

2022 Member Satisfaction Study

Vermont Electric Cooperative

PREPARED BY:

NRECA Market Research Services



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Executive Summary

Following are the top-line findings based on the results of an online survey of 1,347 residential and non-residential members of Vermont Electric Cooperative conducted in May/June of 2022:

- Overall satisfaction with Vermont Electric is very good, with an overall mean rating of 8.77. This has not changed significantly from the 2021 study and is significantly higher than in studies between 2014 and 2017. However, it does remain lower than the Co-op Norms mean rating of 8.99.
- The mean ratings for 19 of the 23 service attributes are evaluated above 4.00 on a 5-point scale, which is considered “good”. Thirteen attributes receive mean ratings near or above 4.50, the “excellent” threshold.
 - VEC receives the highest ratings for *having professional employees, customer service, and the helpfulness of employees*.
 - The lowest rated attributes are *the monthly service fees and charging reasonable rates*.
 - Compared to the 2021 study, none of the attributes have changed significantly.
- **Member Service** is the strongest key driver of overall satisfaction. This means that increases/decreases in the ratings for the attributes included in this area should cause a corresponding increase/decrease in overall satisfaction ratings. This area contains nine attributes and all are evaluated well above 4.0, including the three highest rated attributes in the study.
- The second-strongest key driver of satisfaction is **Electric Service** and is another area that is evaluated very well, with mean ratings for the five attributes close to or above 4.50. Additionally, *minimizing blinks, momentary outages* has increased significantly since the 2019 study. Members indicate that the impact of longer power outages (3 to 4 hours) have the most serious impact on them, while outages lasting 5 to 10 minutes have the least impact.
- **Electric Cost** is the next driver of satisfaction. Not surprisingly, this is the driver that contains the lowest rated attributes in the study. Although this is typical in studies of this type, with mean ratings below 4.0 and three of the four attributes having decreased significantly from the 2019 study, this may be cause for concern. However, member evaluations for *the value they feel they receive for the money* are positive with a mean rating of 4.15.
- The final key driver of satisfaction is **Payments and Bills**. While the three attributes in this area do not have a strong impact on overall satisfaction, they are all evaluated well above 4.0.
- Members continue to feel that providing electricity from solar and hydro power is important. Although the importance of providing power from nuclear energy and natural gas remains low, both have increased in importance from most of the previous studies.
- Providing low-cost energy is more important than receiving power from renewable energy and carbon free energy generated locally or in-state. However, receiving power from renewable energy and carbon free energy generated locally is more important than that generated in-state.
- Eight percent of the members sponsor solar panels in VEC’s Co-op Community Solar program. Although this is a significant decrease from 2018, the decrease is due to more people saying they

don't know if they sponsor panels or did not answer the question, not to people saying they do not sponsor panels.

- The proportion of members who currently own or lease an electric vehicle has increased significantly from the 2019 study, as has the likelihood of purchasing or leasing an EV in the next 5 years. The proportion of members who say they are likely to purchase/lease on-site back up battery storage for their home in the next 5 years has also increased significantly since 2019. Almost half of the members say they own a backup generator.
- Newsletter readership is consistent with recent studies but has significantly decreased from the studies between 2014 and 2016. Most members receive their newsletter in print format.
- Most members receive their electric bills digitally and almost half say they always or usually read the inserts that come with the bill.
- Most members would prefer to receive information from VEC by email on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- Two-thirds of members use social media, most often Facebook. Facebook is also the social media members use most.
- Eight in ten say they use VEC's SmartHub online tool.
- Approximately four in ten view themselves as a member of the co-op, rather than just a customer. Although this is consistent with previous studies, it is lower than the Co-op Norms.

Objectives, Methodology, & Analysis

Objectives

This residential member survey addresses but is not limited to the following informational objectives:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** Assess how satisfied members are with Vermont Electric Cooperative.
- **Performance Quality Attributes:** Evaluate residential member perceptions of service quality on a variety of attributes (e.g., rates, billing, outages, problem resolution, etc.).
- **Performance Quality Trends and Benchmarks:** Compare the results to past studies to identify trends and benchmark the results against co-ops nationwide using NRECA's Co-op Norms Database.
- **Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts:** Derive the key drivers of overall satisfaction and the degree to which consumer needs are being met to help VEC prioritize any improvement efforts.
- **Other:** Explore other areas of specific interest to the co-op, including perceived importance of renewable power sources, likelihood of purchasing/leasing a plug-in electric vehicle in the next 5 years, newsletter and bill insert readership, and communication preferences.
- **Member Demographics:** Provide demographics of the residential member base and identify differences in attitudes between demographic groups.

Methodology

Data were collected through online surveying. This is the second year that VEC's survey was conducted entirely online.

An e-mail invitation was sent on May 31 to a random sample of 8,672 members for whom VEC has an e-mail address, with 186 returned as being undeliverable. The survey was closed on June 7 with a total of 1,347 surveys completed online, resulting in a response rate of 16%. The online survey respondents are weighted by connect date to match the overall tenure distribution of the co-op.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points. This means that a result of 50% in the survey may range between 47% and 53% in an infinite number of residential samples this size.

Analysis

The graphics presented in this report are based on data collected from the current study and tracking comparable results from 17 studies conducted between 2003 and 2021. The results of tracking surveys provide value by demonstrating when results remain consistent and indicating where there has been significant change over time. Comparisons to previous studies are primarily focused on the studies since 2014, the first year an online component was introduced in the methodology. Due to the co-op's desire to move to a combined survey including both residential and non-residential members, data from the separate residential and non-residential surveys prior to 2021 have been combined. Because of this, it is important to remember that results in this report from those studies will not be the same as presented in the earlier reports.

The co-op has experienced some recent events that are likely to have an impact on attitudes and satisfaction:

- A 1.96% rate increase went into effect on 1/1/2022.
- The co-op has implemented a number of new programs in the past year. These include new load management programs, Level II electric vehicle charging incentive to not charge during peak times, and a home battery program.
- There are also a number of programs that will be implemented in 2022 or are under consideration. These include Energy Equity programs, on-bill financing pilot project, Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program, rural community pilot, and low/moderate weatherization and cchP incentives.
- A heavy snowstorm hit Vermont on April 19 causing thousands of electric consumers to be without power, some for multiple days.

Comparisons are also made to results from similar studies conducted by 86 co-ops among more than 94,000 residential members across the country between January 2019 and December 2021. These “Co-op Norms” can be viewed as an example of other co-ops’ scores, not a national benchmark as they are not taken from the universe of all cooperatives. Rather, these are co-ops for whom NRECA Market Research Services has conducted a study in that 3-year time period. These co-ops tend to have higher levels of satisfaction and for those who are Touchstone Energy members, they also outperform Touchstone Energy’s ACSI.

Differences between current and previous studies and between member segments, such as differences by age or service tenure, are either statistically significant or not. A “significant” change refers to the certainty of a difference, not the magnitude or size of the difference. Throughout this report, only significant changes or comparisons will be mentioned even if the word “significant” is not used, unless noted otherwise. Significance is measured at the 95% confidence level, meaning that at least 95% of the time, using the same sampling procedure, this difference will occur; the difference is likely not a matter of chance.

When evaluating the mean ratings in this report, on a 5-point scale a mean of 4.50 or above should be considered “excellent” and a mean between 4.00 and 4.49 is considered “good”. Means below 4.00 may be cause for concern and those below 3.75 indicate a need for improvement.

To provide additional points for analysis, demographic information was purchased from Acxiom Corporation for each household served (residential members only). For those households that matched by surname and address, an enhanced package of demographic data was appended to the file. The data elements are listed below:

- Adult Age Ranges Present in Household
- Number of Children in Household
- Children Age Ranges in Household
- Marital Status in Household
- Number of Adults in Household
- Household size
- Home market value
- Home year built
- Population density
- Personix lifestage cluster
- Education
- Homeowner/Renter
- Length of Residence
- Estimated Household Income
- Gender of head of household
- Age of head of household
- Occupation of head of household
- Dwelling type
- Personix lifestage group
- Personix lifestage insurance group

