

Strategic Directive 13

Customer Service

Update to the Tacoma Public Utility Board

October 27, 2021



Customer Service

2021 Challenges

- COVID effects
- Lobby closure & reopening
- Reconstitution planning
- Overdue items & moratorium
- Payment assistance

TPU Continues to Deliver

- High customer satisfaction & engagement
- New CX Board
- New outage map
- AMI Customer Portal development
- Evergreen Options grant
- Water grant & loan program
- Utility Modernization

Communications

Connecting customers with resources during COVID

- 2020 Emergency Assistance Program – distributed in multiple languages
- 2020 CARES funds for small businesses
- 2020 Rates outreach – transitioned model from in-person outreach to virtual
- 2021 Pierce County Emergency Rental Assistance funds – marketing combined with calls and letters from customer service staff
- 2021 Lobby re-opening with online appointment setting system



●●● Communications

Preparing customers for resumption of disconnection services resuming in 2022

- Leverage high-visibility partnerships to increase awareness and word-of-mouth
- Create a sense of urgency around other factors
- Reflect & echo messaging from the State and other agencies
- Use our customer data for more impactful direct communications
- Increase frequency in TPU channels

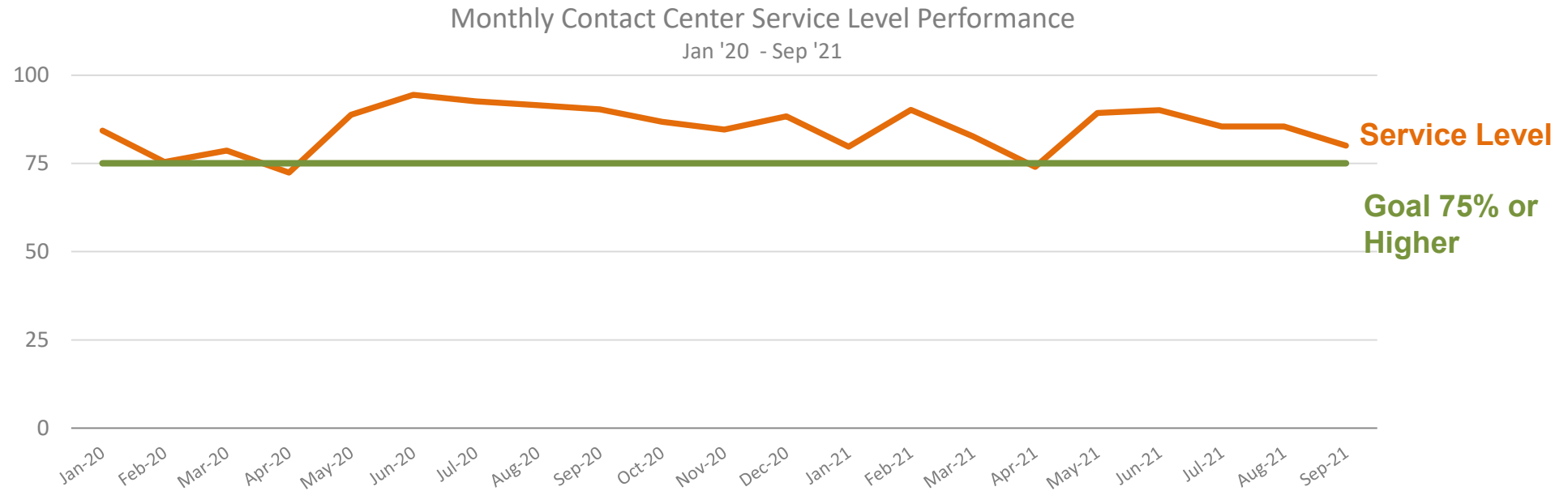


Measurements

●●● Contact Center Service level

84.7%

of 499,358 inbound customer calls from January 1st, 2020 through September 30th, 2021 were **answered by a live agent within 30 seconds** exceeding the target goal of 75% or more

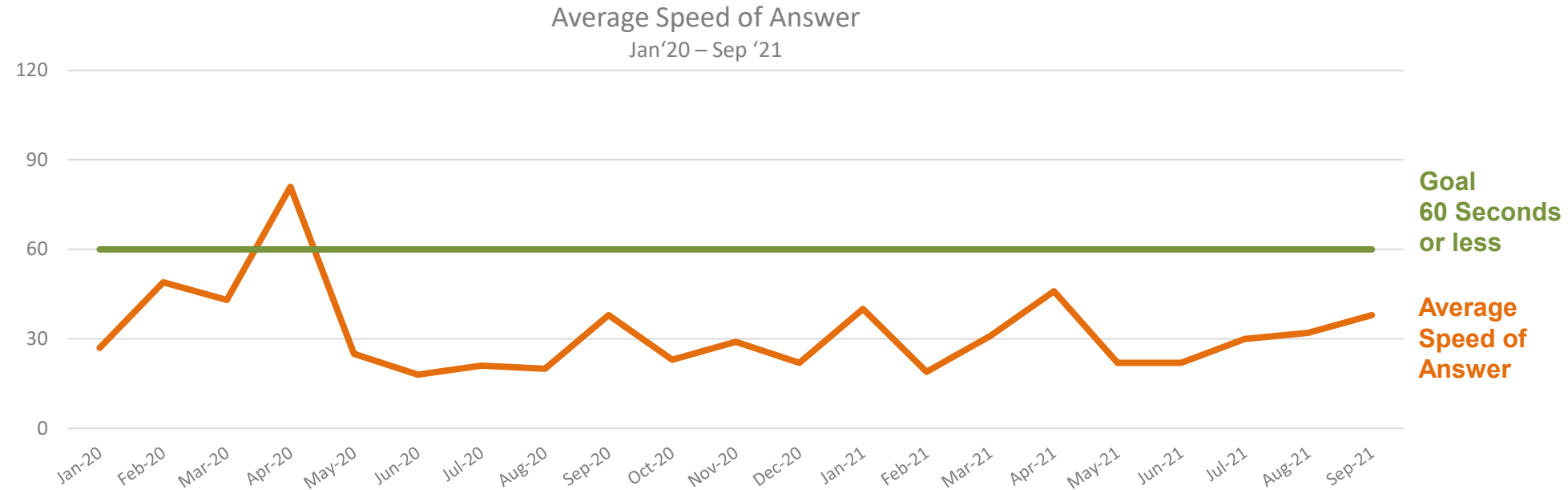


- Customer Services is committed to **delivering quality service in an efficient manner**. By exceeding this industry metric TPU demonstrates respect for our customers time and an eagerness to serve our community.
- While incoming call volumes have decreased an average of 30% with the suspension of credit related disconnects, Customer Services has redeployed surplus staff to conduct **proactive outreach** informing our customers about **available resources and assistance programs**.

●●● Contact Center Average Speed of Answer

33 Seconds

The **average amount of time customers waited to speak to a live agent** after exiting the self service automated phone system from January 1st, 2020 through September 30th, 2021

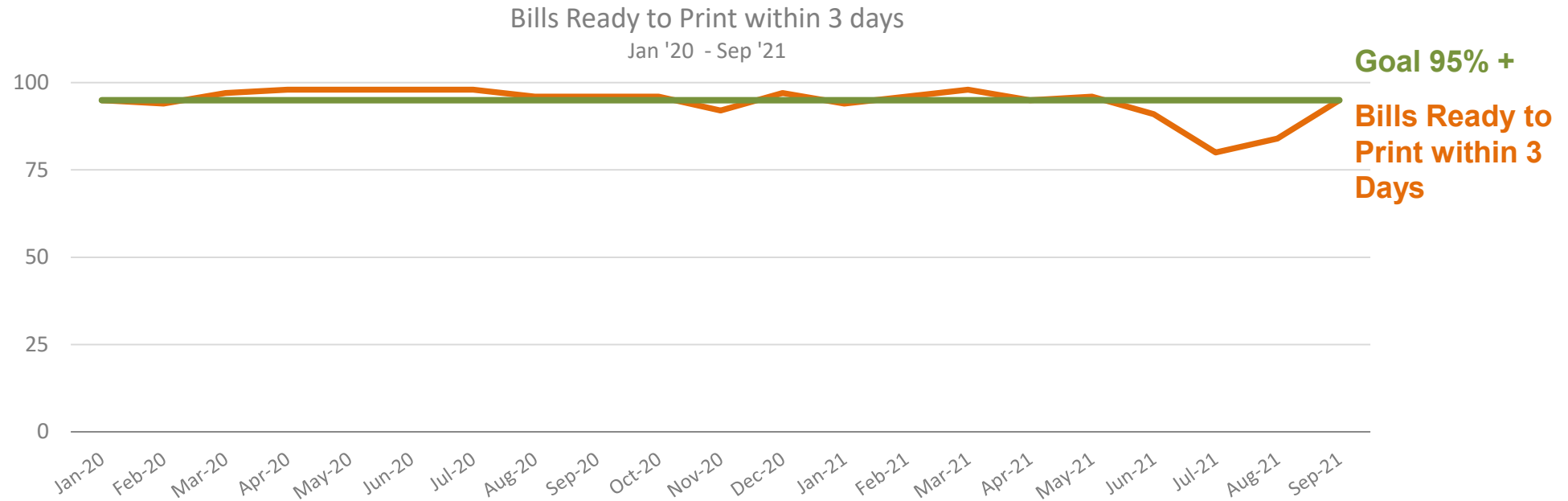


- By keeping the Average Speed of Answer(ASA) below 60 seconds Customer Services makes sure customers can easily reach a live agent when necessary. A low ASA **avoids the customer hanging up and having to call back** to have their matter addressed.
- Achieving a low ASA leads to **less customer frustration** and reduces a component of dissatisfaction leading to **better customer satisfaction** scores.

