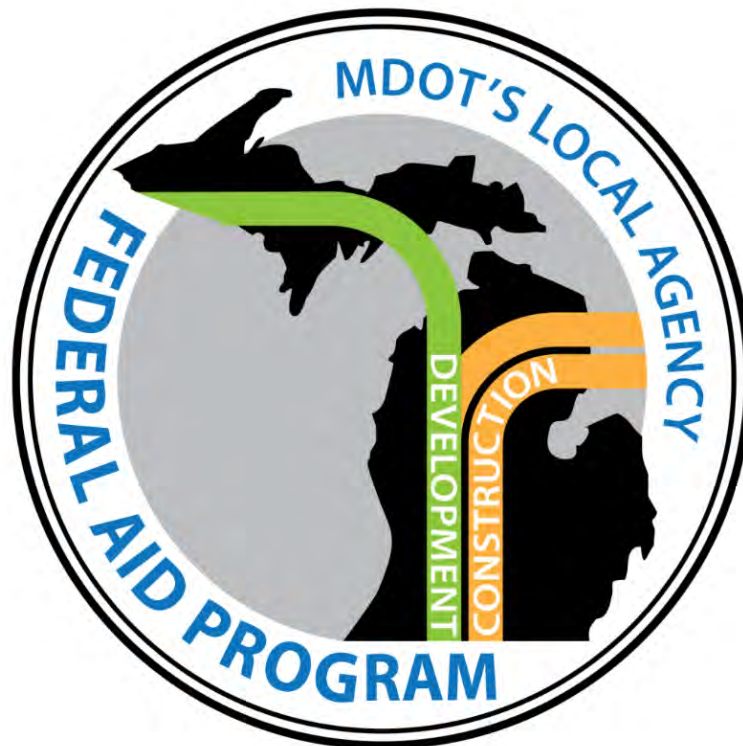


Local Agency Program

MDOT Construction Oversight Consistency & Alignment Survey Feedback October 2017



Published: March 2018

Survey Results

The information contained on the following pages summarizes survey feedback. There were hundreds of comments, suggestions, and ideas received. Forty-seven pages to be exact. In the spirit of transparency, we felt it was essential to publish survey results and a snap shot of the comments.

A Local Agency Construction Engineer Alignment Team has been developed to analyze, prioritize, and develop a strategic vision to improve consistency and alignment of MDOT's Local Agency construction oversight activities. Programmatic changes take time, especially when so many stakeholders are involved. While it's not realistic to ever achieve 100% consistency and alignment, it is realistic to listen to feedback and strive for improvement by implementing change.

Thanks again to those who participated in the survey. Additionally, thank you to all program participants, for your patience, as we work through this program improvement process.

Regards,

Kelly L. Crannell

Kelly L. Crannell, P.E., MBA
MDOT-Local Agency Construction Engineer
crannellk@michigan.gov

