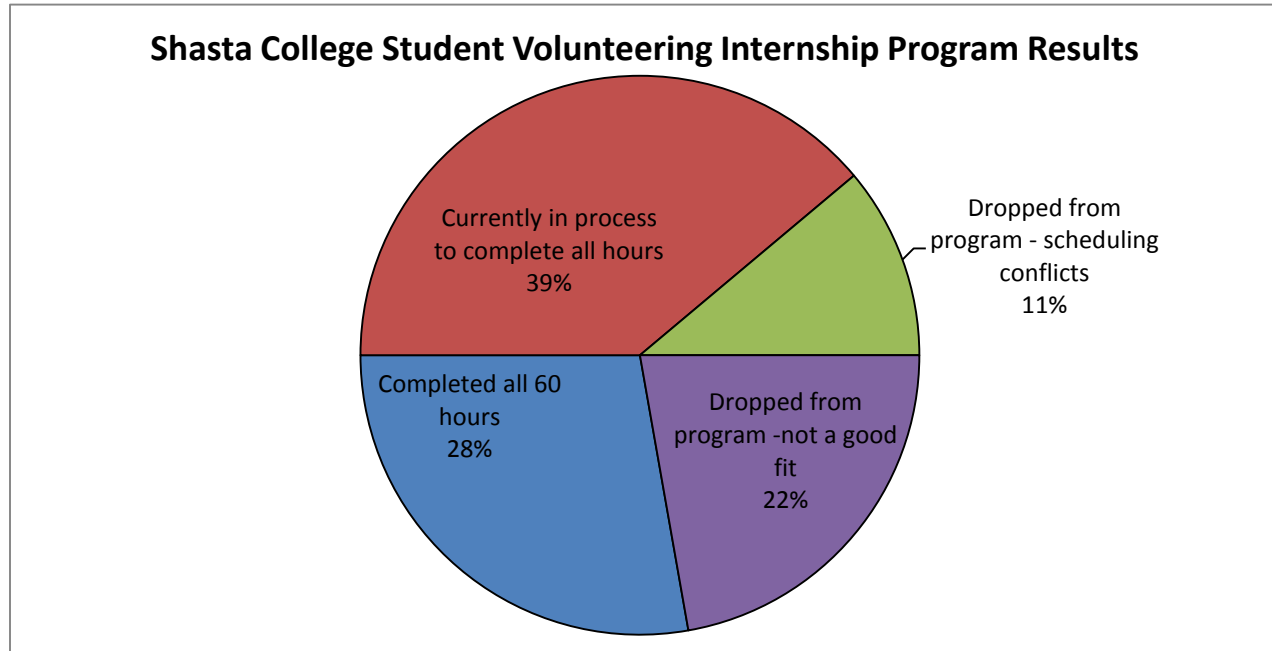
GENERAL VOLUNTEERING

In General Volunteering, at the end of the report quarter there were 69% of participants still active either within this avenue (46%), or within another avenue of the Volunteer Program (23%), compared to only 30% who remained active in the previous 27-month reporting period.