●●● Bills Ready to Print Within 3 Days

94.5%

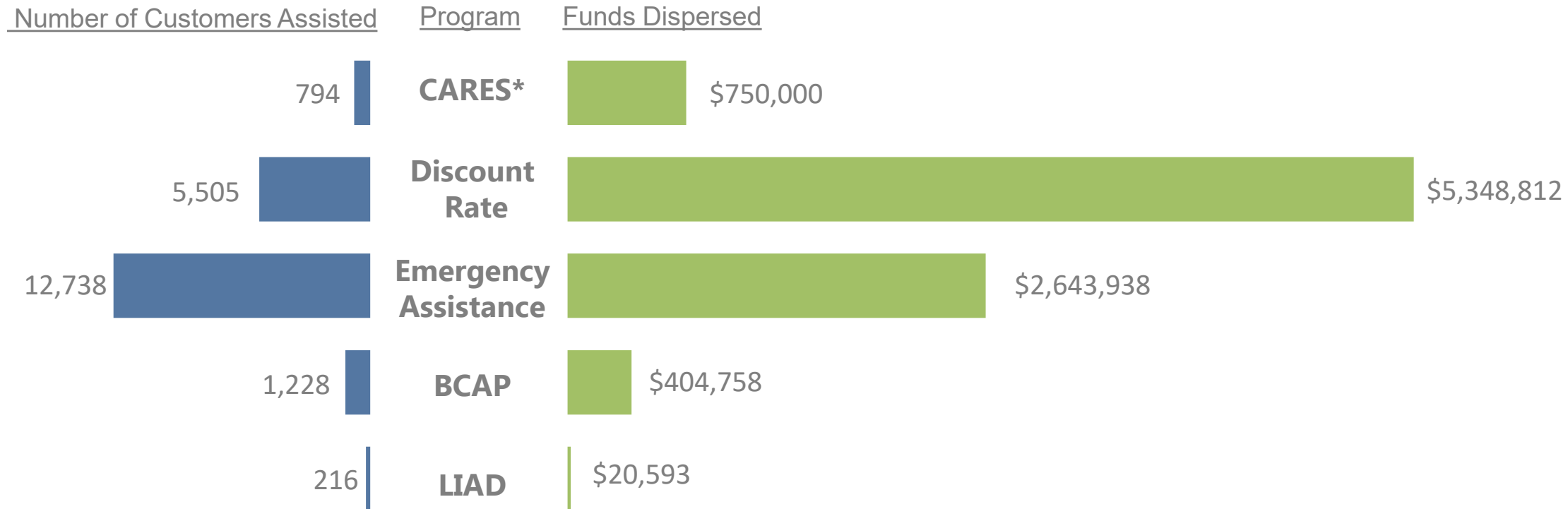
of 3,065,024 customer bills generated from January 1st, 2020 through September 30th, 2021 were **printed and mailed within 3 days of the meter read**



- Customer Services strives to provide our customer base with **timely and accurate bills** on a consistent basis.
- Relying on less experienced, temporary staff as we transition to AMI has at times had sporadic, negative impacts to complete routes within the established window. Onboarding of additional temporary staff and route optimization are mitigating those impacts at this time.

Customer Assistance Programs

TPU Funded Customer Assistance from Jan '20 – Sep '21

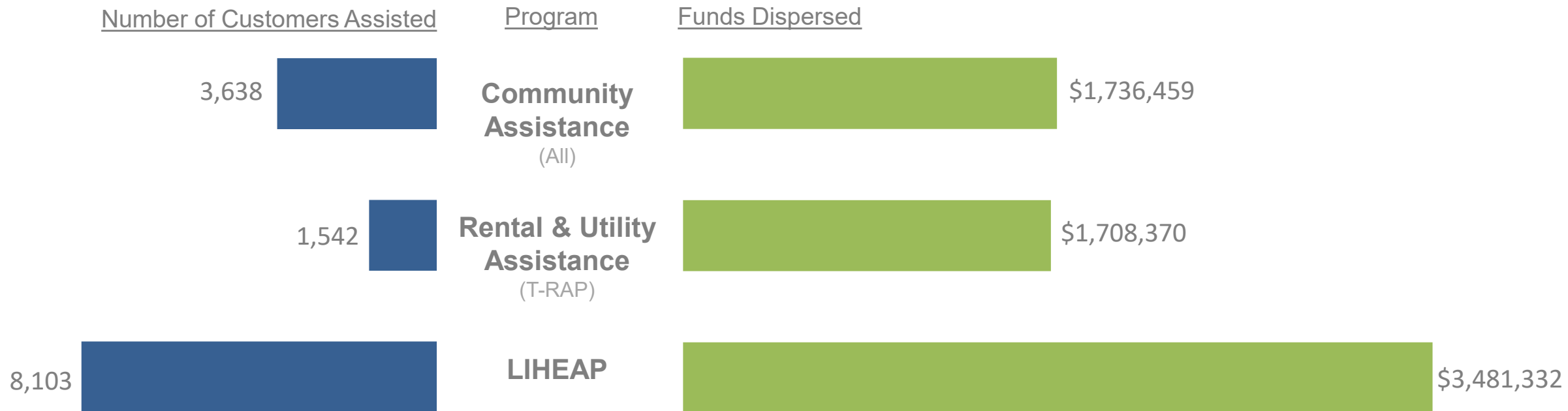


- Over the 21 month timespan displayed above, Customer Services has been instrumental in directing and distributing over **\$9.17 million in emergency and customer assistance** funds to customers with limited incomes or impacted by the COVID pandemic.

*Federal money distributed by TPU to assist Small Business customers impacted by COVID

Customer Assistance Programs Cont'd

Federal or Community Funded Customer Assistance from Jan '20 – Sep '21



- Over the same 21 month timespan, Customer Services also helped customers qualify for an additional **\$6.9 million in federal and/or community based assistance** funds.

2020 Water Services Accomplishments

- Telework: Water Customer Experience team
 - Adopted Home Agent phone systems for ACD customer calls.
- Improvements
 - Convert paper processes to electronic files

COVID -19 Impacts to Water Services

- Staffing levels were affected
- Onboarding new staff virtually
- Water Construction & Development team – lobby office remains closed.
- Supporting field staff in researching paper records

Water Customer Experience Focus for 2021

- On boarding new staff (1) Customer Service Rep
- Employee Survey Results Action Plan, workload and operational effectiveness
- Customer Paid for Work
 - Process improvements to automating workflow steps and easily identify project status
- Project deployments
 - Mobile Work Force Connect
 - Advanced Meter Mass Deployment
 - Customer Engagement Portal
- Strategic Initiative - Water Customer Intent Statement
- Lobby Reconstitution Plan for Water Construction & Development services

●●● Measurement 2b - Water

Phone service levels: customer trouble line

- 2019 – 9,798 calls
- 2020 – 11,455 estimated calls.
- 2021 – 10,325 actuals calls (YTD Q3), estimated to be 13,000+ at years end.

Comments:

- Residents home more often
- AMI questions

Serving our customers

Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey

Fall 2021

We provide services that are vital to our quality of life.



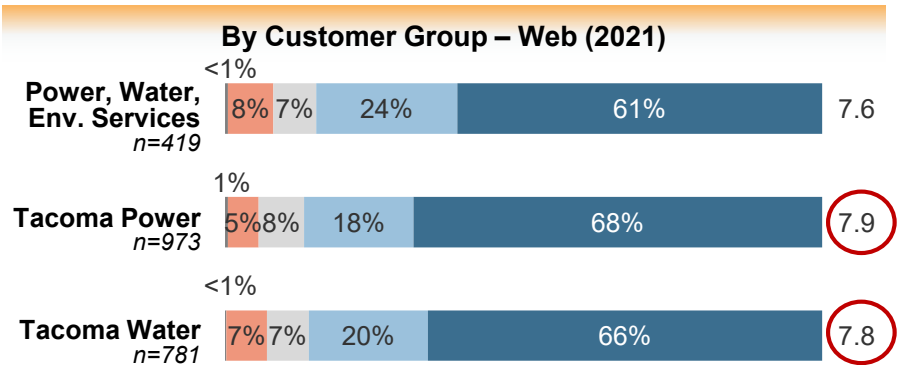
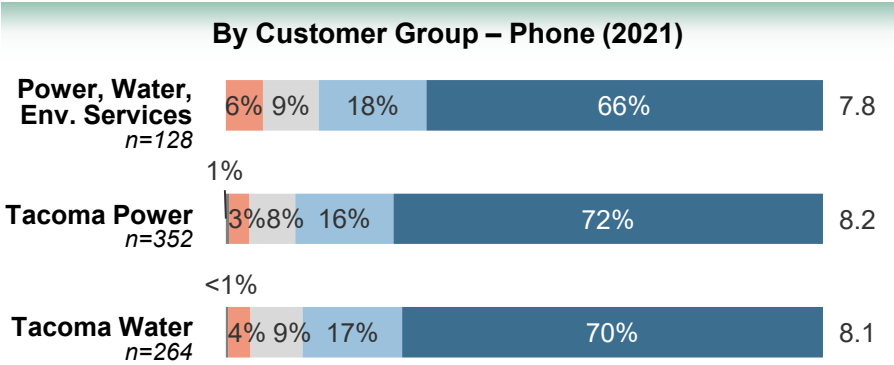
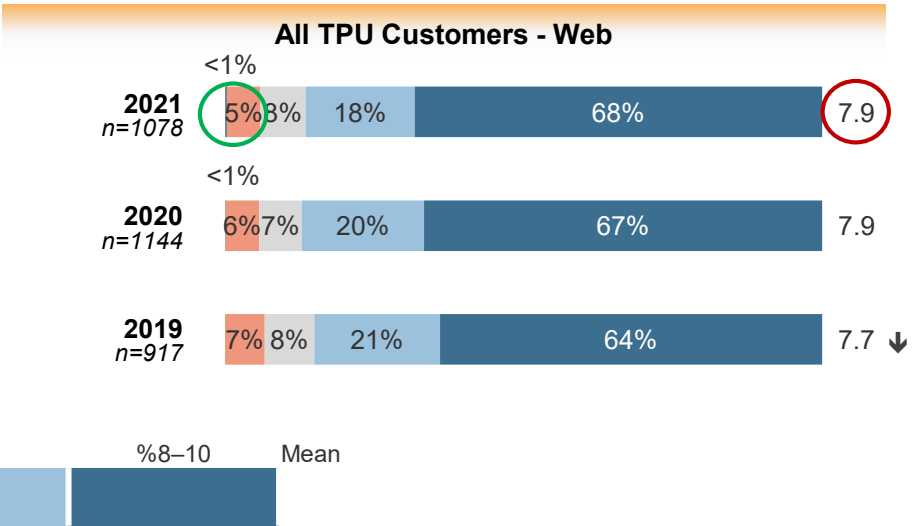
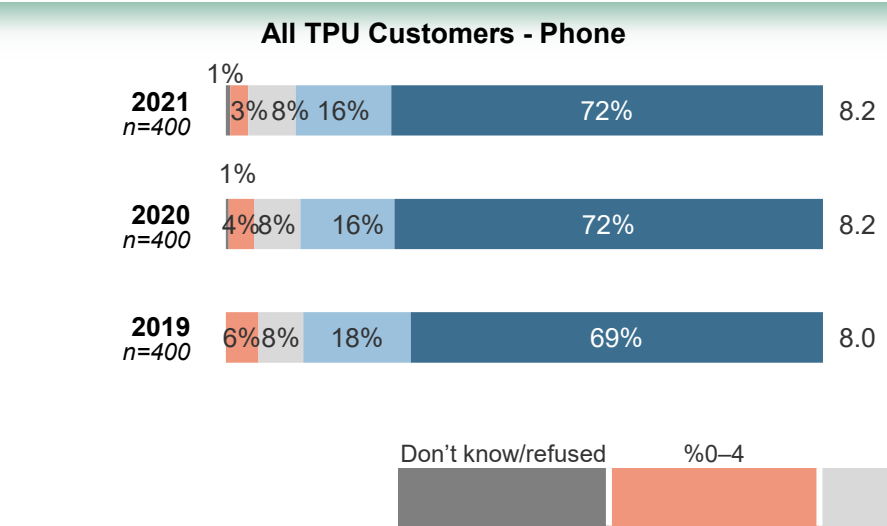
Objectives & Methodology