www.michigan.gov/mdotlocalconstruction

Survey Introduction

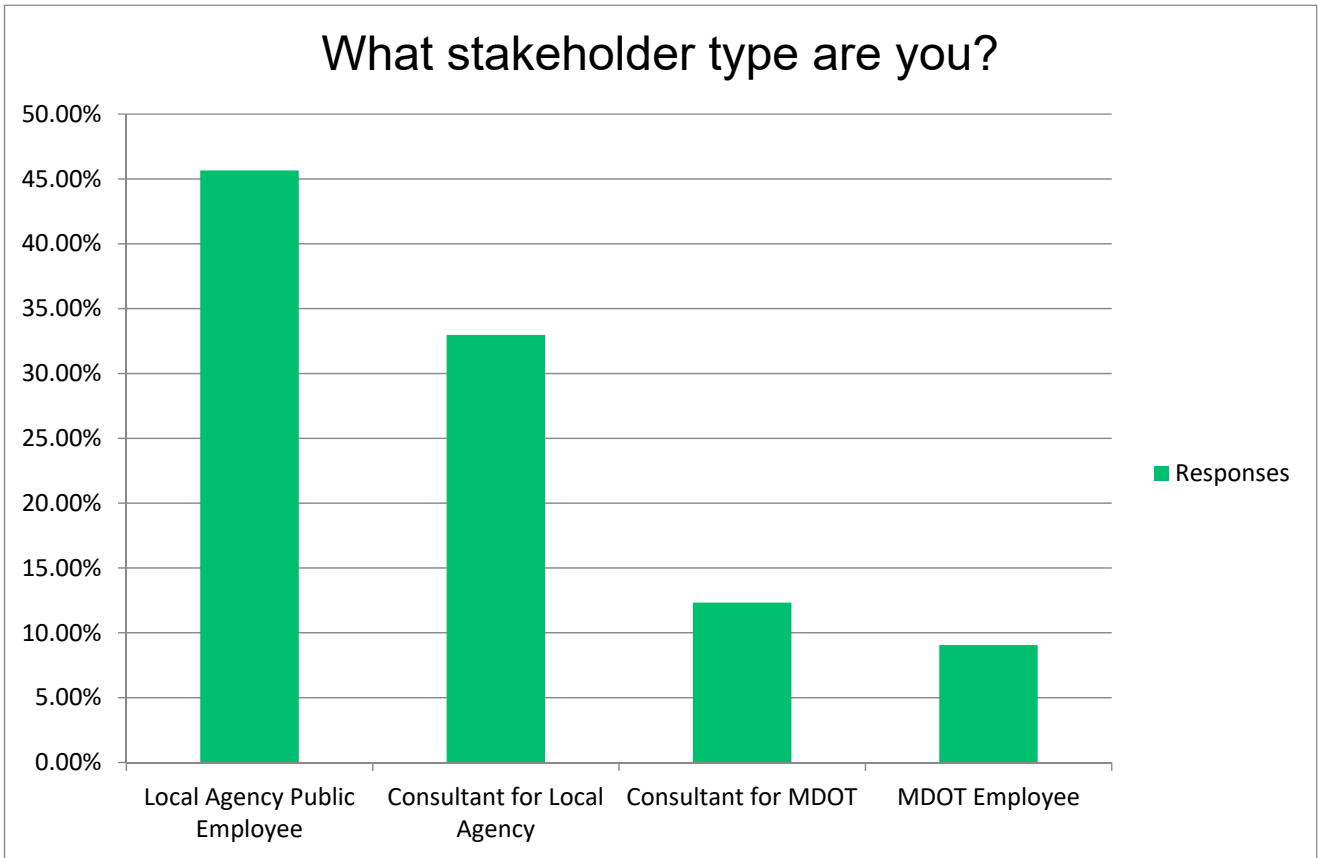
An LPA (Local Public Agency) Stakeholder Partnering Team was chartered in June of 2017 as an FHWA Every Day Counts initiative. Participants include Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), County Road Association, Michigan Municipal League, and Consultant members. The team's mission is to identify and address programmatic challenges.

Consistency and alignment of MDOT's Local Agency construction oversight activities have been identified as a programmatic challenge. Guidance regarding MDOT's LPA oversight activities are outlined in the Construction Wiki, Division 1, Supplemental Information, Local Agency.

To order to identify areas needing attention, MDOT developed a survey to gain feedback which will help pinpoint areas of inconsistencies, gauge effectiveness of the current oversight structure, and assist in refining MDOT's construction oversight of Local Agency projects to a more consistent, effective, aligned effort.