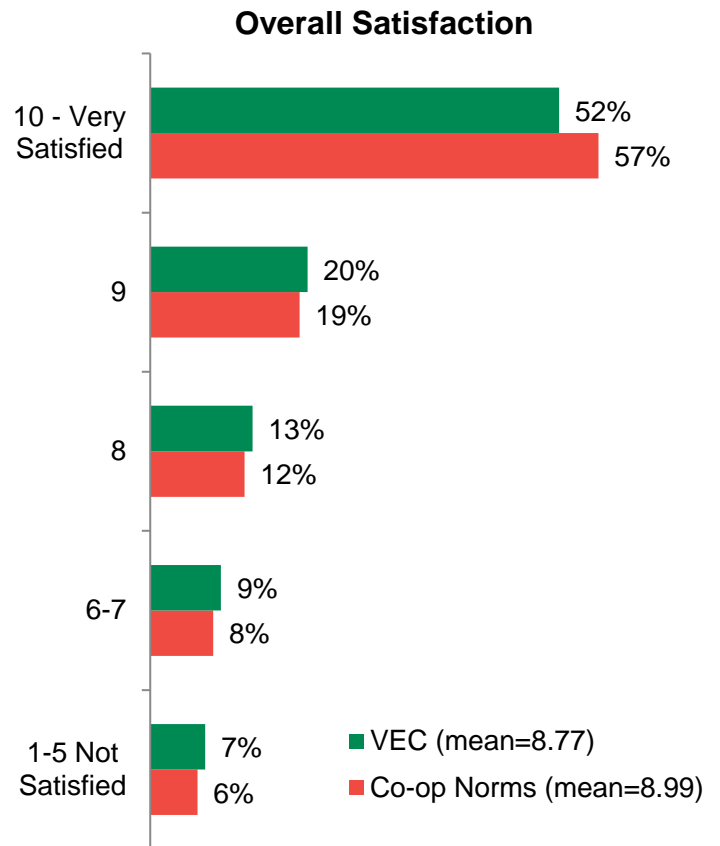
Key Findings

Overall Satisfaction

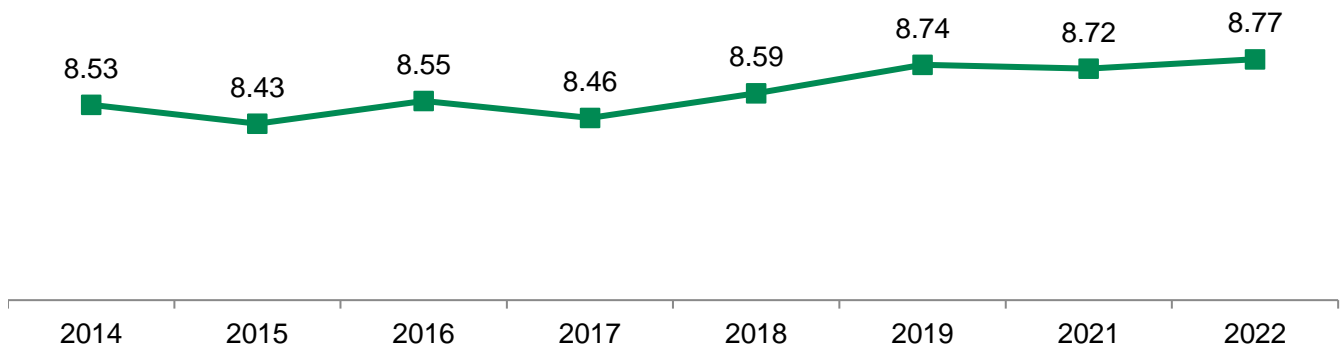
Overall satisfaction among Vermont Electric’s members continues to be very good. The mean overall satisfaction rating is 8.77 and 72% give a top rating of “9” or “10”.

Although this is lower than the Co-op Norms, it has not changed significantly from the 2021 study and is significantly higher than in the studies between 2014 and 2017.

Longer-tenured members (20 years or more), older members (especially those 65 or older), those living in smaller households (3 or fewer people), those paying lower monthly electric bills (especially \$50 or less), and retired members are significantly more satisfied than are their individual counterparts.



Overall Satisfaction Mean Ratings By Year



Performance Quality Attributes

Members were asked to evaluate 23 performance quality attributes related to member service, electric service, communication, billing, and cost. On 19 of the attributes measured, the mean ratings are above 4.00, a “good” rating on a 5-point scale.

Additionally, mean ratings for 13 attributes are approximately 4.50 or higher which is considered excellent. These are:

- Having professional employees (4.65)
- The overall customer service they provide (4.62)
- The courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems (4.61)
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (4.59)
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed (4.55)
- The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (4.52)
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers (4.50)
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum (4.50)
- Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum (4.50)
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages (4.50)
- The restoration of power after an outage (4.49)
- Resolving any issues or problems (4.48)
- Having convenient payment options (4.48)

Conversely, the attributes on which VEC is rated least well are *the monthly service fees* (61% rating “4” or “5”) and *charging reasonable rates* (62%). This is an area that is often rated lower in cooperative satisfaction research and ratings often fall below the “good” threshold of 4.00. With mean ratings of 3.69 and 3.72, respectively, and significantly lower than in 2019, this may be of concern to the co-op.

Performance Quality Trends and Benchmarks

Compared to the 2021 study, none of the attributes have changed significantly. However, two attributes have increased significantly compared to 2019 while five have decreased. As in 2020, almost all of the attributes are significantly higher than in at least one study between 2014 and 2018.

The two attributes that are significantly higher than in 2019 are both related to electric service. They are:

- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages

Conversely, the five attributes that have decreased are all related to rates and fees:

- Charging reasonable rates
- Their monthly service fees
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills
- Helping customers keep bills as low as possible
- The accuracy of meter reading and billing

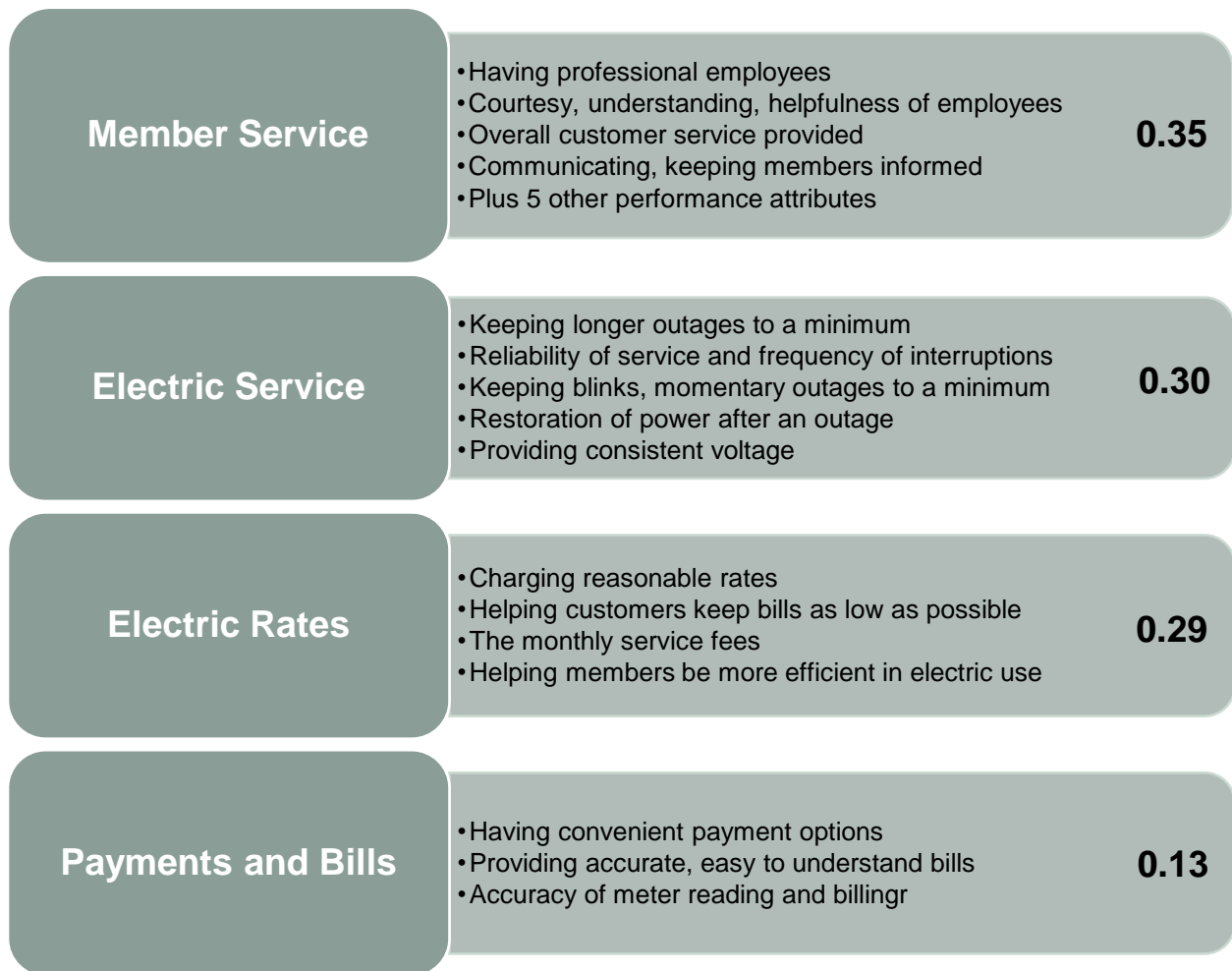
While mean ratings for many of the comparable attributes are similar to the Co-op Norms, there are a number with gaps of 0.10 or greater, both higher and lower than the Co-op Norms:

	VEC Mean	Co-op Norms	Gap
<i>Keeping members informed on the status of outages</i>	4.50	4.24	+0.26
<i>Communicating with members and keeping them informed</i>	4.55	4.44	+0.11
<i>Supporting the local community</i>	4.41	4.51	-0.10
<i>Delivering a good value for the money</i>	4.15	4.26	-0.11
<i>Their monthly service fees</i>	3.69	3.81	-0.12
<i>Providing accurate and easy to understand bills</i>	4.36	4.50	-0.14
<i>Helping members to be more efficient in their use of electricity</i>	3.86	4.10	-0.24
<i>Charging reasonable rates</i>	3.72	3.97	-0.25

Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts

The key drivers of overall satisfaction among residential members are Member Service, Electric Service, Electric Rates, and Payments and Bills. Going forward, these are the areas that Vermont Electric Cooperative should focus on most.

Regression analysis was used to determine the key drivers of overall satisfaction. The scores are to be interpreted relative to each other. For example, since *member service* has an importance score of 0.35 and *payments and bills* has a score of 0.13, we can say that members' perceptions of the member service they receive have more than 2.5 times the impact on overall satisfaction as their perceptions of the payment options and bills provided by VEC. Attributes not shown below are not significant drivers of overall satisfaction. More information on how the factors were formed and importance scores derived can be found in Appendix B.