- Provide actionable guidance to help the company plan programs and initiatives that will be effective in strengthening customer relationships.
- Give TPU employees easy access to specific, direct feedback that can be used to identify customer preferences and concerns, plan responses, and monitor performance and progress over time.
- A total of 400 telephone interviews and 1,078 web surveys were conducted across five customer types. The telephone quotas were set in proportion to their distribution in the TPU residential customer population while the online interviews were weighted to match this distribution:

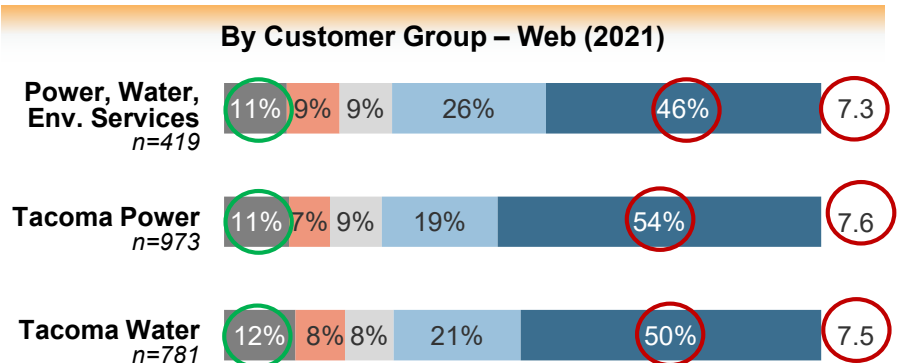
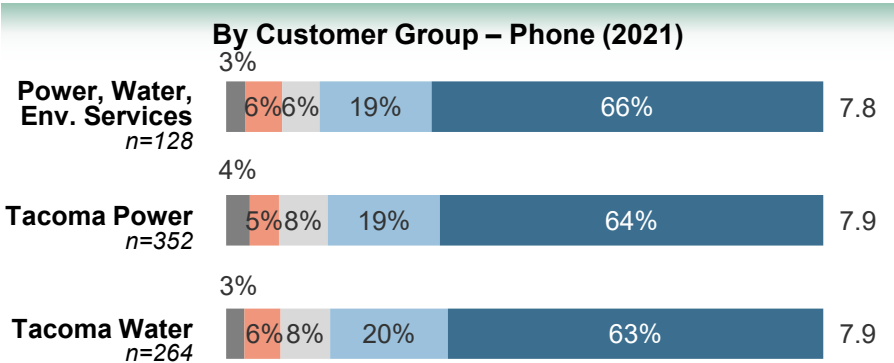
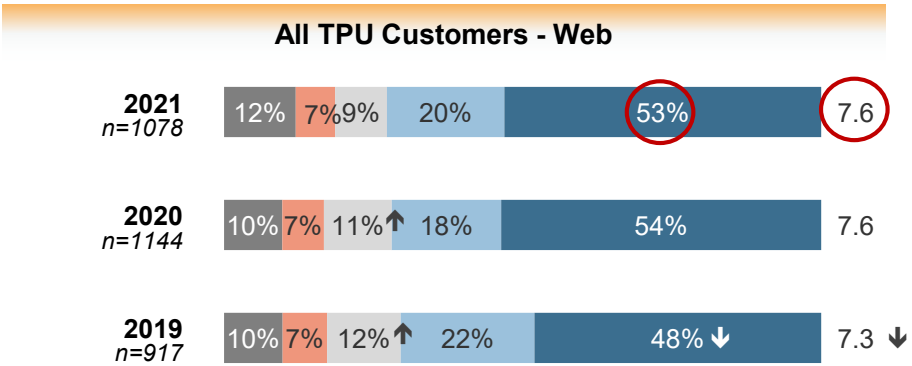
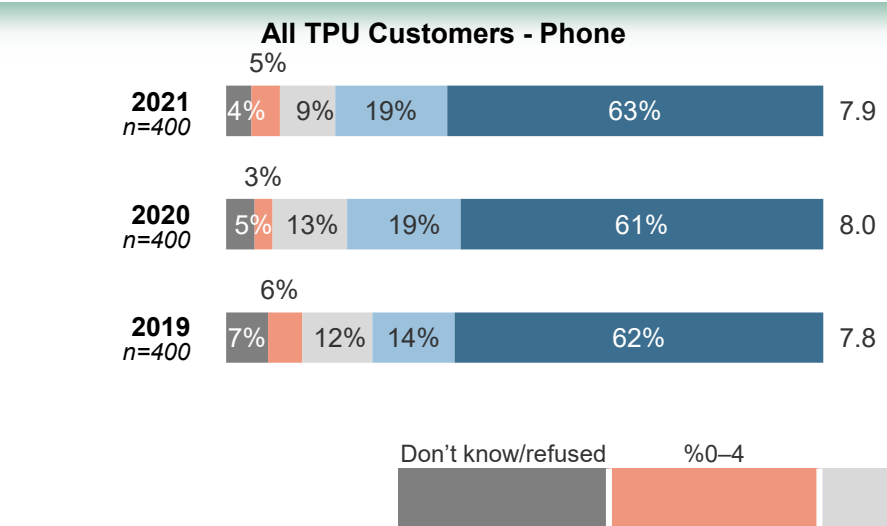
	Phone	Web	Weighted Web
	<i>n</i> =	<i>n</i> =	<i>n</i> =
Power, Water, and Environmental Services	128	419	345
Power only single-family	89	239	244
Power only multi-family	101	208	262
Water only	48	105	134
Power and Water only	34	107	92

- The sampling error for 400 telephone interviews is +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence level.
- The sampling error for 1,078 online interviews is +/-3.0% at the 95% confidence level.

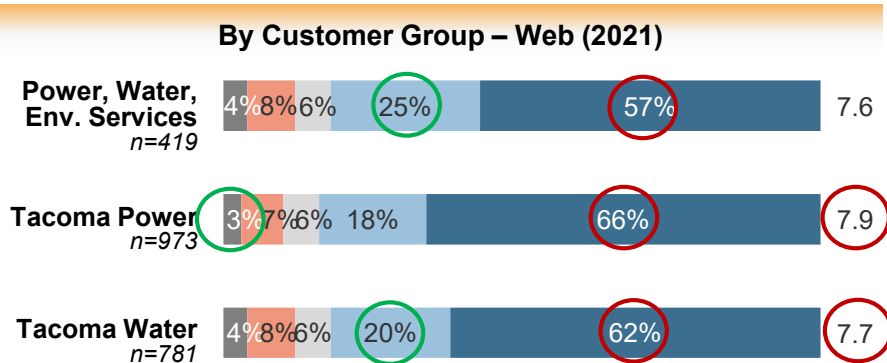
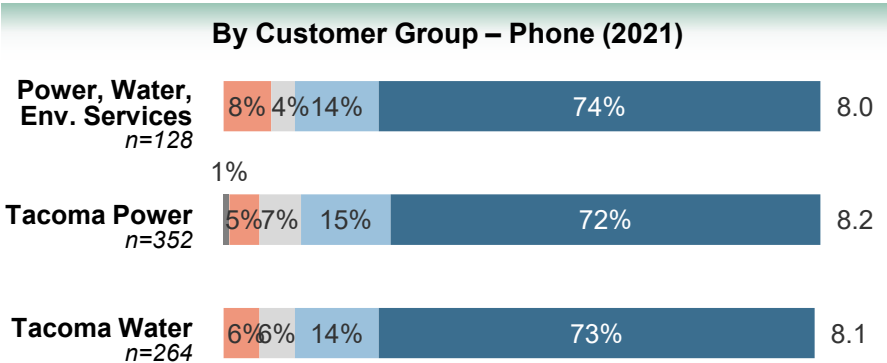
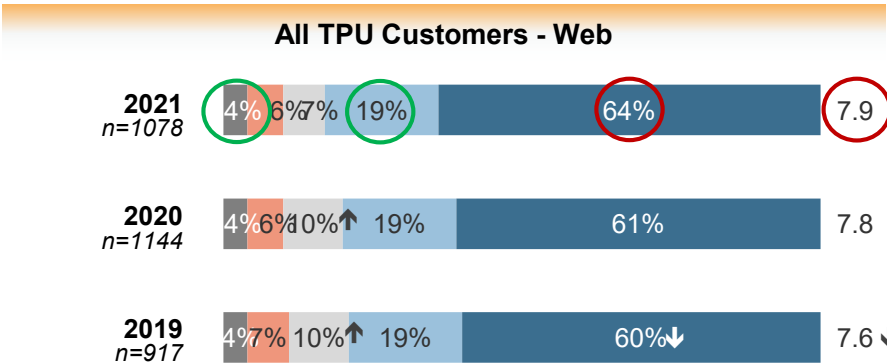
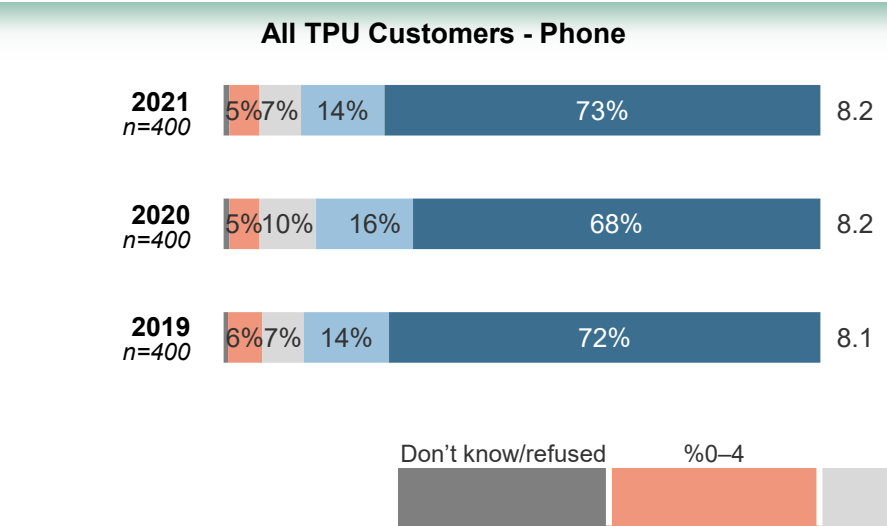
Overall Satisfaction: Tacoma Public Utilities