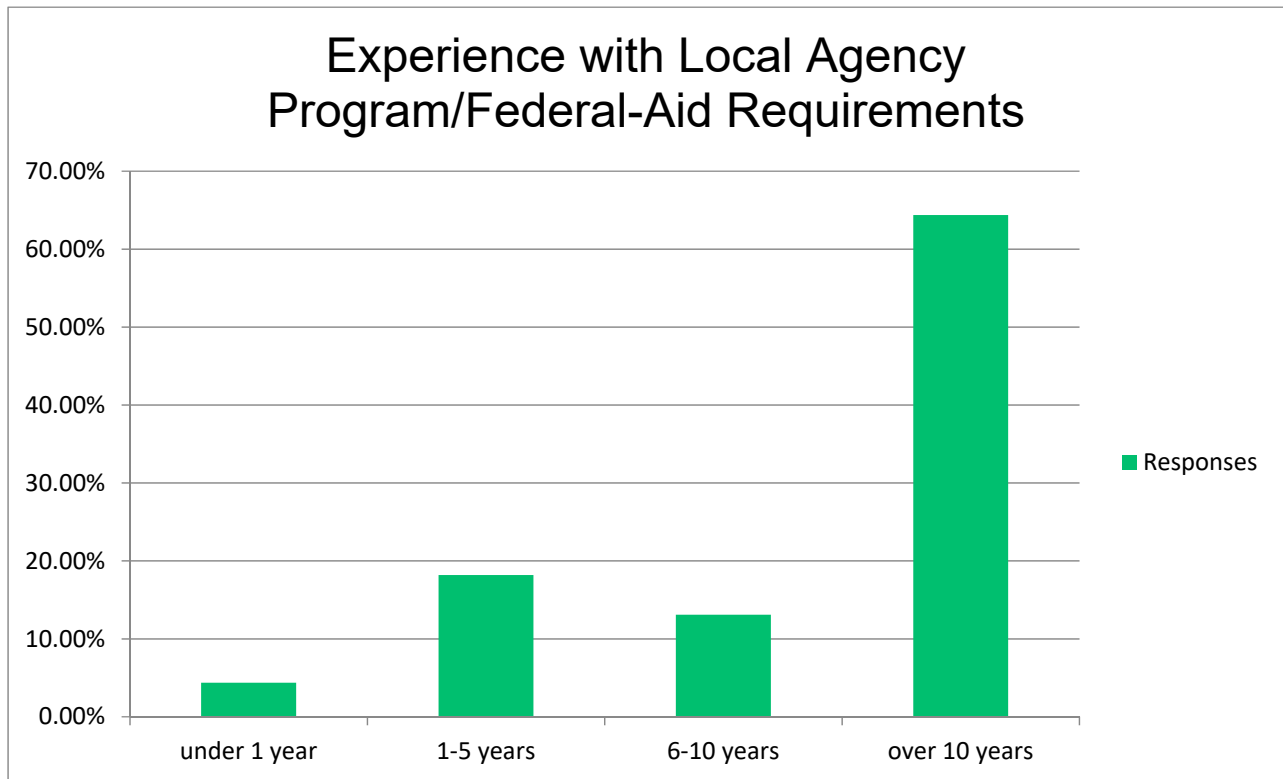
Q1: What stakeholder type are you?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Local Agency Public Employee	45.65%	126
Consultant for Local Agency	32.97%	91
Consultant for MDOT	12.32%	34
MDOT Employee	9.06%	25
Answered	276	
Skipped	0	



Q2: Experience with Local Agency Program/Federal-Aid Requirements

Answer Choices	Responses	
under 1 year	4.36%	12
1-5 years	18.18%	50
6-10 years	13.09%	36
over 10 years	64.36%	177
Answered		275
Skipped		1



Q3 - part 1: Please answer based on your opinion about MDOT's feedback to local agencies in the following areas.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
MDOT provides valuable feedback on Design Plan Constructability	0.63% 1	18.87% 30	23.27% 37	45.26% 72	6.29% 10	5.66% 9	159	3.4
MDOT provides valuable feedback on Traffic Control	0.64% 1	14.65% 23	50.96% 42	50.96% 80	5.10% 8	1.91% 3	157	3.46
MDOT provides valuable feedback on Quality Assurance Requirements	1.27% 2	19.11% 30	33.12% 52	38.22% 60	7.01% 11	1.27% 2	157	3.31
							82	
							Answered	159

Q3 – part 2. Please answer based on your opinion about MDOT's feedback to local agencies in the following areas.

MDOT provides valuable feedback on Design Plan Constructability - 36 Comments Received:

Comments included concerns regarding construction experience/ knowledge of staff providing feedback. Agencies would like more local agency-based comments/need to think outside box (rural/urban settings instead of trunkline). Would help to define what local agencies should expect for feedback on plans (i.e. MDOT does not 'review' but offers feedback based on experience to assist agencies in avoiding potential construction related problems). Suggested to have LAP Engineers perform site visit during construction. Comments also included displeasure of too much red tape, things are becoming too complicated. MDOT staff is sometimes frustrated when comments are ignored then become issues during construction.

MDOT provides valuable feedback on Traffic Control 23 Comments Received:

Comments included agency appreciation when staff takes time to share expertise and/or comment on potential traffic issues, MOT, and progress clause/schedule. Agencies prefer feedback during GI meeting and is more helpful when staff considers local agencies point of view (i.e. urban or rural settings, lower traffic volumes, non-trunkline environments). Agencies see varying degrees of staff knowledge/expertise.

MDOT provides valuable feedback on Quality Assurance Requirements - 23 Comments Received: Comments include agency frustration as QA requirements seem to be continually changing. Some agencies experience more authoritarian approach from department, rather than partnering or assistance in helping them understand requirements and preserve their federal-aid. It would be helpful to discuss QA requirements at pre-con. Simple tasks/jobs are increasingly becoming more and more difficult to deliver.