Overall Satisfaction

Member Service

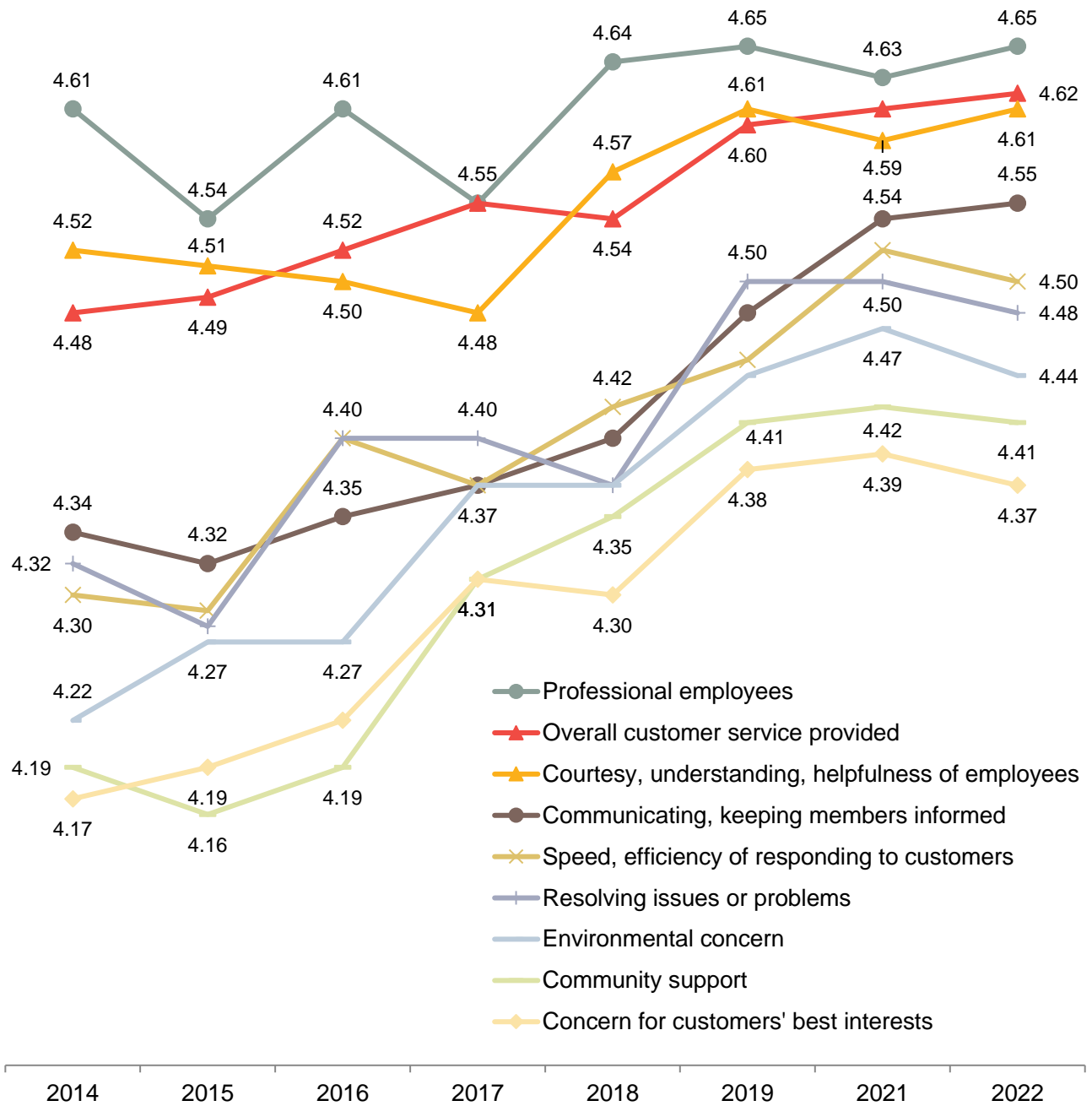
The strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is **Member Service**. The nine attributes that make up this driver are evaluated well above the “good” threshold of 4.0, including the two highest rated attributes in the study – *having professional employees* and *the overall customer service provided*. Three other attributes in this driver also meet or exceed the excellent threshold.

Most of the comparable attributes are similar to the Co-op Norms with two exceptions. *Communicating with members and keeping them informed* is higher than the Co-op Norms while *supporting the local community* is lower.

All nine attributes are significantly higher than at least two studies between 2014 and 2018. These are graphed on the following page.