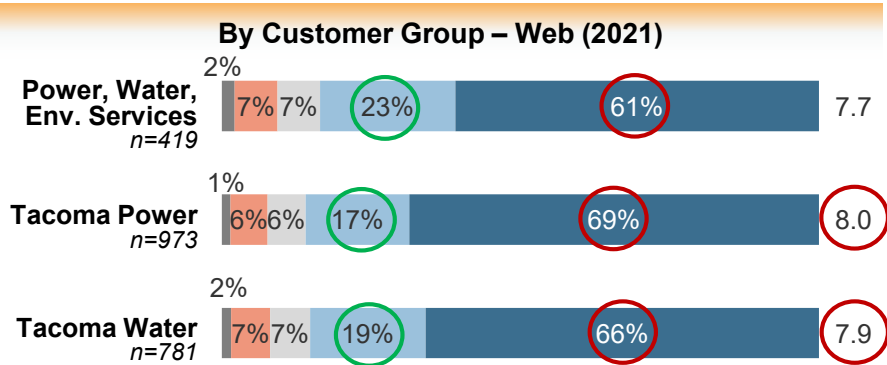
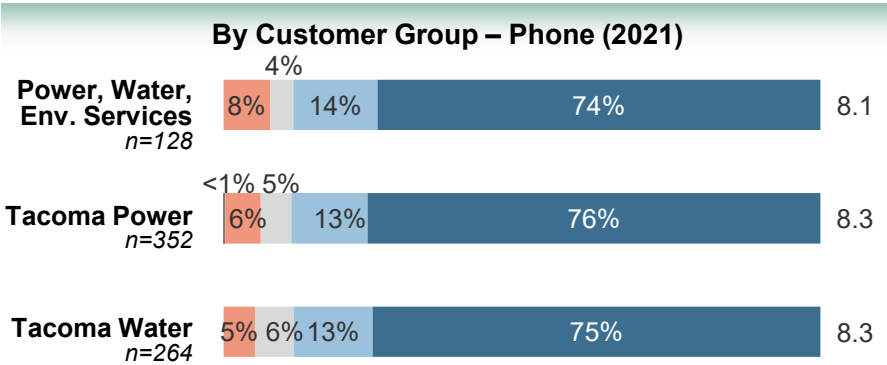
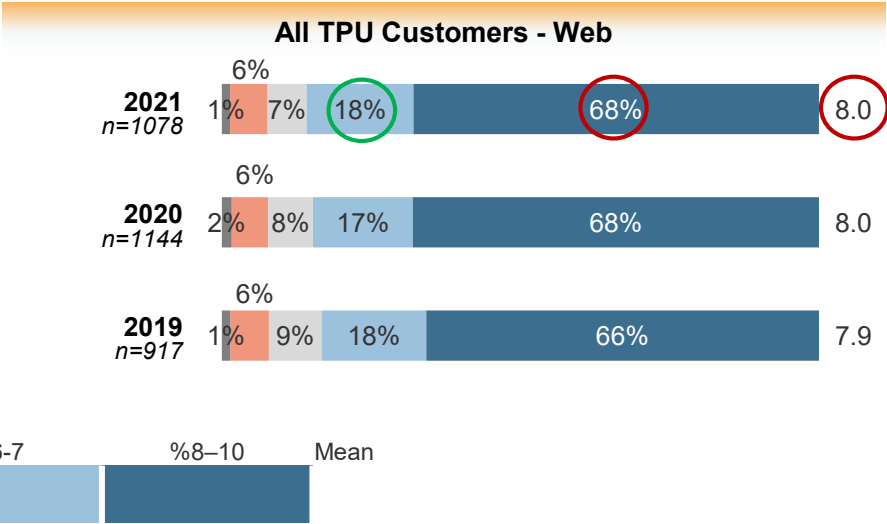
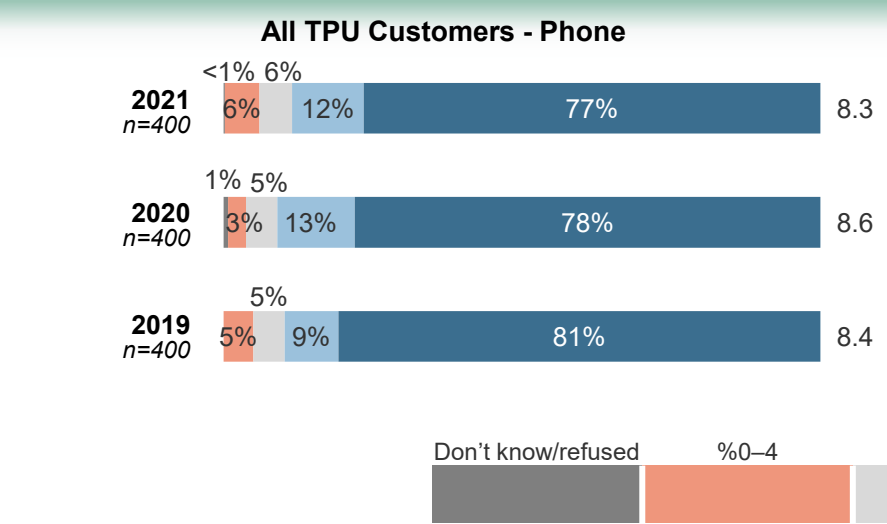
Being Well Managed



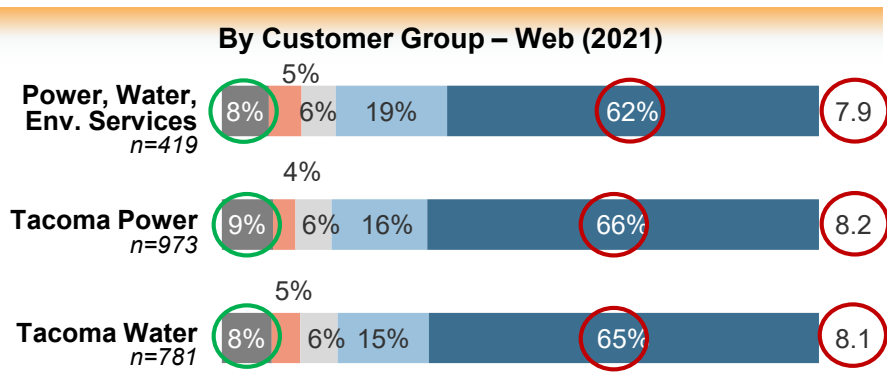
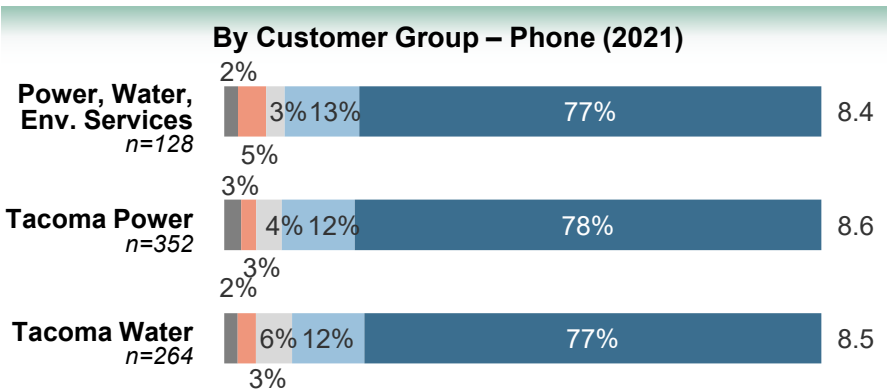
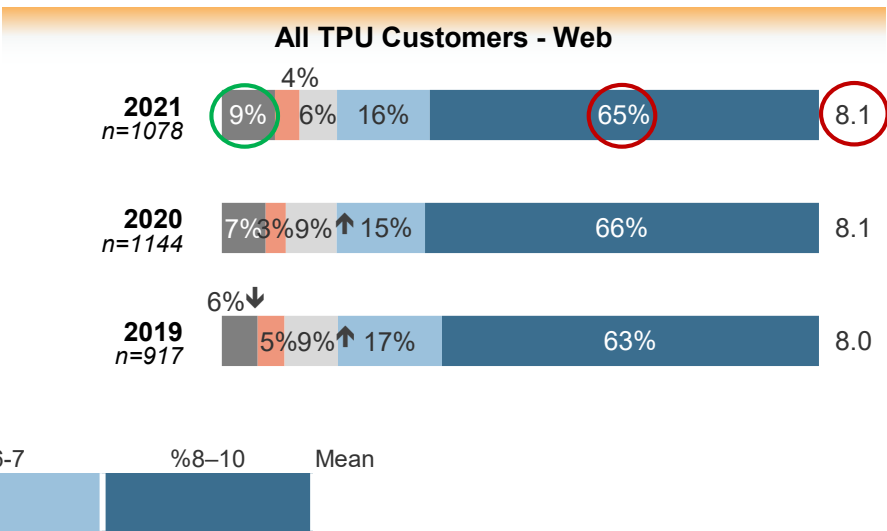
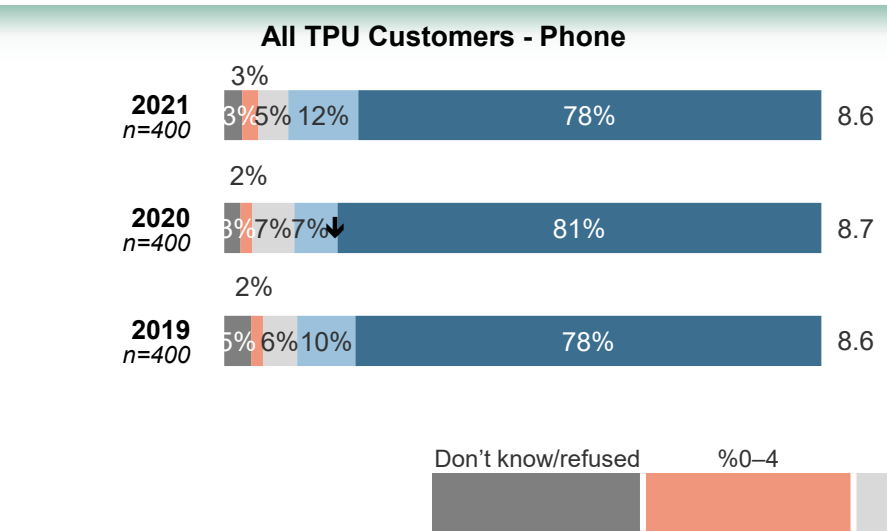
Being an Organization You Can Trust