Q4. Considering MDOT is responsible for ensuring federal aid compliance via CFR 23, Part 635.105, please evaluate MDOT’s involvement level with the following project delivery activities:

	Not at all involved	Slightly involved	Somewhat involved	Mostly involved	Extremely involved	Total	Weighted Average	Comments
Assisting Local Agency in Troubleshooting Construction Issues	3.85% 6	30.77% 48	33.97% 53	28.85% 45	2.56% 4	156	2.96	40
Resource to Discuss Construction Materials	6.58% 10	21.71% 33	42.11% 64	25.00% 38	4.61% 7	152	2.99	28
Resource to Discuss Construction Methods	10.32% 16	22.58% 35	36.13% 56	28.39% 44	2.58% 4	155	2.9	23
Assisting Local Agency with Contract Modification, including item eligibility determinations	3.23% 5	12.26% 19	27.74% 43	39.35% 61	17.42% 27	155	3.55	32
Work Order discussion/assistance	8.50% 13	18.95% 29	31.37% 48	35.29% 54	5.23% 8	153	3.08	21
Contractor Force Account discussion/assistance	7.95% 12	19.87% 30	27.15% 41	36.42% 55	7.28% 11	151	3.11	26
Extension of Time Request evaluation	2.61% 4	13.73% 21	27.45% 42	46.41% 71	9.15% 14	153	3.44	21
						191		
						Answered	156	
						Skipped	120	

Collectively, 156 comments received regarding MDOT involvement: Feedback varied greatly, including thoughts that Department is helpful, it depends on who you ask, the current situation is less than satisfactory, there is conflicting information, and processes are too complicated.

Q5. Explain any inconsistent MDOT oversight activities you've experienced regarding local agency project delivery.

Answered: 84

Skipped: 192

84 Comments Received:

Comments identified various areas for the department to focus alignment efforts on, which are being evaluated to determine if they are isolated instances or systemic program challenges. A sample of the comments include: Sometime it appears staff is preoccupied by other department duties and unavailable to dedicate time to local agency oversight, there seems to be areas in the state where staff turnover makes it hard for the department to provide locals with consistent oversight. Seems like the department could increase consistency by providing more internal training regarding the local agency program. There are challenges for local agencies to follow guidance in the construction manual. Doesn't seem like there is a consistent approach to determining eligibility of extras, overruns, etc. throughout the state. File review process varies greatly depending on guidance interpretation and who's performing review (annual statewide training effort could improve consistency of this process). Involvement of designated representatives varies throughout state – some locals rarely interact with DR; other areas identify too much involvement. Clearer guidance might help align what agencies should expect. 'Gotcha' attitude is occasionally encountered from state at end of project - partnering approach would be better received by agencies as federal aid projects are a very small part of our local programs.

Q6 – part 1: Interim and Final File Reviews are a tool MDOT uses to ensure Local Agencies are properly documenting project delivery including, but not limited to, basis of material acceptance, daily site activities, and federal contract requirements such as prevailing wage and DBE participation. If you are a certified engineer, please mark N/A.