Mean Ratings by Year

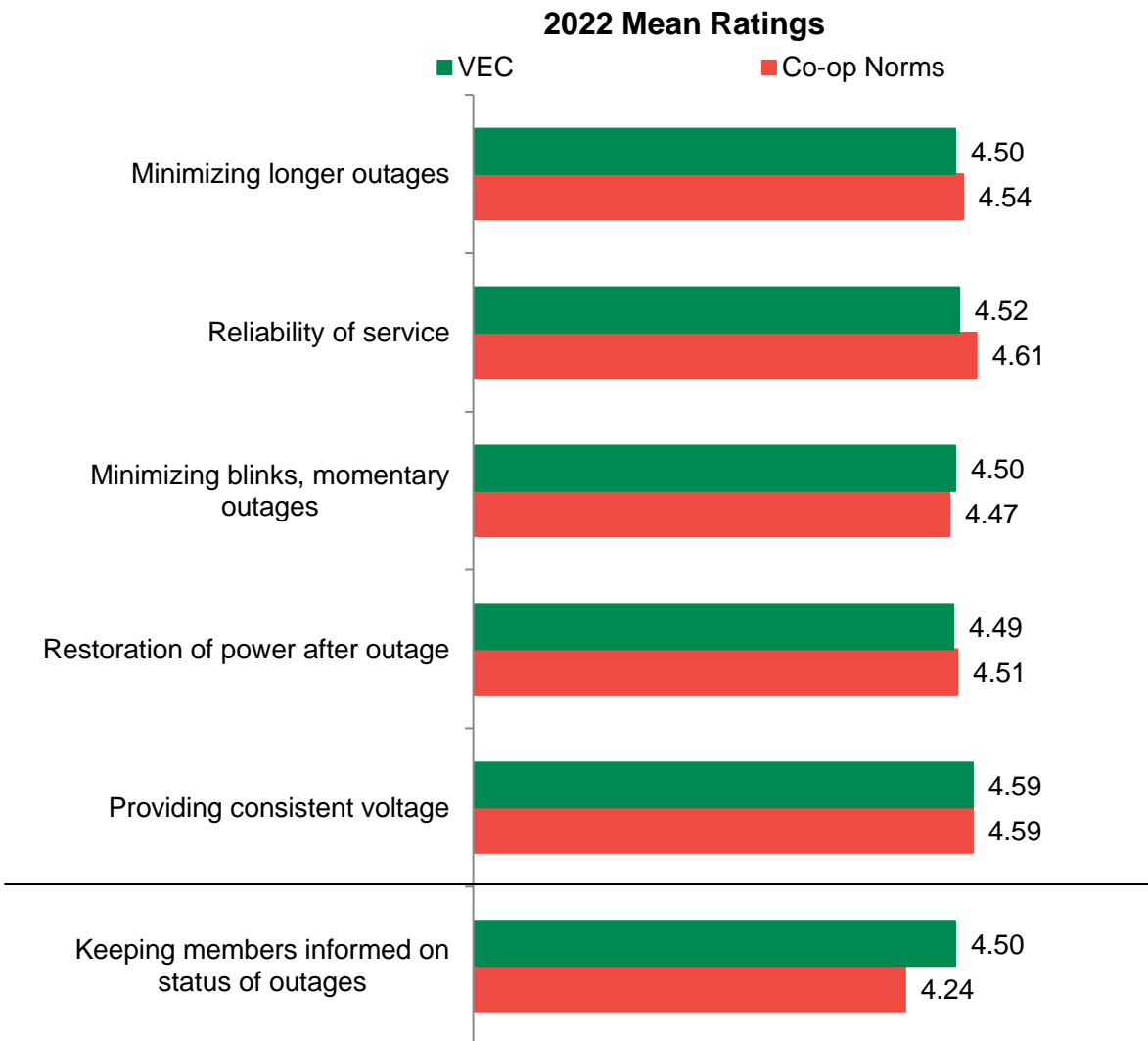


Electric Service

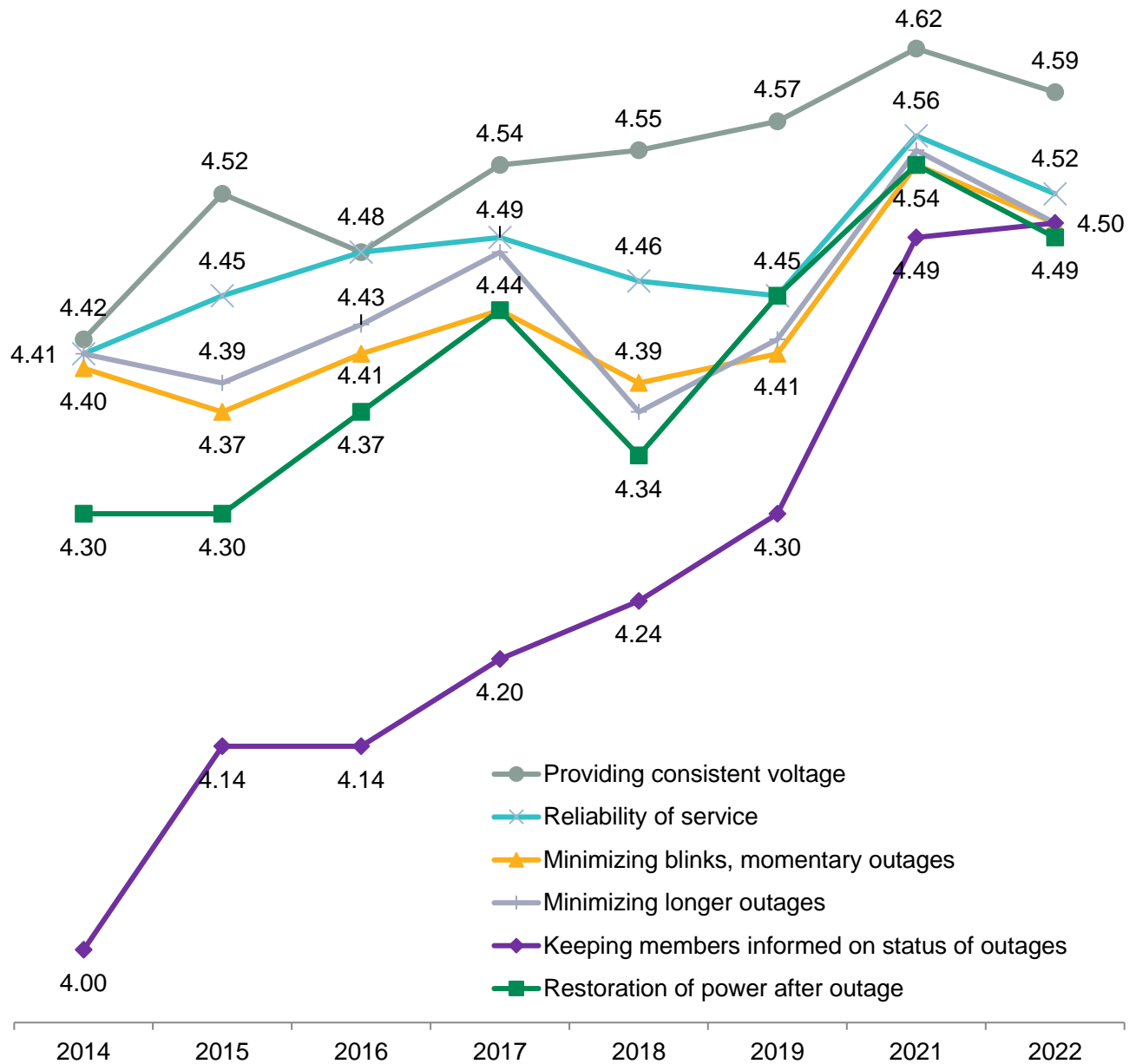
Electric Service is the second-strongest key driver of satisfaction. This is an area for which VEC is evaluated as being excellent, with all five attributes included in this driver having mean ratings of approximately 4.50 or higher. Additionally, all of the attributes are similar to the Co-op Norms.

All five attributes are rated higher than at least one of the studies between 2014 and 2018. Additionally, *minimizing blinks and momentary outages* is one of the two attributes in the study that are significantly higher than in 2019.

Although the attribute *keeping members informed on outage status* is not a driver of satisfaction, it is also evaluated positively and is higher than in all of the previous studies as well as the Co-op Norms. Trending is shown on the following page.

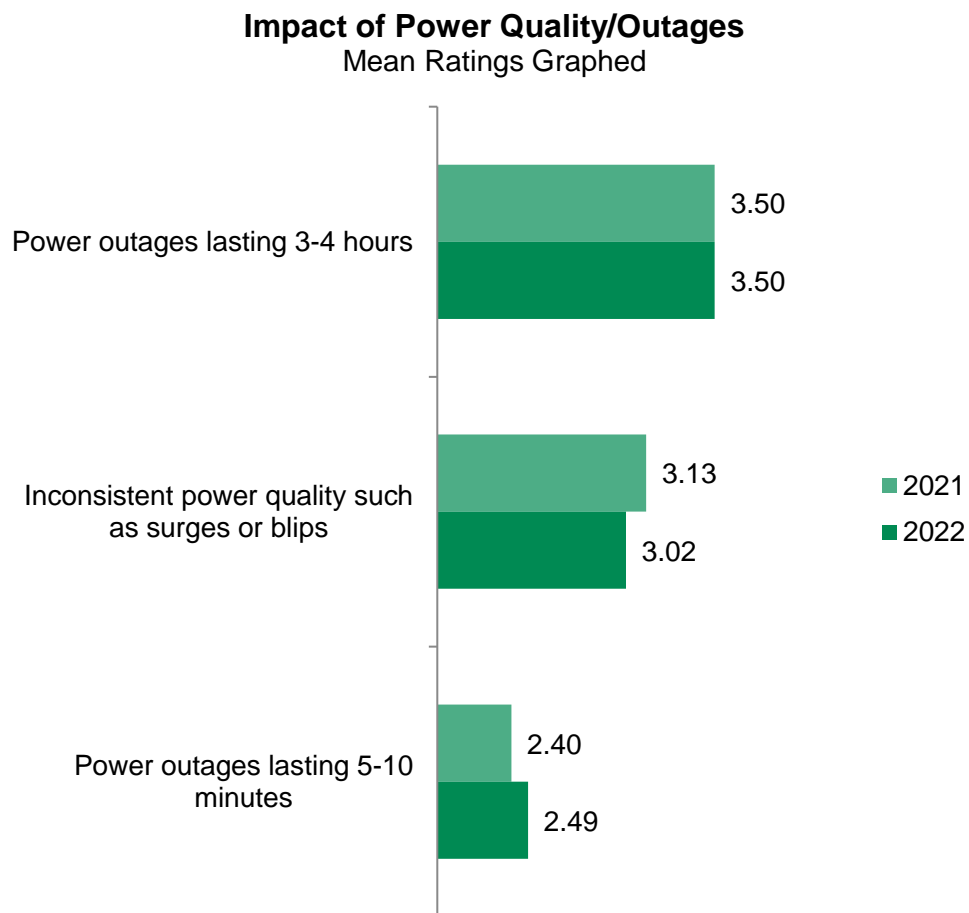


Mean Ratings by Year



Power outages that last three to four hours are more serious to members than are outages of 5 to 10 minutes and inconsistent power quality.

Since in past studies these questions were only asked of non-residential members, the graph below shows only the 2021 and 2022 studies in which everyone was asked. Mean ratings have not changed significantly from last year.



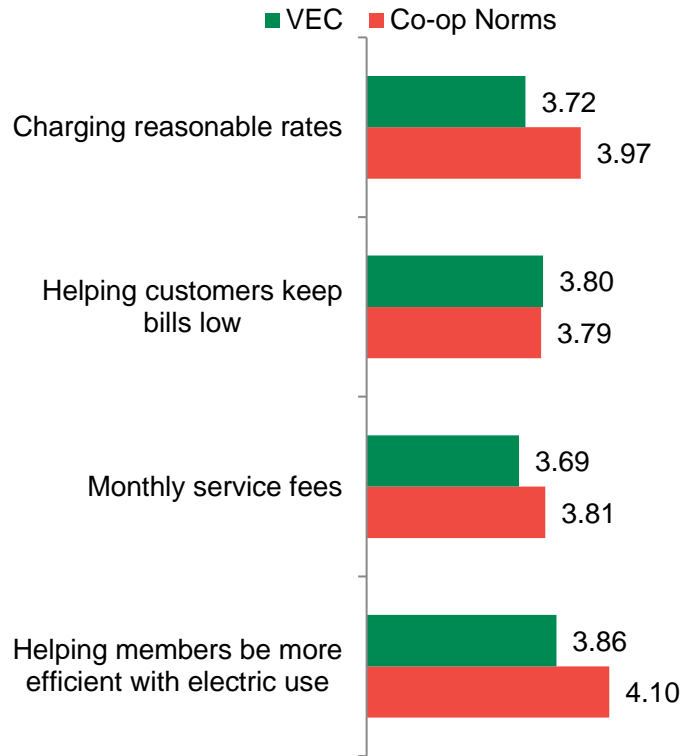
Electric Cost

Electric Cost is the next key driver of overall satisfaction. This area includes the four attributes in the study whose mean ratings fall below 4.0.

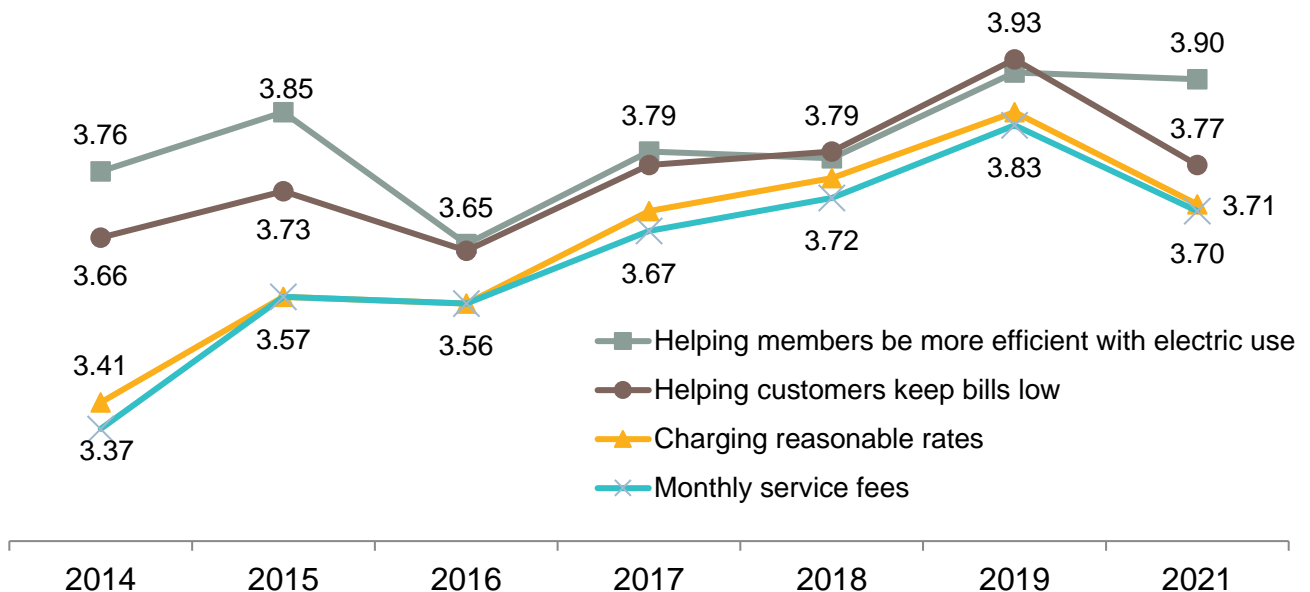
Additionally, with the exception of *helping members be more efficient with their electric use*, all of the attributes in this driver are evaluated lower than in 2019. However, all four attributes are higher than at least one of the studies between 2014 and 2016.