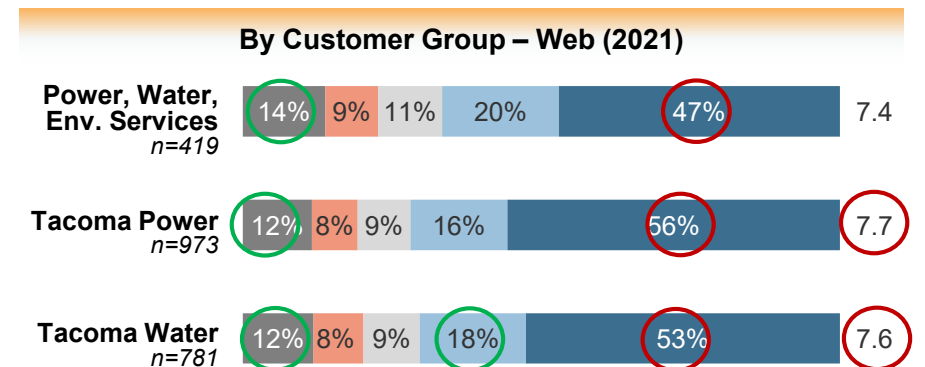
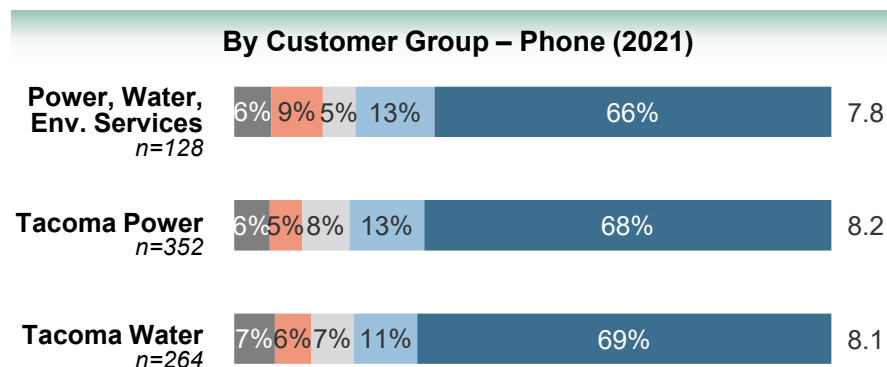
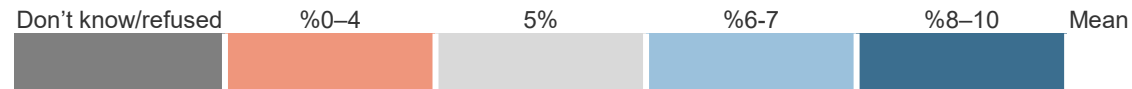
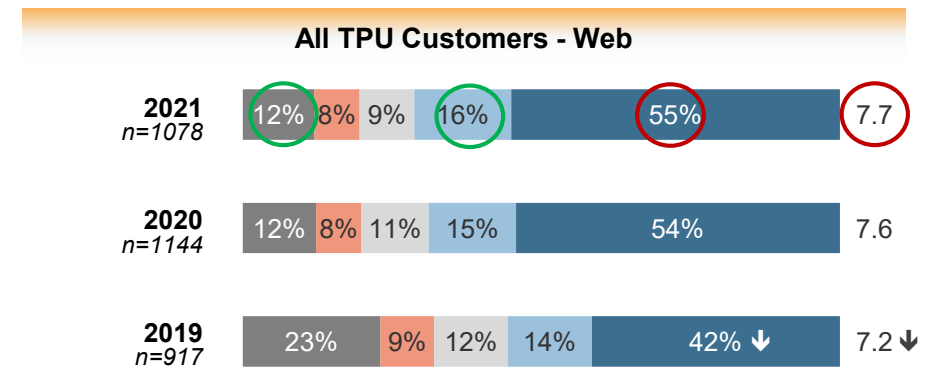
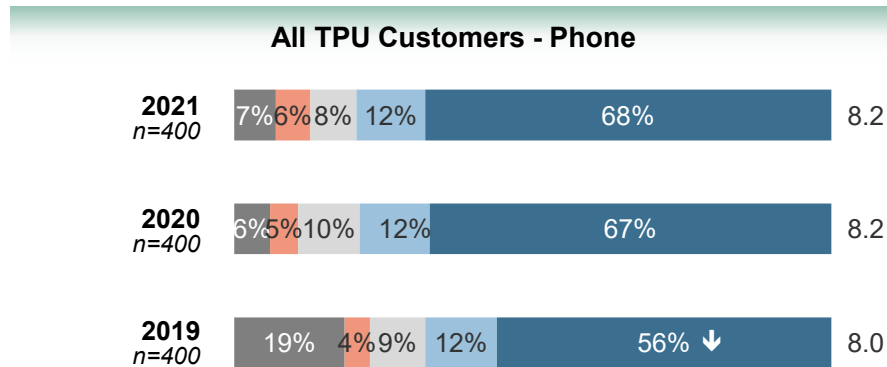
Being Easy to Do Business with



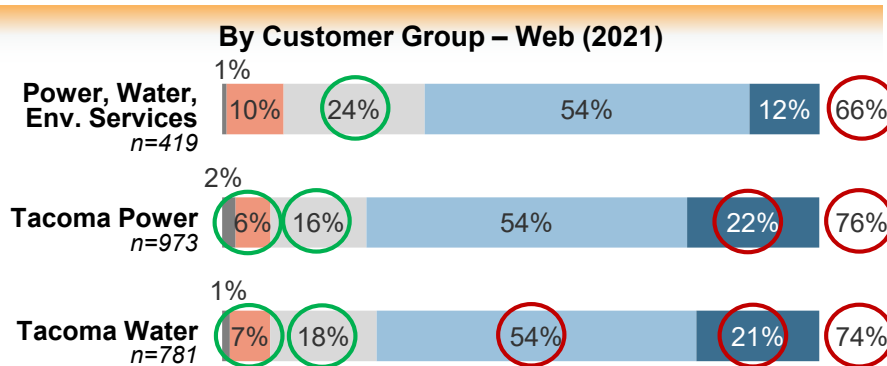
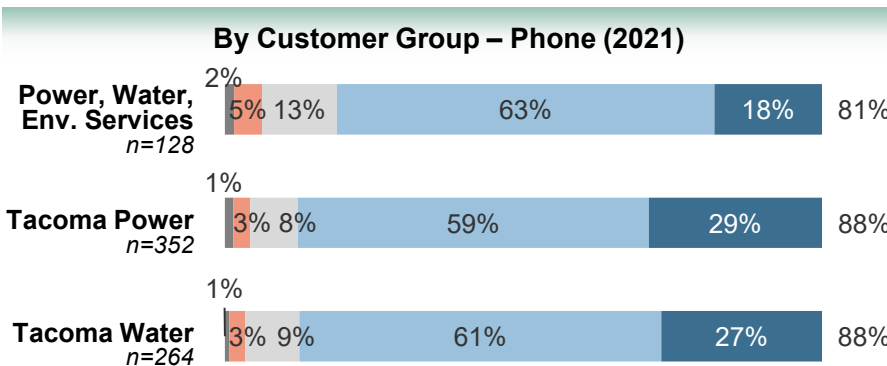
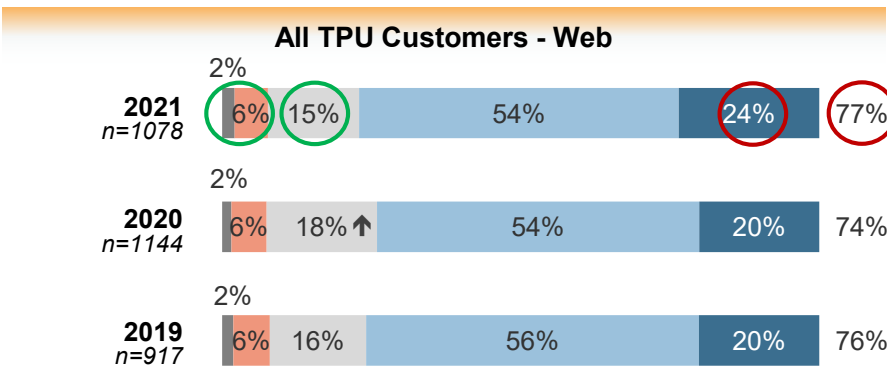
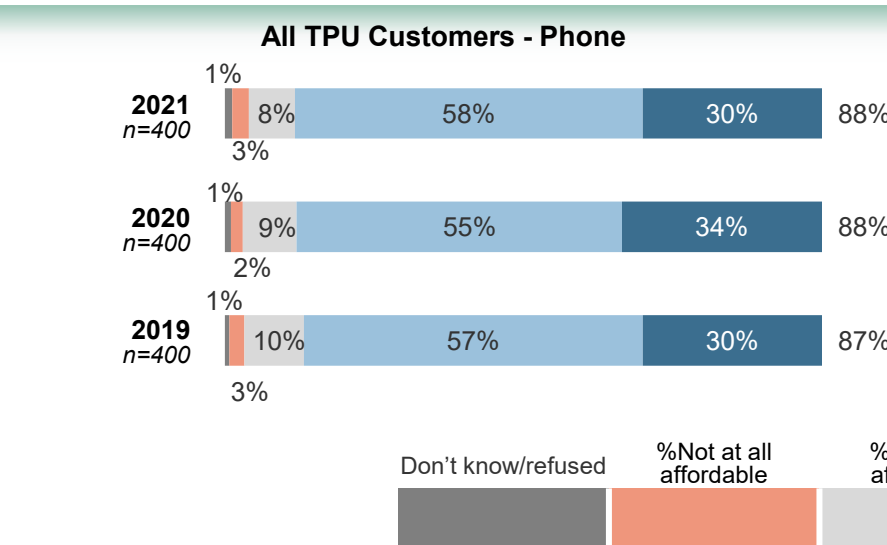
Having Knowledgeable and Well-trained Employees