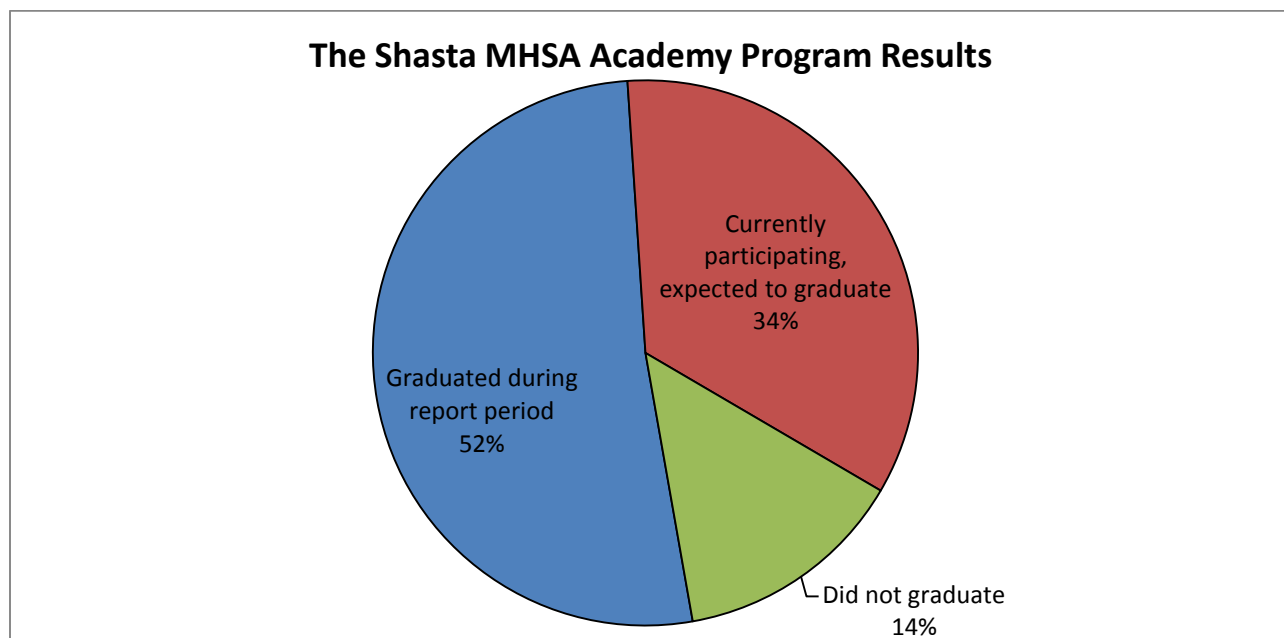
THE SHASTA COLLEGE STUDENT VOLUNTEERING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

As this avenue is new to the Volunteer Program this reporting period, there is no previous data to compare. However, it appears implementation of this program was successful, as demonstrated by expected completion of the program by 67% of the participants.



THE SHASTA MHSA ACADEMY

This avenue is also new to the Volunteer Program this reporting period, so there is again no previous data to compare. But again, it appears implementation of this program was successful, as demonstrated by the overall number of applicants for this particular avenue, and the expected graduation of 86% of the participants.



INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

Not all of the impact of a program such as the Volunteer Program can be measured simply with numbers and statistics. The anecdotal evidence for the positive growth and success for the expanded Volunteer Program with its multiple avenues of participation can also be found in some of the satisfaction surveys, comments and individual stories.

THE SHASTA COLLEGE STUDENT VOLUNTEERING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The majority of the participants in this program, as well as the college instructor at Shasta College, have had very positive reactions and feedback. As just one example of how transformative this program has been, one of the student interns (the last quote in this section) is now employed in the field with HHSA – the exact result hoped for in Workforce Education and Training programs. Here is a sampling of some of the participant's thoughts on the Shasta College Student Volunteering Internship Program and the experiences they have had with it:

- *“My experience interning has been pretty amazing thus far. Not only have the SCMh staff members been kind enough to let me shadow them, the clients have also been very accepting of me and have graciously allowed me to participate in their personal and group affairs.”*
- *“I think one of the greatest things that I’ve learned is that there are a lot of programs in our community than I never knew existed. In conjunction with this, I feel like ... SCMh [doesn’t get] the recognition it deserves. I’m grateful for my experience at SCMh as it’s given me the opportunity to learn factual information about the mental health field in our community.”*
- *“So far, this internship has done more than meet my expectations as it’s been able to give me an inside look at what working in the social field would be like. And let’s be honest, this is something you typically don’t get to do unless you’re already employed somewhere. So, I really appreciate that SCMh has paired with Shasta College to give students the opportunity to peer into their windows (so to speak).”*
- *“I was able to sit in on client intake and treatment plan appointments. I did not realize the extent of services and technical process involved. [The clinician] was kind, understanding and sensitive in her questions and responses to clients. The vulnerability of the clients was quite startling to me. They were very honest about their mental dysfunctions, medications, and their reactions to the medication. Each client went into depth about their history, experience, and concerns. Growing up in a society where mental health issues and struggles are not openly discussed, I found their honesty courageous and refreshing.”*
- *“It was an amazing opportunity and I met some incredible individuals, both employees and clients. I am thankful for their patience and careful consideration of my many questions. It was an honor to be allowed to shadow and observe them in their day to day activities. The employees were gracious, accommodating, and kind. I am so appreciative of the time spent with me and the education I was able to gain in their presence.”*