Compared to the Co-op Norms, VEC is evaluated lower for all except *helping customers keep bills as low as possible*.

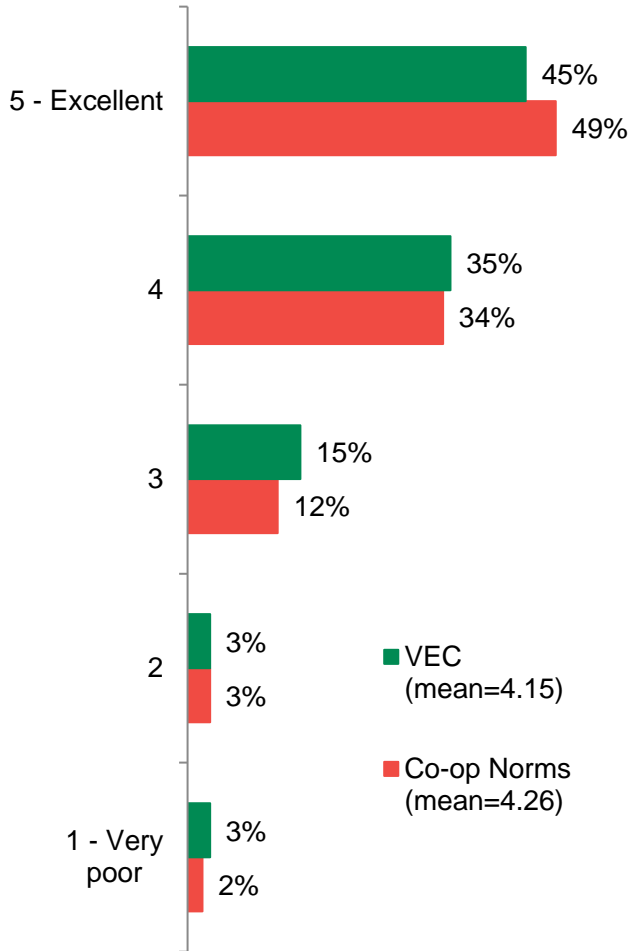
2022 Mean Ratings



Mean Ratings by Year



Value for the Money

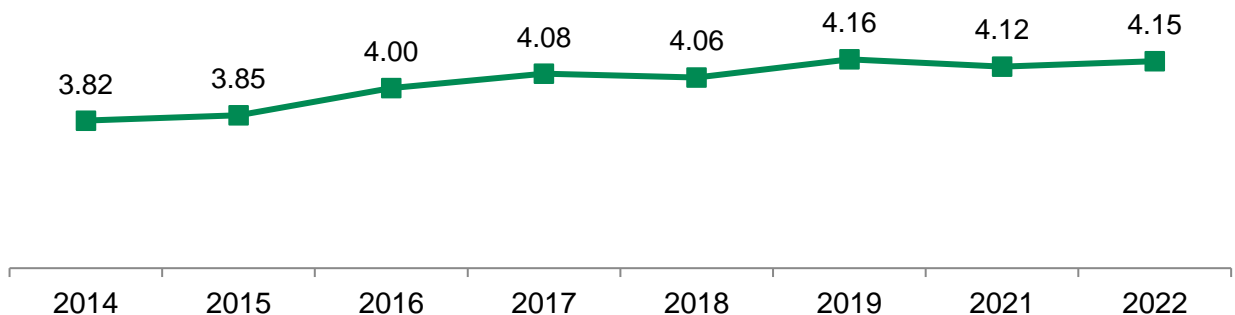


Members evaluate *the value they receive for their money* as good, with a mean rating of 4.15 on a 5-point scale. This is significantly higher than the studies between 2014 and 2016 but lower than the Co-op Norms.

A regression analysis was also conducted to determine the key drivers of *delivering good value for the money*. As can be seen in the table below, it was found that four factors are significant drivers of value. Although perceptions of members’ electric cost by far have the strongest impact on the value members feel they receive, it is not the only factor that enters into the “value equation”.

Key Drivers of Value	
Electric Rates	0.61
Member Service	0.42
Electric Service	0.26
Payments and Bills	0.12

Mean Value Rating By Year



Payments and Bills

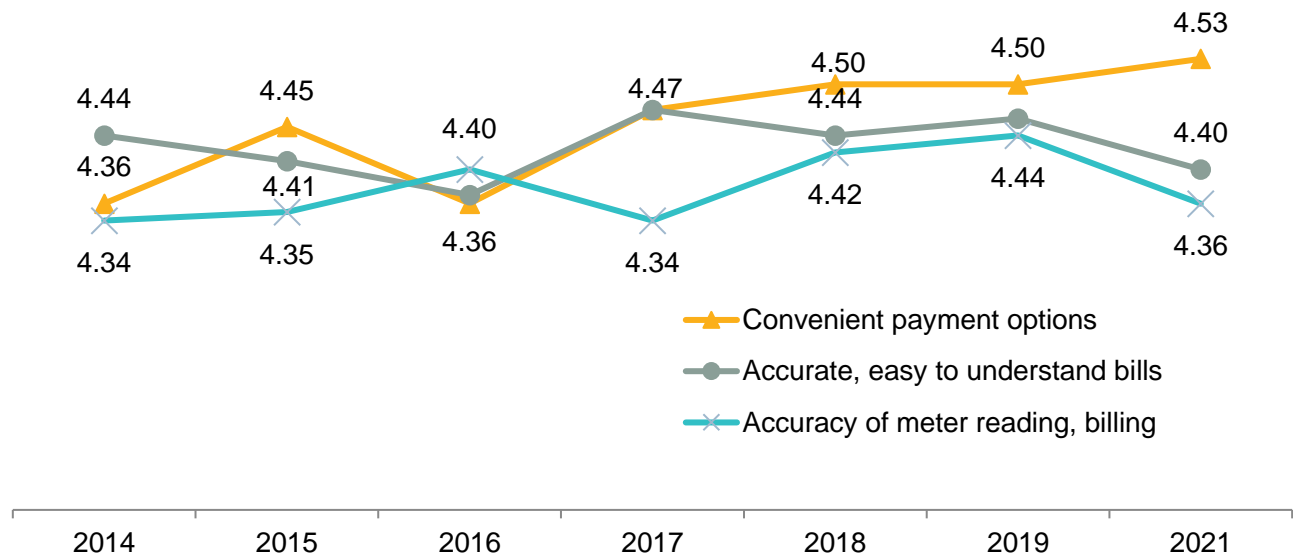
The final key driver of overall satisfaction is **Payments and Bills** and is another area for which VEC receives very good ratings from its members.

Mean ratings for *accurate, easy to understand bills* and *the accuracy of meter reading and billing* are lower than in 2019. Conversely, *convenient payment options* continues to be higher than in the 2014 and 2016 studies. Having *accurate, easy to understand bills* is also lower than the Co-op Norms.

2022 Mean Ratings



Mean Ratings by Year



Renewable Energy

Members continue to give the highest ratings for the importance of VEC providing green power from solar and hydro renewable sources. Power from nuclear and natural gas are least important to members.

Although not all of the differences are statistically significant, member segments that give higher importance ratings than do their individual counterparts include:

Solar:

- Non-residential members
- Those paying lower electric bills
- Those who are not married

Hydro:

- Those who are more satisfied with VEC
- Older members

Wind:

- Non-residential members
- Older members
- Those who are not married

Bio-mass:

- Older members
- Retired members
- Those who are not married

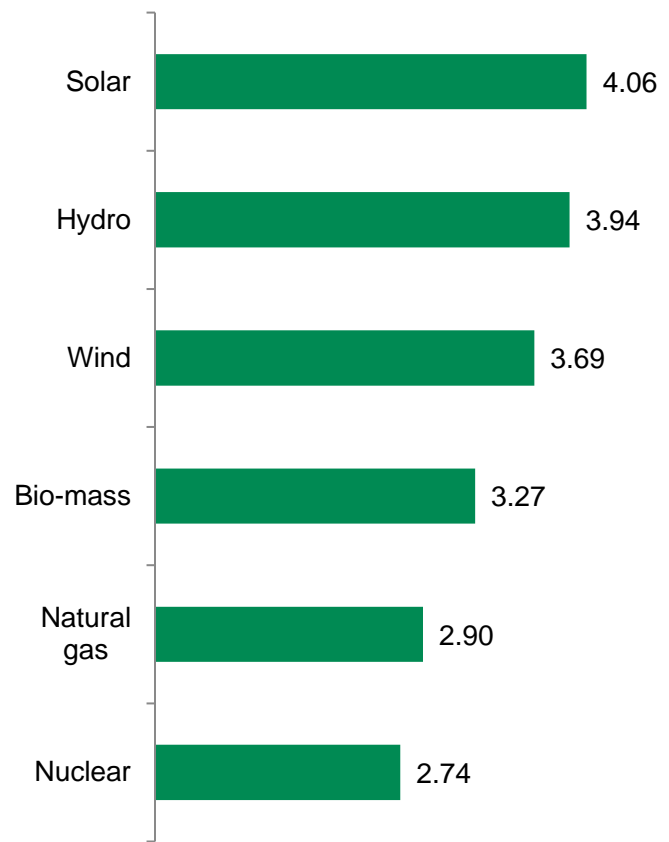
Natural gas:

- Those who are more satisfied with VEC
- Older members
- Renters
- Those without children in the home

Nuclear:

- Retired members
- Those without children in the home

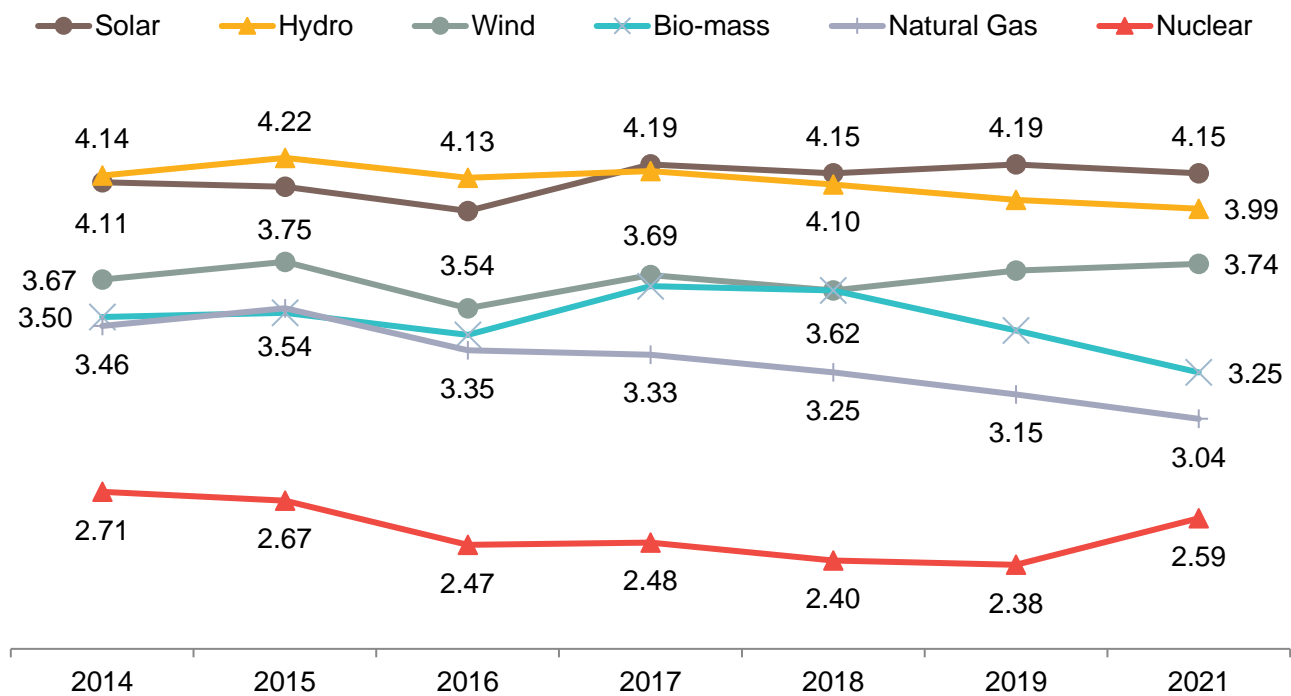
Importance of Power Sources
2022 Mean Ratings Graphed



The importance of providing power from nuclear is higher than in all of the studies between 2016 and 2021. Wind continues to be higher than in 2016.

Conversely, the importance of providing power from solar is lower than in 2017 and 2019, hydro is lower than in all of the studies between 2014 and 2018, bio-mass is lower than in all of the studies between 2014 and 2019, and natural gas is lower than all of the studies between 2014 and 2021.

Mean Ratings by Year



It is more important to VEC members to have low-cost energy than to receive power from renewable energy and carbon free energy, regardless of where it is generated. However, renewable energy generated locally and carbon free energy generated locally are more important than either one being generated in-state.

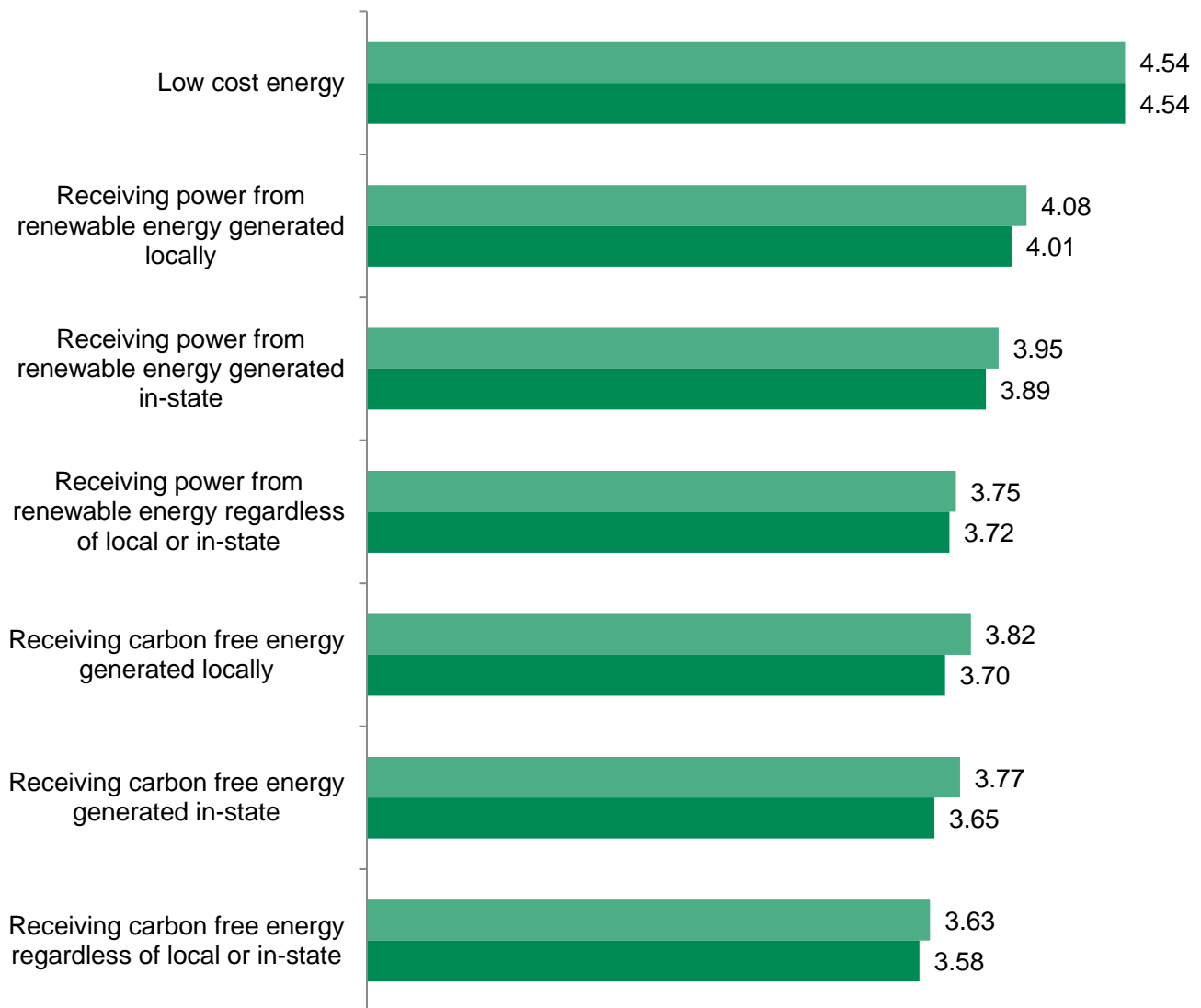
Additionally, receiving power from renewable energy is more important than receiving carbon free energy regardless of where it is generated.

With one exception, mean importance ratings have not changed significantly from 2021. The exception is receiving carbon free energy that is generated locally which has decreased.