Offering Assistance to Customers in Need*

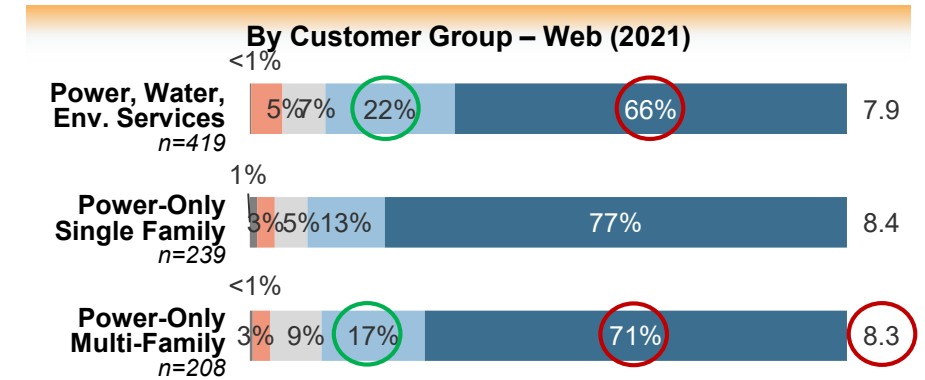
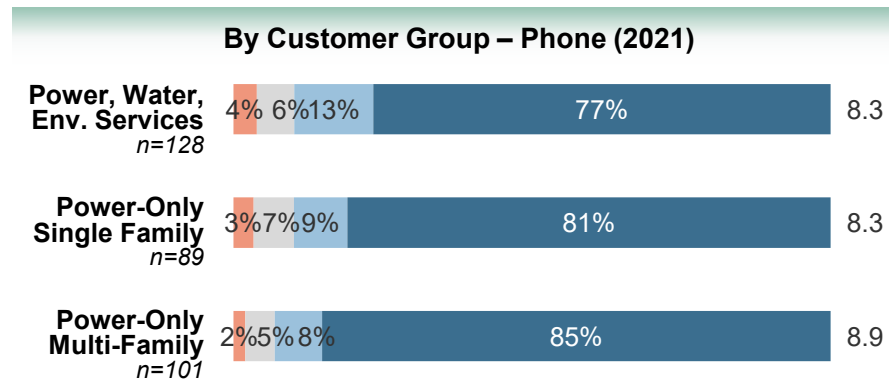
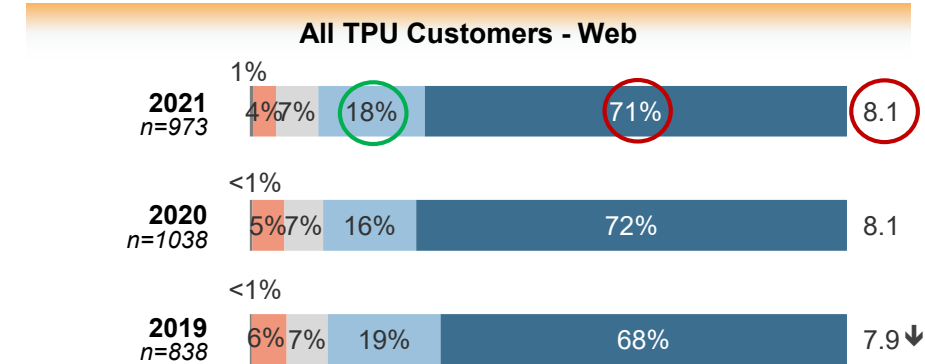
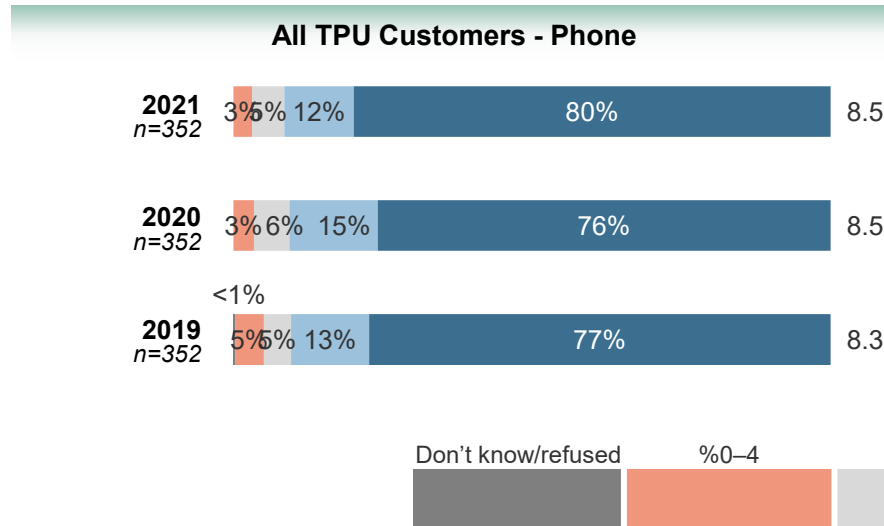


Bill Affordability

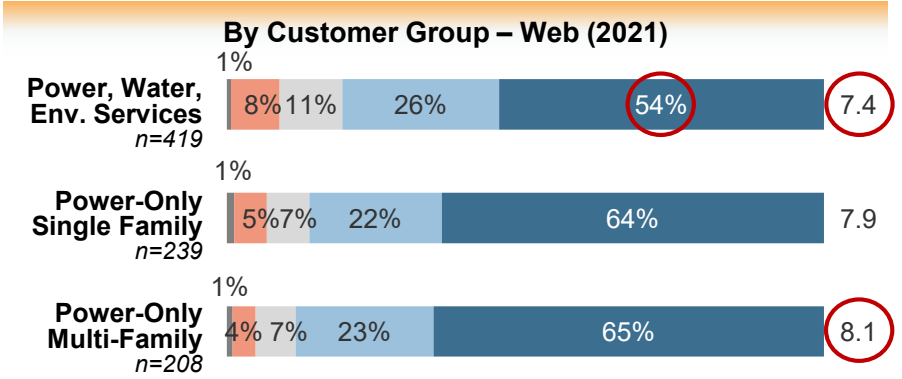
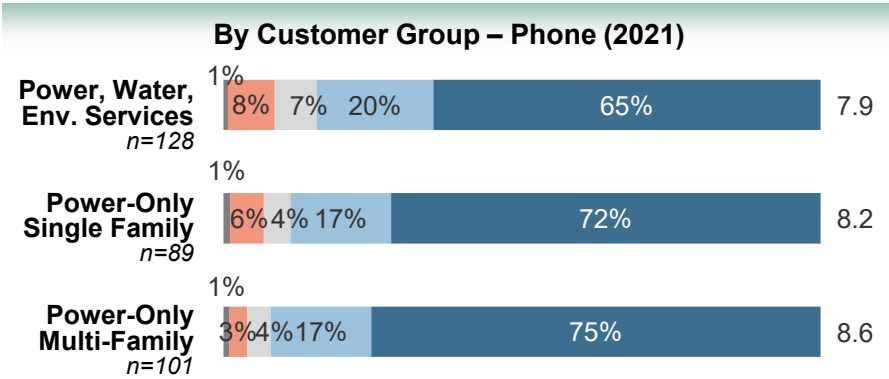
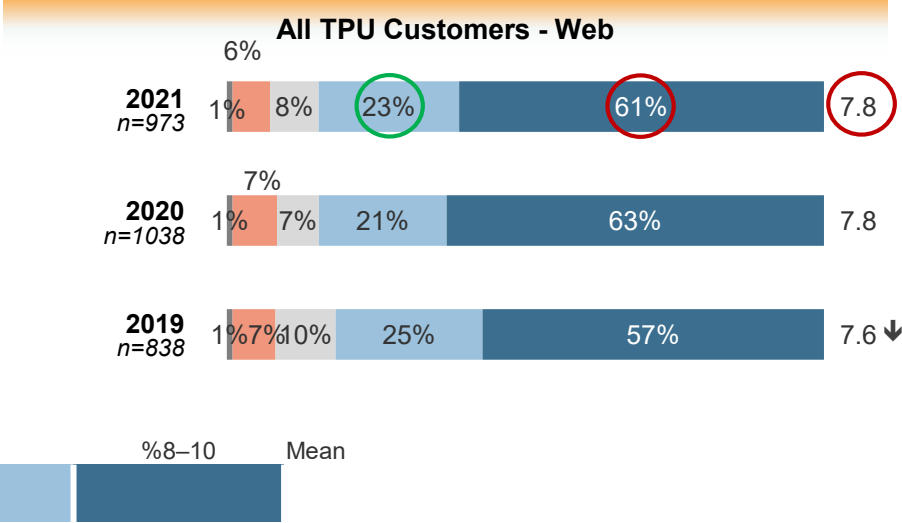
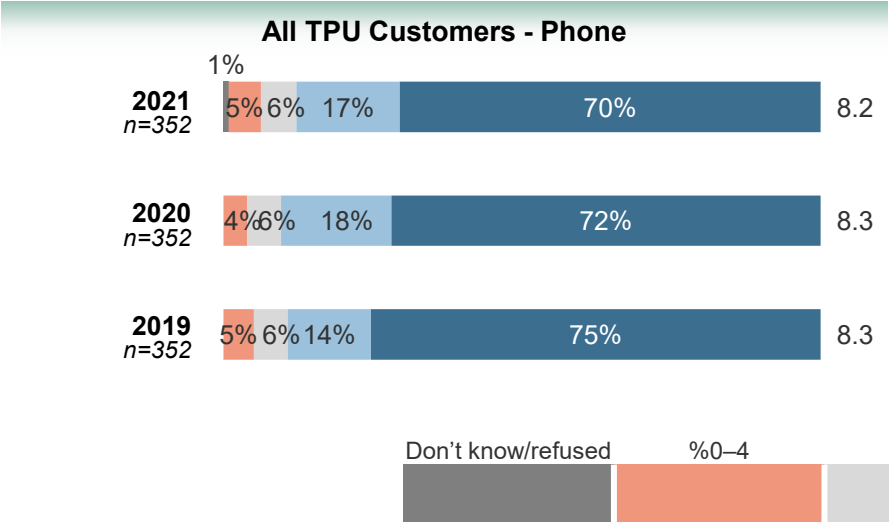