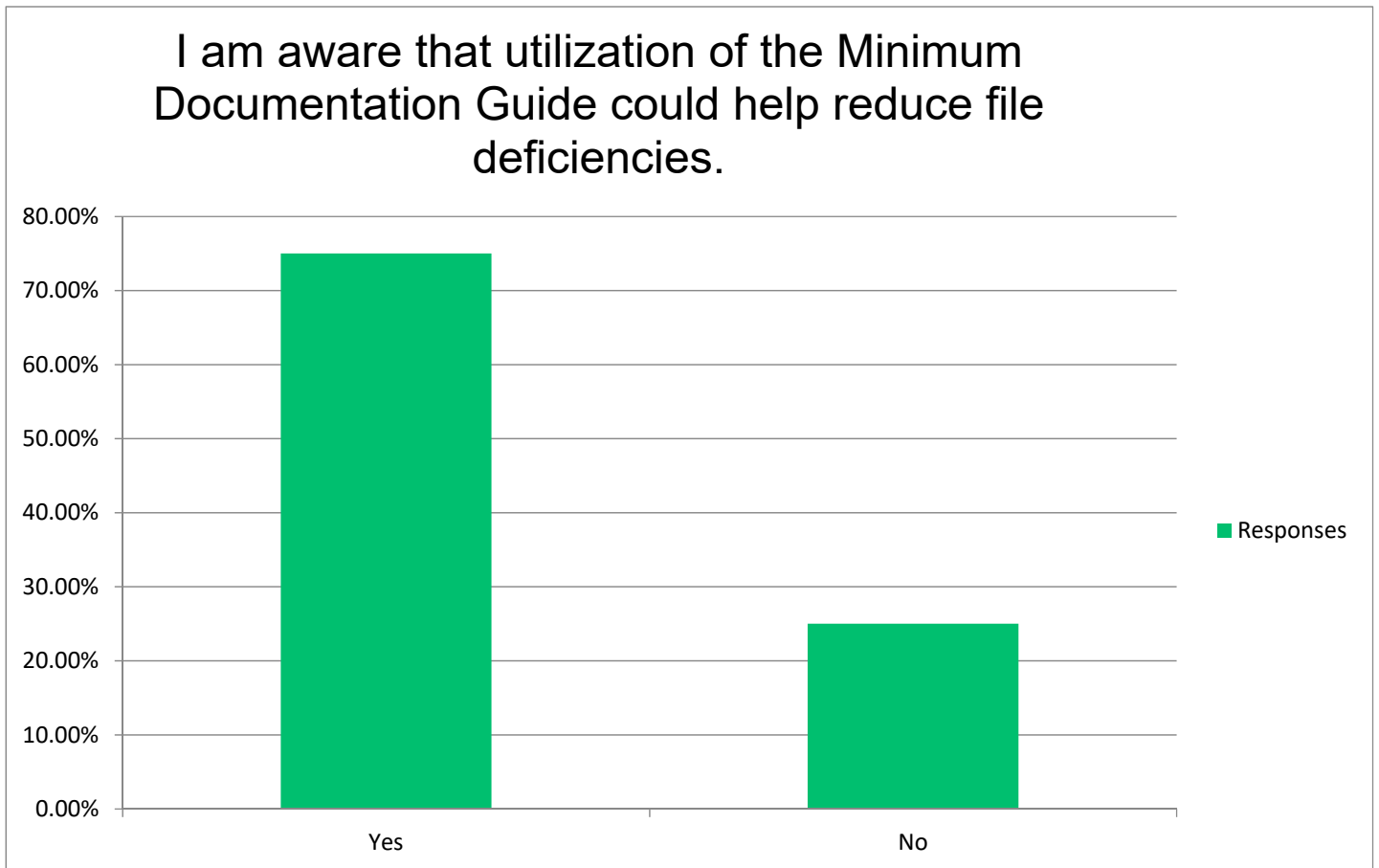
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
I find file review procedures consistent from project to project.	5.26% 8	16.45% 25	19.08% 29	36.84% 56	7.89% 12	14.47% 22	152	3.3
I use feedback/suggestions from interim file reviews to improve documentation for the remainder of the project.	0.66% 1	0.66% 1	16.45% 20	42.11% 64	19.74% 30	20.39% 31	152	4
My file reviewers go over the file deficiencies with me.	2.63% 4	7.24% 11	13.16% 20	46.05% 70	17.11% 26	13.82% 21	152	3.79
I understand what needs to be done to correct file deficiencies.	0.00% 0	5.88% 9	10.46% 16	47.71% 73	22.88% 35	13.07% 20	153	4.01
Do you have suggestions to improve the file review process?							47	

Q6 – part 2: Do you have suggestions to improve the file review process?

47 Comments Received including: ProjectWise use makes the reviews go smoothly, not all file reviewers are consistent, sometimes scheduling is a problem, need to take the personal preferences out of the review (i.e. if information is there, but not in the format the reviewer prefers, should still be acceptable – sometimes reviewers are to ‘nit-picky’), needs to be more timely, when deficiencies are noted there should be Q & A with the reviewer, MDOT has a good process, explaining how to fix the file deficiencies and/or citing requirement reference would be helpful, interim review deficiencies should be fixed more timely than just at end of project, file review should be learning opportunity-not a ‘gotcha’, MDOT should be more involved than just farming out to consultants, sometimes feels like consultants feel obligated to find ‘issues’ to justify their time and billing, e-reviews do not promote constructive conversation between reviewer and project staff

Q7. I am aware that utilization of the Minimum Documentation Guide could help reduce file deficiencies.