Importance of Cost and Location of Generation

Mean Ratings Graphed

■ 2021 ■ 2022

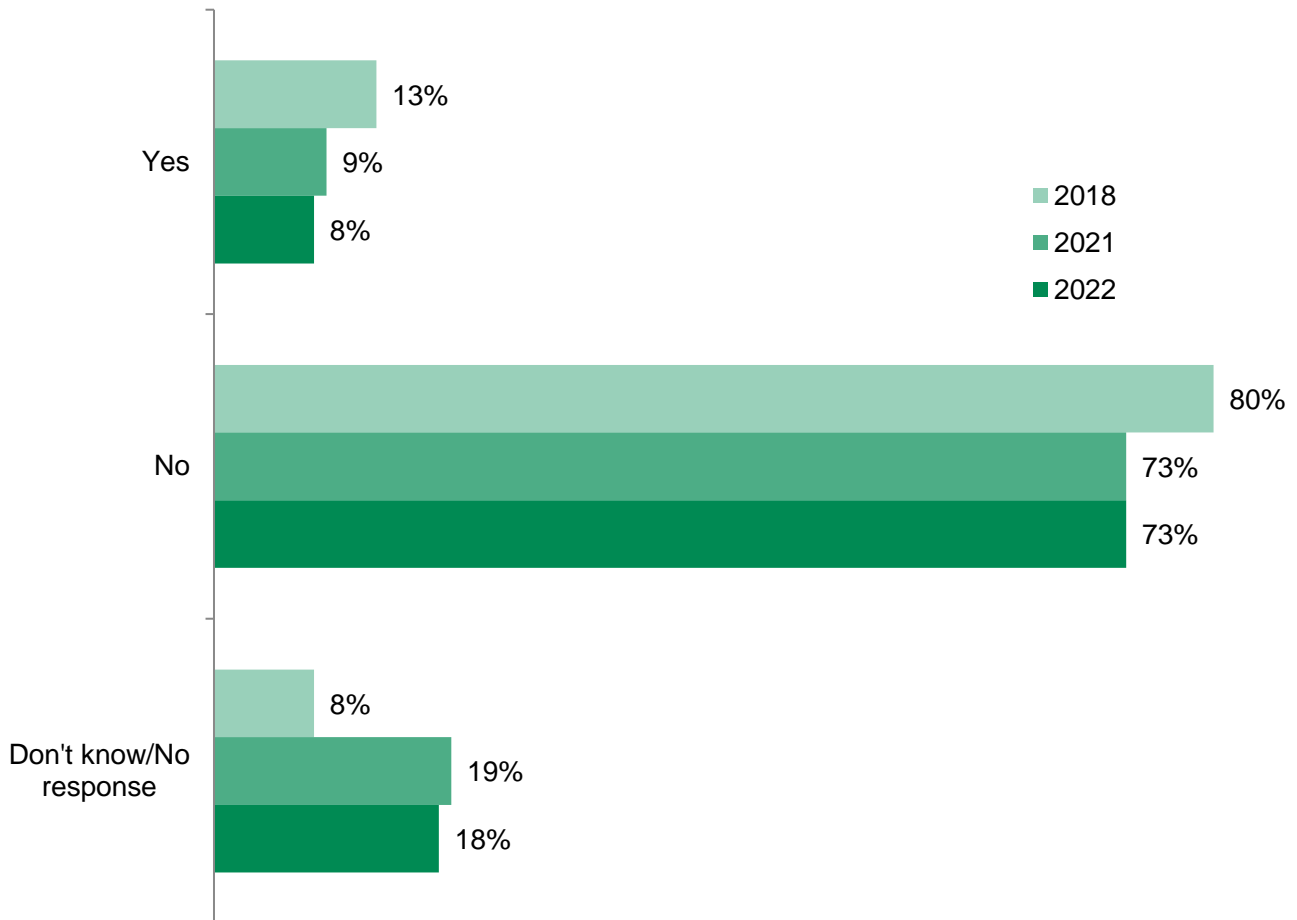


Approximately one in ten members indicate they sponsor solar panels in VEC’s Co-op Community Solar program. Older members (65 or older), those who own their home, those paying lower monthly electric bills, and retired members are more likely than their individual counterparts to sponsor solar panels.

The proportion of members who say they sponsor solar panels in the community solar program continues to be significantly lower than in the 2018 study. However, as in 2021, this is due to an increase in members who say they don’t know if they sponsor solar panels rather than an increase in members who do not sponsor solar panels.

Just over one-quarter do not know or were not able to name a reason for not sponsoring solar panels. Among those able to provide an answer, the reasons given most often are needing more information about sponsorship and the cost, followed by members who have or plan to have solar panels at home. A full listing of responses can be found in Appendix C.

Sponsors Solar Panels in VEC’s Co-op Community Solar Program

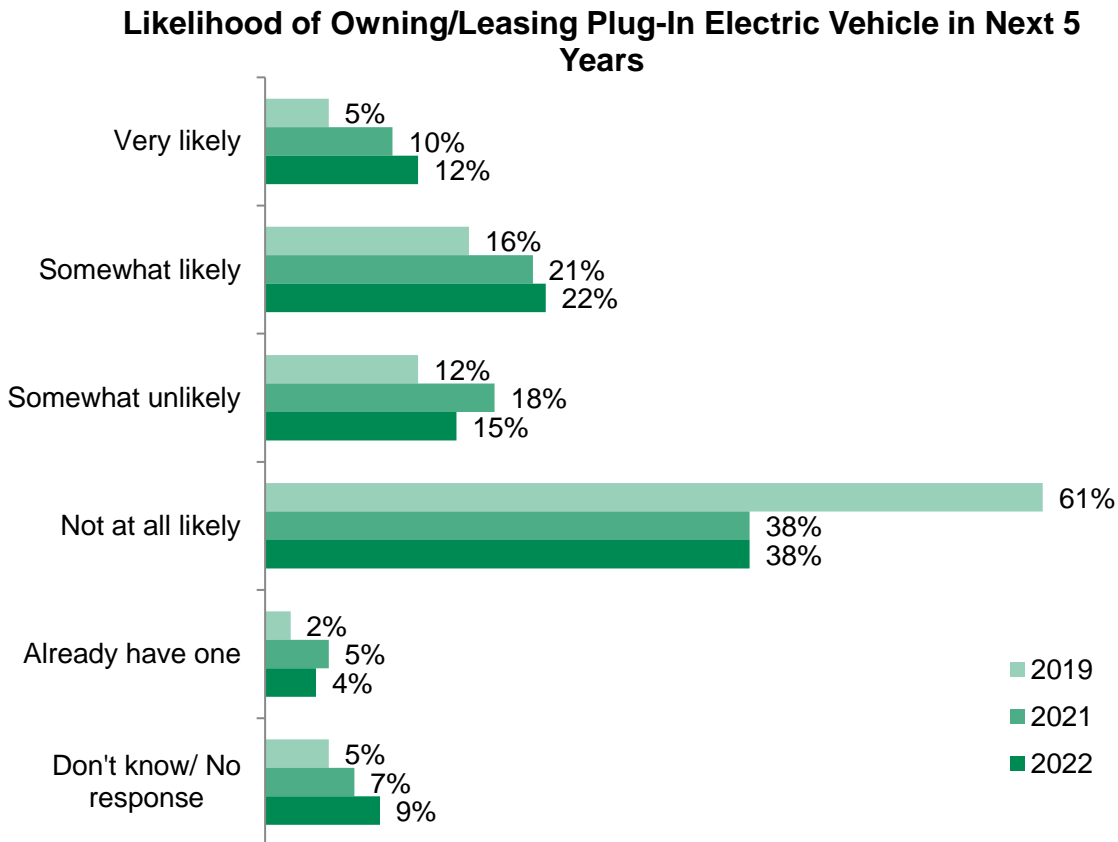


Products and Services

Four percent of the members indicate they currently own or lease a plug-in electric vehicle and one-third say they are very (12%) or somewhat (22%) likely to purchase or lease an electric vehicle in the next 5 years. The proportion of both current owners and members who are likely to purchase a plug-in electric vehicle in the next 5 years has increased significantly from the 2019 study.

Older members (55 or older), those paying \$50/month or less for their electric bill, and those who are not married are more likely than their counterparts to currently own or lease an electric vehicle. Newer members (2 years or less tenure), homeowners, those with more formal education and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their counterparts to be likely to purchase/lease an electric vehicle.

Not surprisingly, the cost of an electric vehicle is mentioned most often as the biggest obstacle to purchasing/leasing one. Other obstacles mentioned include charging concerns and battery range concerns. A full listing of responses can be found in Appendix C.



Similar to the purchase or lease of a plug-in electric vehicle, approximately three in ten say they are very (7%) or somewhat (22%) likely to purchase or lease on-site back up battery storage for their home in the next 5 years while 2% indicate that they already own one. This continues to be higher than in 2019.

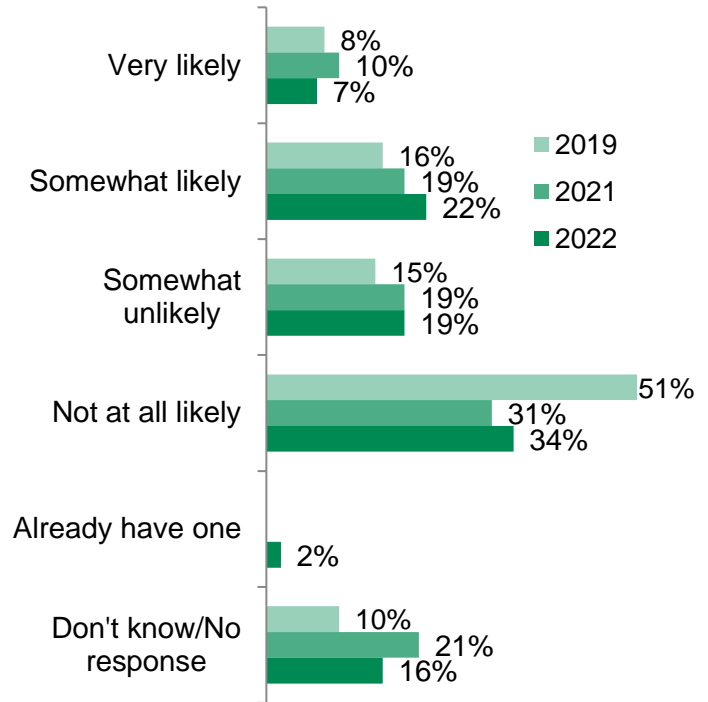
Newer members, younger members, those paying monthly electric bills of \$50 or less or more than \$150, those who are currently employed, those who are not married, and those with a household income below \$30,000 or \$75,000 or more are more likely than their counterparts to say they are likely to purchase on-site back up battery storage.

Members paying electric bills of \$50 or less or over \$150 per month are more likely to already own or lease an on-site back up battery.

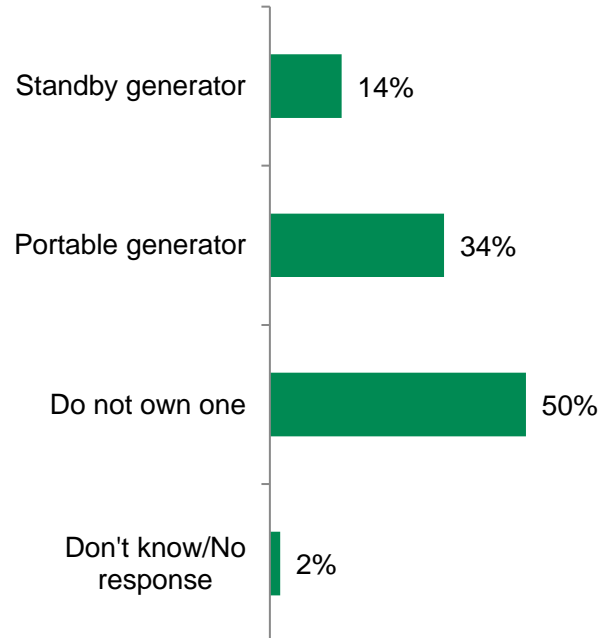
Almost half of the members own a standby (14%) or portable generator (34%). Older members, those paying a monthly electric bill above \$200, and those with an income of \$100,000 or more are more likely than their counterparts to own a standby generator.