Electric Service Measures

Overall Satisfaction with Electric Service Provided by Tacoma Power

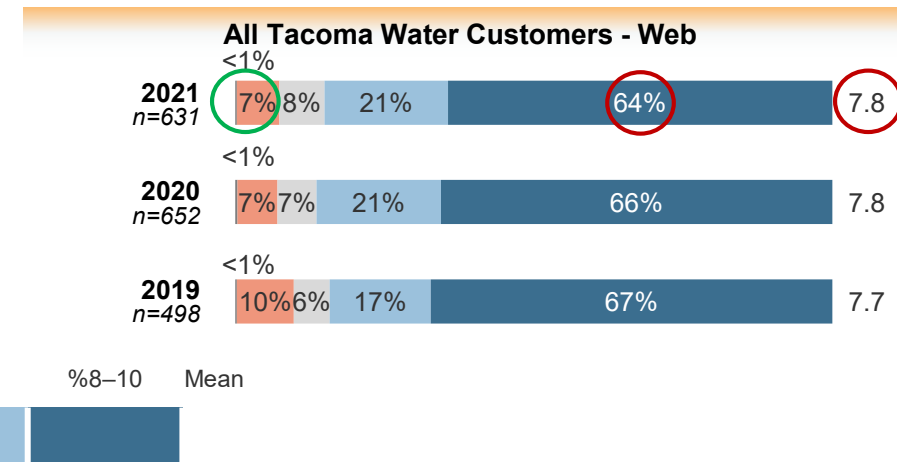
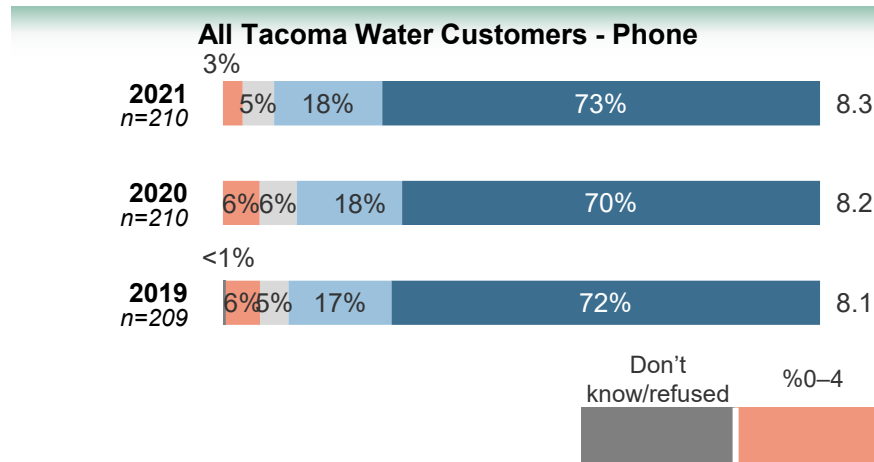


Value of Electric Service



Water Service Measures

Overall Satisfaction with the Water Service from Tacoma Water - Phone



What does Tacoma Water do well to earn your satisfaction?	Phone			Web		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
All power customers	n= 150	17**	NA*	330	423	405
Water quality	36%	41%	-	23%	20%	22%
Reliable service	35%	35%	-	21%	19%	21%
Satisfied/no problems	23%	24%	-	9%↓	13%	15%
Communication	6%	6%	-	8%	7%	8%
Reasonable Rates	5%	6%	-	4%	7%	6%
Customer service	8%	6%	-	10%↑	6%	4%
Billing/payments	10%	6%	-	5%	5%	6%
Maintenance	3%	6%	-	2%	3%	4%
Other	9%	12%	-	14%	15%	19%

What does Tacoma Water need to improve most to earn your satisfaction?	Phone			Web		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
All power customers	n= 58	9***	NA*	167	226	224
Rates	34%	-	-	40%	29%	30%
Water quality	19%	-	-	8%	12%	10%
Billing	9%	-	-	12%	10%	9%
Communication	2%	-	-	3%	4%	4%
Maintenance	-	-	-	4%	2%	2%
Water pressure	3%	-	-	3%	2%	1%
Other	16%	-	-	9%	10%	13%

*Not asked of phone respondents in 2021. **Base size <30, interpret results with caution. *** Insufficient sample size (n<10).

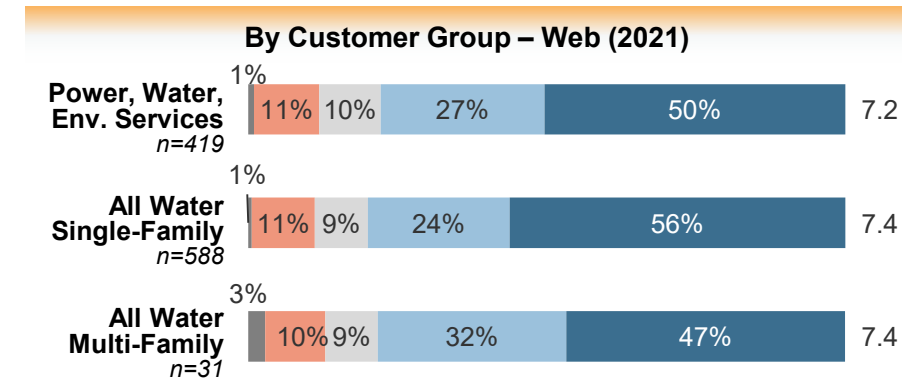
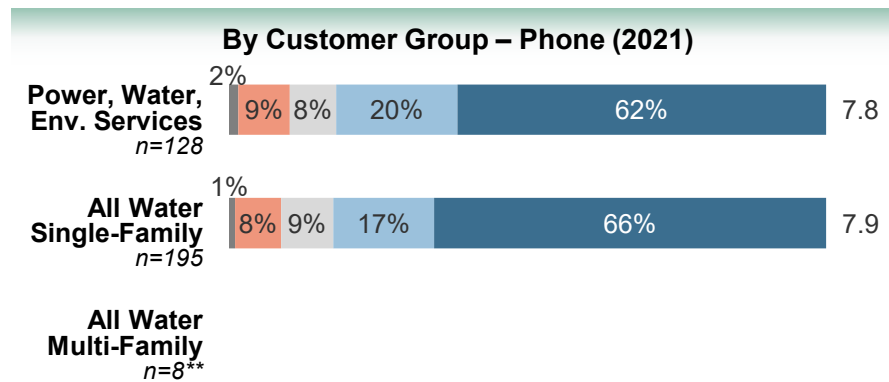
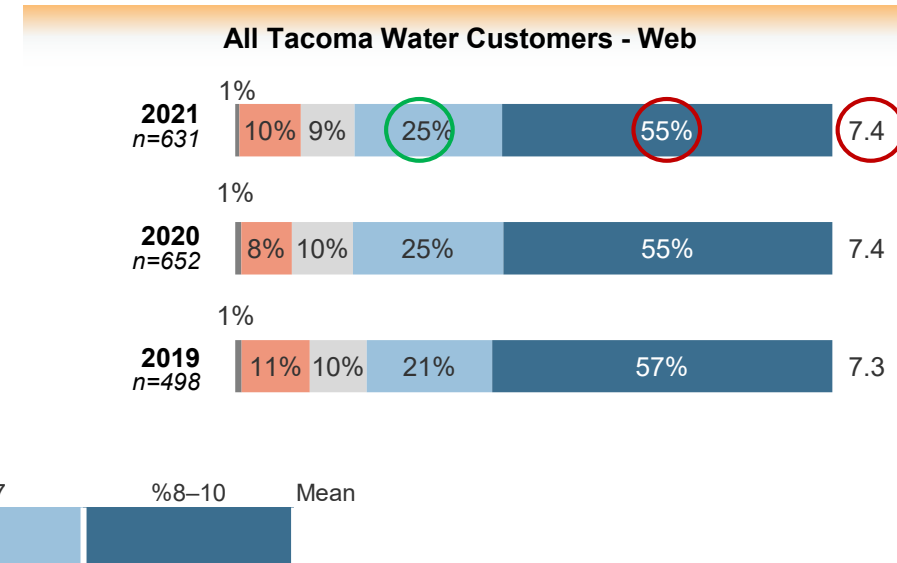
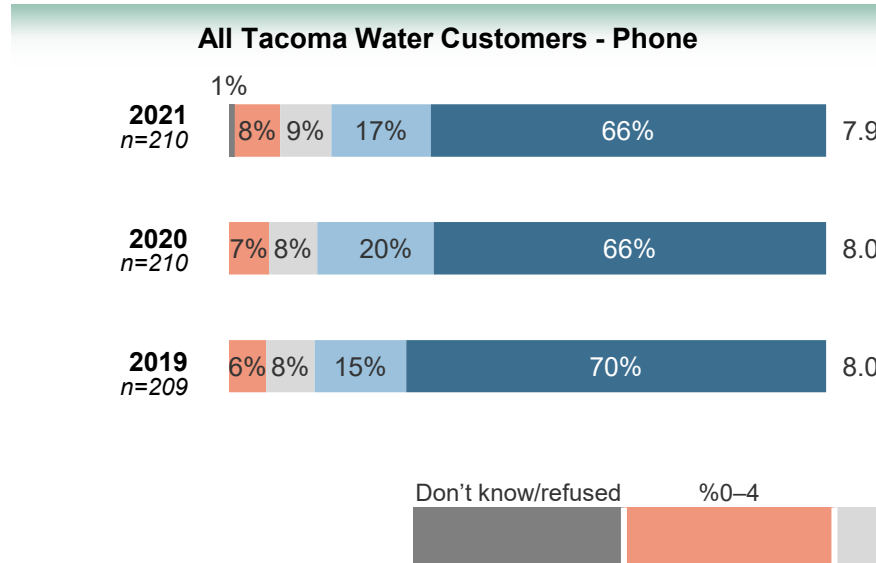
Q3_2. Based on your overall experience as a customer, and using that same scale, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with water service provided by Tacoma Water