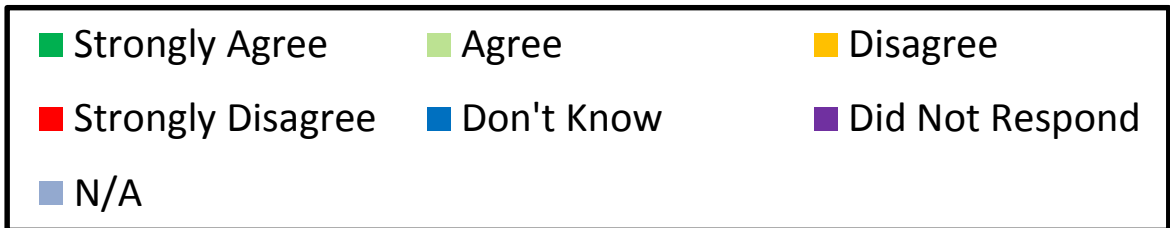
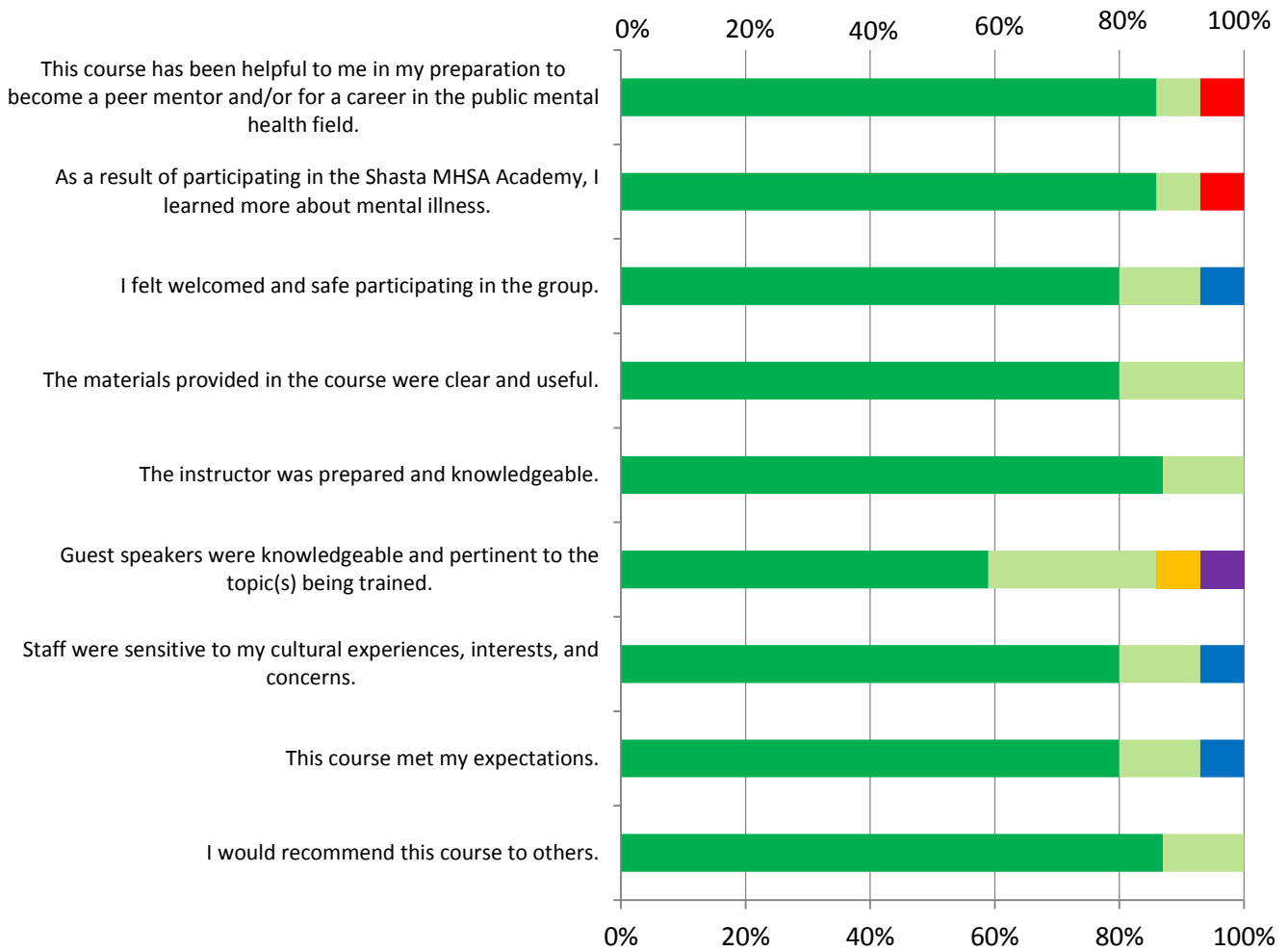
- *“On my first day of the internship, I had the pleasure of sitting in on a Clinician’s meeting. ...Aspiring to one day become a Clinician, I was very fascinated with being present for this process. This experience was much more than something to just put on my future applications and resumes; it has honestly changed my view on my major and life in general. My view on mental health has expanded greatly and I am amazed at all the resources offered in Shasta County alone. I had the pleasure of meeting so many new people, in different walks of life, and being invited in their lives. Every single staff member at Shasta County Health and Human Services department was extremely kind and thankful for my time being spent there. After months of waiting for an internship to be placed on my plate, I am so happy to have this one come into my life. It was a wonderful experience that I would highly recommend to anyone.”*
- *“I was so excited to begin the internship as I knew it was going to open doors for me that I would not have had access to otherwise. The most valuable thing, in my opinion, was firsthand experience in the field that I love. I was able to see what a Social Worker/Case Manager deals with on a day-to-day basis, which let me see what a career option would be with my Bachelor’s degree. As far as how this will affect my education, it just will further push me to continue towards my educational goals of at least my BA. However, most of the employees I shadowed encouraged me to push through towards a MA while I’m young and in school mode, as the opportunities only increase along with my education. Instead of being limited to social worker, I could be a therapist, LCSW, psychologist, the list goes on. I also thought I might decide what specific field of psychology I wanted after this internship, but it only further opened my mind to the options.”*
- *“The mental health team is phenomenal and I feel very lucky to have been included in their lives for this short period of time. I am so grateful for this opportunity and it really changed my life. ...I was under the impression that if I’m in school then I should just work a dead-end job that barely makes ends meet because that’s what everyone does while continuing their education. After spending just two months volunteering at mental health, I suddenly couldn’t stand the thought of not being able to grow at my job. I’ve started looking into jobs available to me at mental health and I am happy to report I have already had one successful interview and am scheduled for my second ... The job I’m applying for is community mental health worker, which is mostly clerical duties; however there is plenty of room for advancement and it only is just beginning. This internship broadened my horizons and completely revamped my life and outlook. Thank you so much!”*