		Responses	
Yes		75.00%	114
No		25.00%	38
Answered			152
Skipped			124



Q8. The filing of Form 1120 signifies the Final Inspection is complete, file deficiencies are corrected, the project is accepted, and MDOT can initiate financial close-out. Some projects take an extensive period of time to correct file deficiencies and/or submit Form 1120. How can MDOT assist local agencies in filing the 1120 and requesting project close-out in a timelier manner?

Answered: 93

Skipped: 183

93 comments received including: provide additional guidance in construction manual, clarify guidance about the close-out process, insist on timely reviews and approval of contract modifications, due to no retainage and hoops to give low contractor performance ratings there is no recourse to motivate contractor to respond with paperwork (1386/2124) when there is no more money on the line, offer a conference call discussion a few weeks after final inspection and/or file reviews to prompt resolution of remaining issues, scheduling of final file review sometimes take a while, should use late close-outs as a scoring tool on future grant applications, loosen up on the small items – this can make a difference in timeliness of close-outs, should allow some file deficiencies to be just that – file deficiencies, develop a schedule for closeout activities and stick to it – written procedures and checklist, 1120 just means contractor’s work is accepted-doesn’t relate to close-out

Q 9. What additional outreach efforts or training do you need from MDOT to assist with understanding how to preserve aid and maintain compliance with program requirements?