Q5_1. What does Tacoma Water do well to earn your satisfaction? (Asked of respondents who answered Q3_2 with a rating of 8-10)

Q5_2. What does Tacoma Water need to improve most to earn your satisfaction? (Asked of respondents who answered Q3_1 with a rating of 0-7)

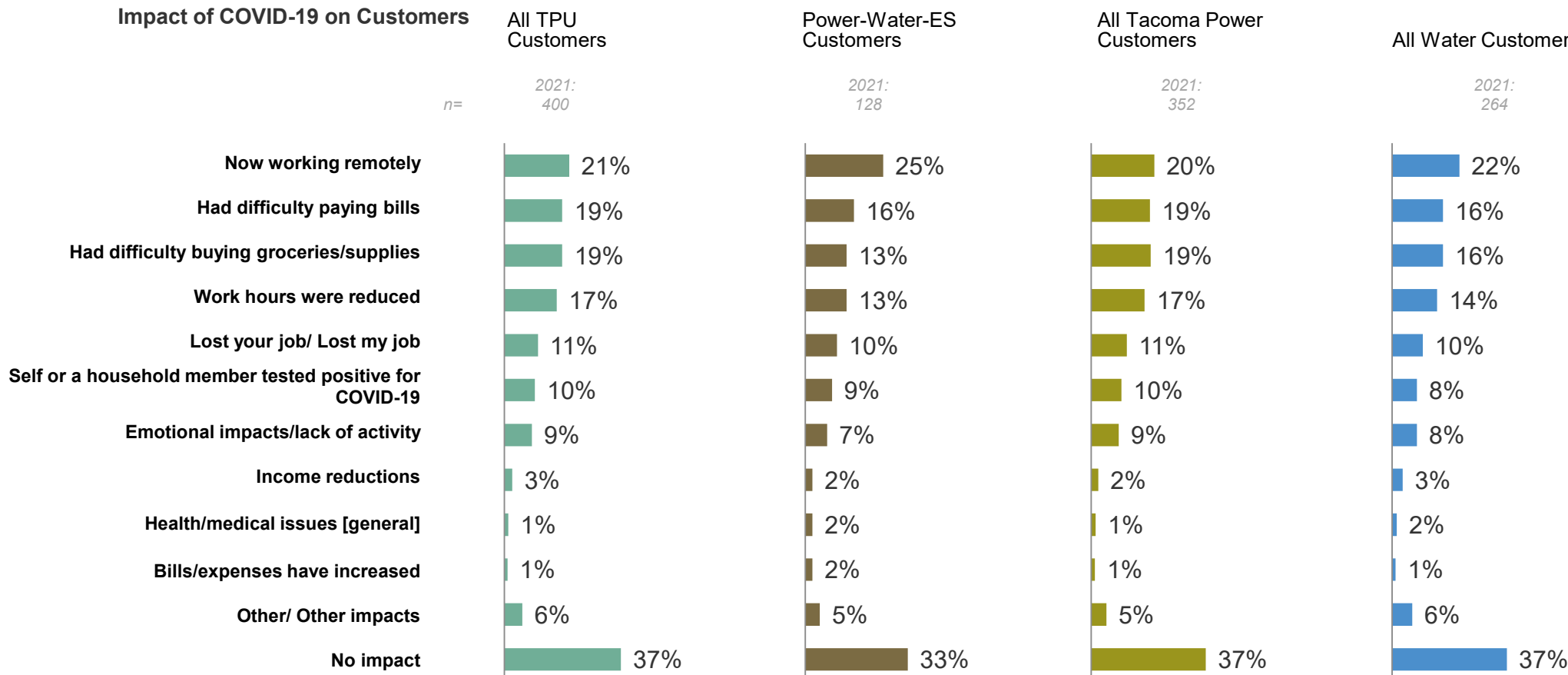
↑↓ Indicate significant differences between the current wave and previous waves. ○ / ○ circles indicate significantly higher/lower percentages for web results versus the 2021 phone results.

Value of Water Service



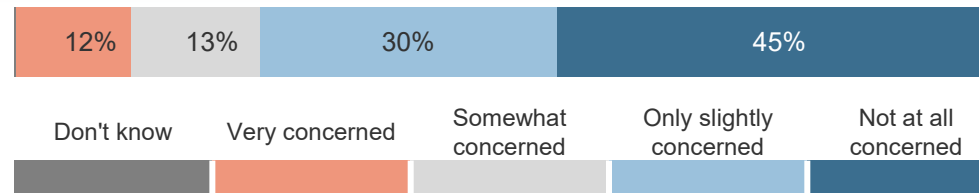
COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19 on TPU Customers – Phone

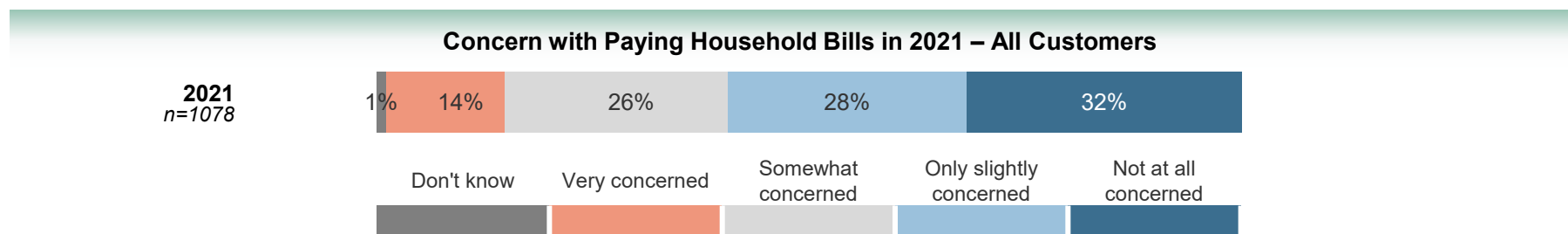
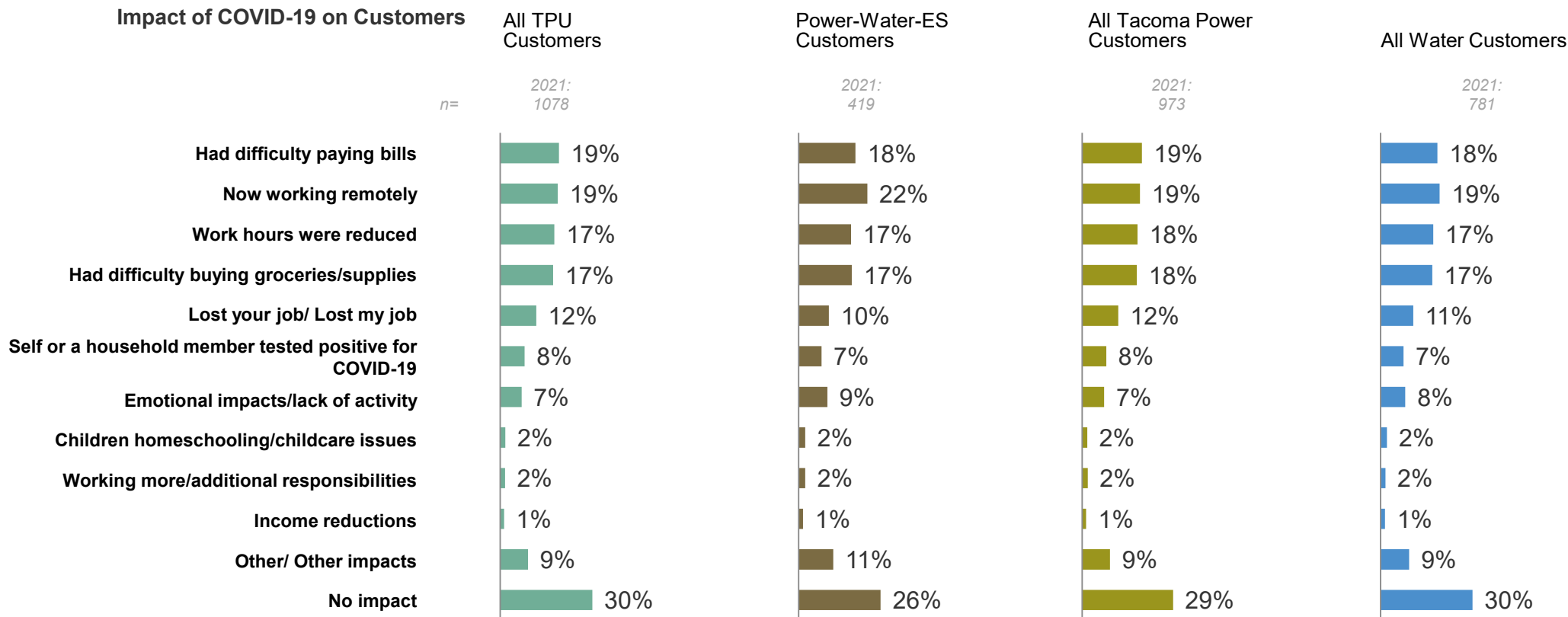


Concern with Paying Household Bills in 2021 – All Customers

2021
n=400



Impact of COVID-19 on TPU Customers – Web



Benchmarking

	 TACOMA POWER	 TACOMA WATER	 TACOMA RAIL
	TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES		

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