THE SHASTA MHSA ACADEMY PROGRAM

Reviewing course evaluation from the two cohorts of Shasta MHSA Academy that concluded during this report period, it is obvious that all the participants found the curriculum covered to be helpful, informative and useful. On all of the Likert-scale questions, over 90% of the responses received for each question were positive in nature. On the specific questions regarding the instructor, course materials and whether they would recommend this course, 100% of the responses were positive.

Shasta MHSA Academy Course Evaluations - Scaled Questions
April 2014 through March 2015

Total surveys collected = 15



As far as the pace of the Shasta MHSA Academy curriculum, 80% of participants found the pace to be just right, with 13% reporting it was a little too fast and 7% feeling it was a little too slow. No one reported it as much too fast or slow.

Some of the free-text comments received on the course evaluations are as follows:

- *“I think time was spent where the class needed it the most. Everything was managed great.”*
- *“The greatest strength [in this course] is the instructor. Her knowledge, compassion & willingness to spend more time in areas the class needed is a huge asset. Instructors for other classes in the past have not always been so compassionate & helpful. Thank you.”*
- *“I was happy with it all!”*
- *“Thank you for this opportunity.”*

FUTURE PLANS

The successes and positive outcomes seen in this reporting period, specifically with the expansion of the Volunteer Program to three separate avenues, are very encouraging. Shasta County HHSA is planning on maintaining the three existing avenues, and is looking at various options for continued growth.

Also, in addition to the existing satisfaction surveys, there are plans underway to create a follow-up system to check in with former participants at 6 months and 12 months after they have completed any avenue of the Volunteer Program. This check in will be to look at what former participants have done with the knowledge and experience that they gained through the various Volunteer Program avenues, and how it has impacted their career choices and lives. This outcome information will help guide Shasta County HHSA in future program growth decisions.