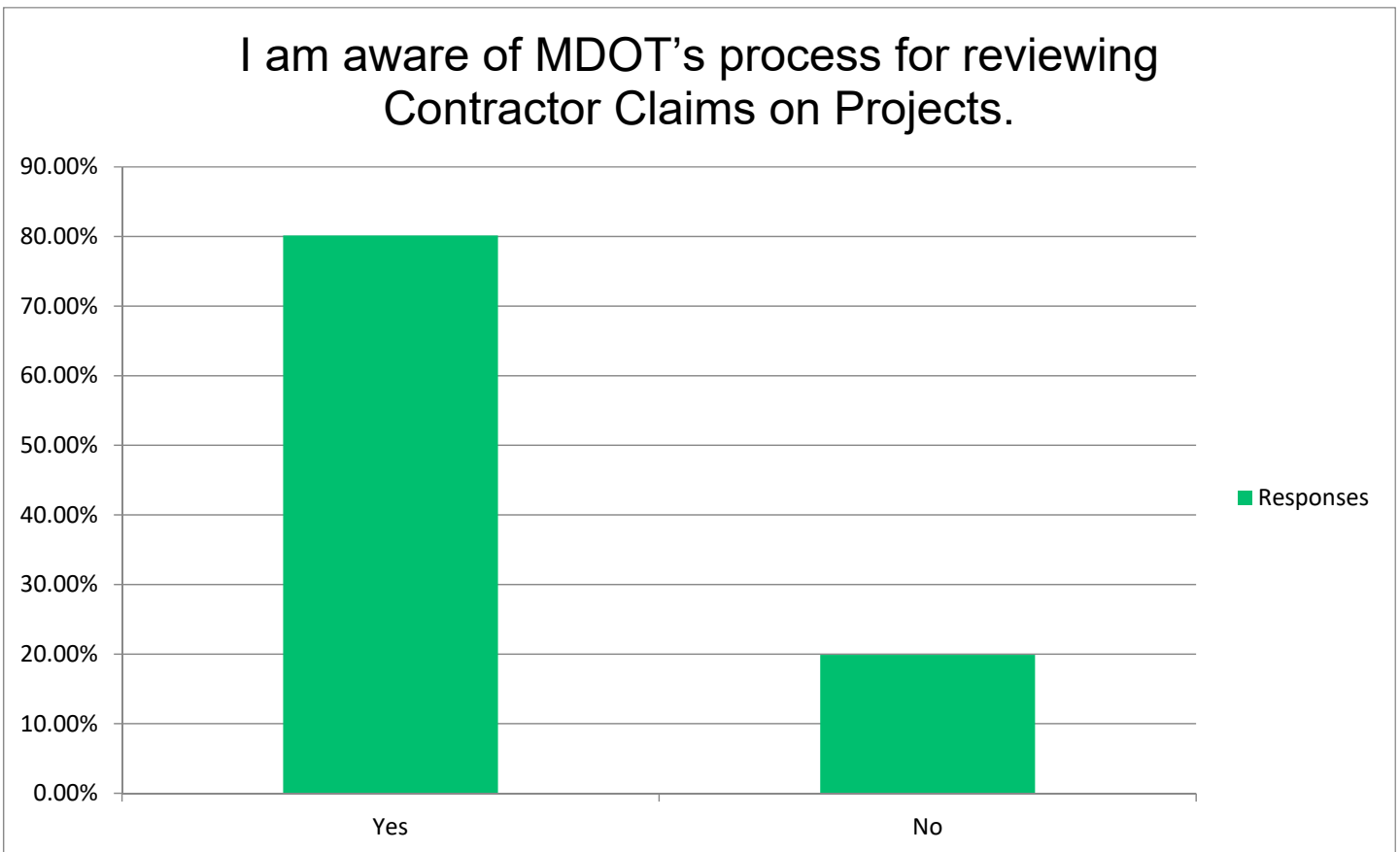
Answered 80

Skipped 196

80 comments were submitted including: suggestions for more diverse training opportunities/locations, suggestions for dedicated local agency construction staff to promote consistency, and requests for more communication regarding anticipated program changes prior to implementation, MDOT needs to first look internally on how to be consistent with oversight efforts and file reviews, reduce the level of complexity, there must be a point (dollar) amount where the means exceeds the end – state should offer exchange program for federal dollars – especially on small projects.

Q10. I am aware of MDOT's process for reviewing Contractor Claims on Projects.

Answer	Responses	
Yes	80.13%	121
No	19.87%	30
Answered		151
Skipped		125



Q11. Please answer based on your knowledge of the following MDOT publications:

	YES	NO	Total
I am aware that the MQAP (Material Quality Assurance Manual) is a contractual document per reference in the MDOT Standard Specification Book.	86.45%	13.55%	155
	134	21	
I am aware that the Density Testing & Inspection Manual is a contractual document per reference in the MDOT Standard Specification Book.	89.03%	10.97%	155
	138	17	
I am aware that the Procedures for Aggregate Inspection is a contractual document per reference in the MDOT Standard Specification Book	87.10%	12.90%	155
	135	20	
I am aware that the HMA Production Manual is a contractual document per reference in the MDOT Standard Specification Book.	88.39%	11.61%	155
	137	18	
		Answered	155
		Skipped	121

Q12. I know where to find the MDOT Construction Wiki Manual.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	77.48%	117
No	22.52%	34
Answered		151
Skipped		125

Q 13. I use the MDOT Construction Wiki Manual.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	55.33%	83
No	44.67%	67
Answered		150
Skipped		126

Q 14. If you use the MDOT Construction Wiki Manual, is there anything pertaining to local agency oversight which could be clarified?

Answered: 51

Skipped: 225

51 comments: need a better notification system for manual changes, clarification regarding Department/ Engineer/MDOT roles & responsibilities, need to improve user experience (searches/finding information), better adherence to published guidelines/provide training, don't use because I leave that to the consultant

Q15. I know where to find the MDOT Materials Source Guide.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	93.15%	136
No	6.85%	10
Answered		146
Skipped		130

Q16. I use the MDOT Materials Source Guide.

Never	Seldom	About half of the time	Usually	Always	Total	Weighted Average
8.00%	19.33%	12.00%	25.33%	35.33%	150	3.61
12	29	18	38	53		
					Answered	150
					Skipped	126

Q17. Why do you not use the MDOT Materials Source Guide regularly?

Answered: 39
 Skipped: 237

39 Responses including: reference as needed, use Unique SP's, need training on manual/hard to find requirements, don't use because utilization of manual delegated to another/rely on consultant.

Q18. I know where to find the Minimum Documentation Guide.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	80.42%	115
No	19.58%	28
Answered		143
Skipped		133

Q19. I use the Minimum Documentation Guide.

Never	Seldom	About half of the time	Usually	Always	Total	Weighted Average
16.08%	25.17%	11.89%	28.67%	18.18%	143	3.08
23	36	17	41	26		
					Answered	143
					Skipped	133

20. Please share any suggestions/ideas which would assist MDOT in providing consistent oversight activities.

Answered: 59

Skipped: 217

59 comments were collected with suggestions/ideas including the need for a more 'partnering' based relationship between MDOT and local agencies, further defining what entities can expect from each other (roles & responsibilities), clarifying guidance documents including elimination of gaps which lead to varying/differing interpretations, increased training (internal & external), collaboration during project rather than critique or 'got ya' at end. Some comments also included desire for aid exchange program in which MDOT would 'buy-out' locals federal aid.