The member groups who are more likely to already own a portable generator include longer-tenured members, homeowners, and those paying a higher monthly electric bill.

Likelihood of Owning/Leasing On-Site Back Up Battery Storage For Home in Next 5 Years



What Type of Back Up Generator Currently Own

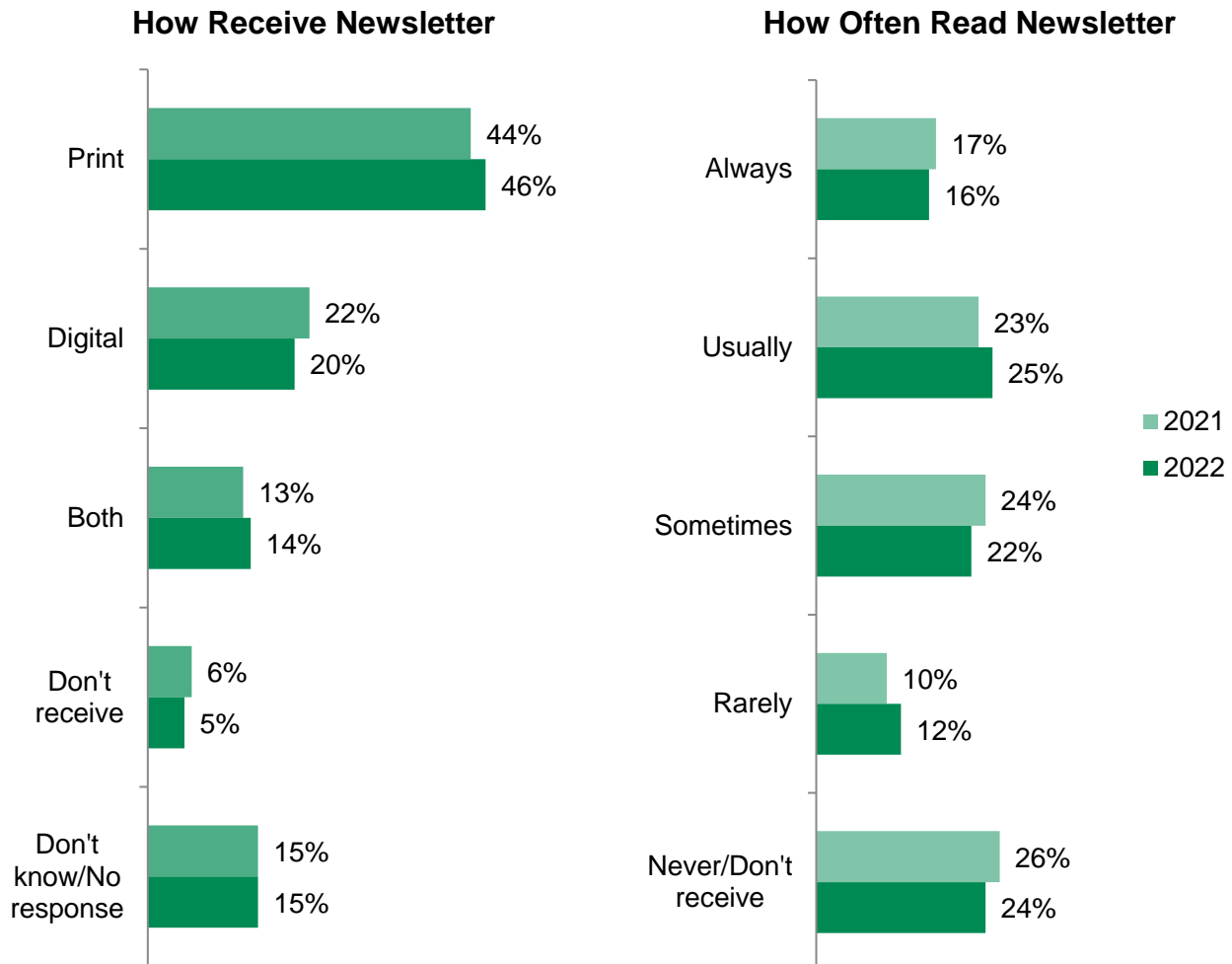


Communication

Sixty percent of the members say they receive the print version of the *Co-op Life* newsletter and 34% receive the digital version. Four in ten say they always (16%) or usually (25%) read the newsletter. This is consistent with recent studies, although the proportion of members who say they always read the publication is lower than in the studies between 2014 and 2016 while those who usually read it is higher than in 2016 and 2018.

Longer-tenured members, older members, those living alone, retired members, those who are married, and less affluent members are more likely to only receive the print version of the newsletter while newer members, those with more formal education, and more affluent members are more likely to only receive the digital version. Those living in larger households, and those who are not married are more likely than their counterparts to say they don't receive the newsletter.

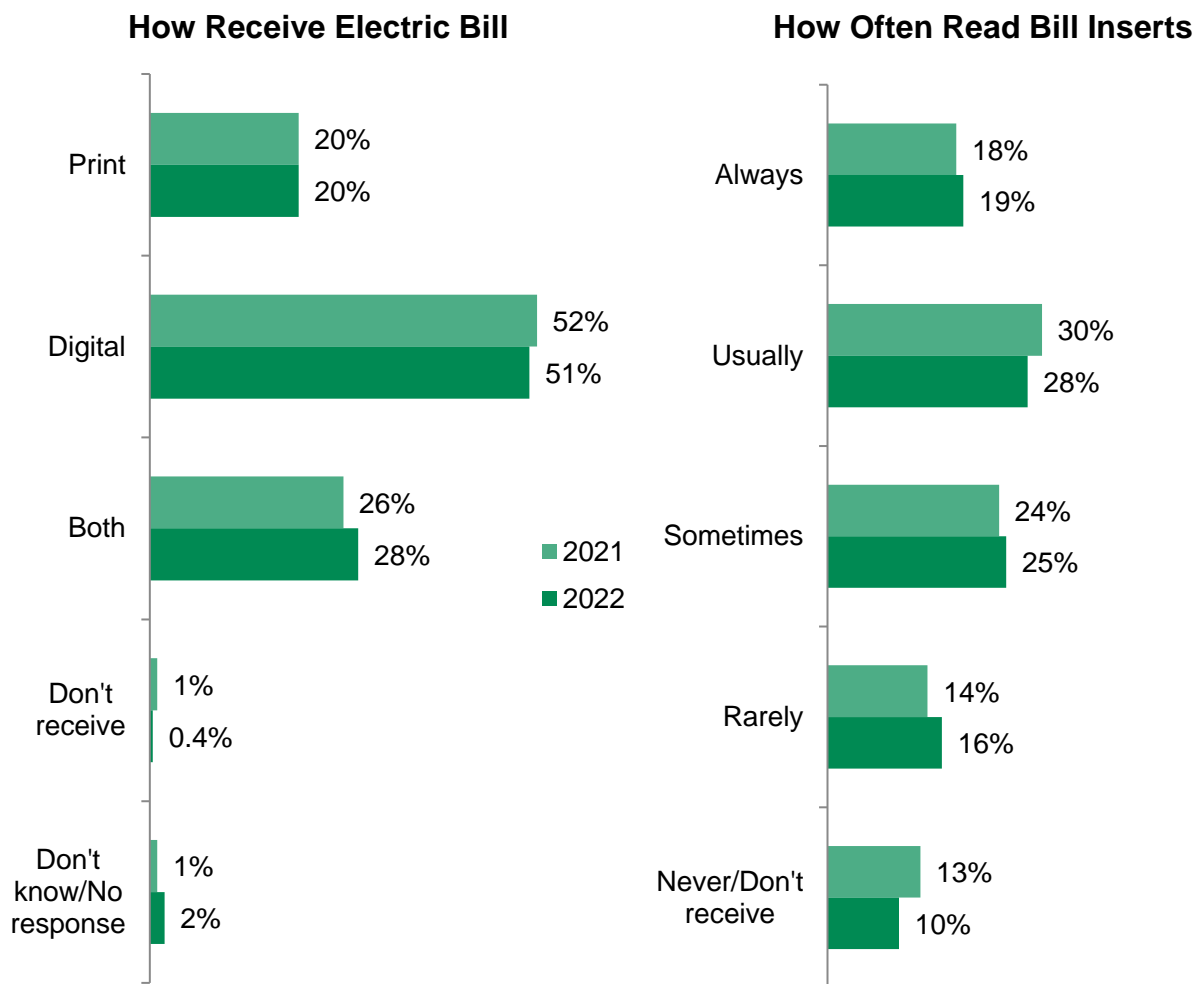
Those more satisfied with VEC, older members, those living alone or with one other person, those paying lower electric bills, and retired members are more likely than their counterparts to say they always read the newsletter.



Forty-eight percent of the members say they receive the printed version of their electric bill and 79% receive their bill digitally. Almost half say they always (19%) or usually (28%) read the inserts that come with their bill.

Similar to receiving the newsletter, longer-tenured members, older members, those who are retired, married members, and less affluent members are significantly more likely to receive only the printed version of their electric bill. Younger members and those who are currently employed are more likely than older members or retired members to receive their bill both digitally and in print.

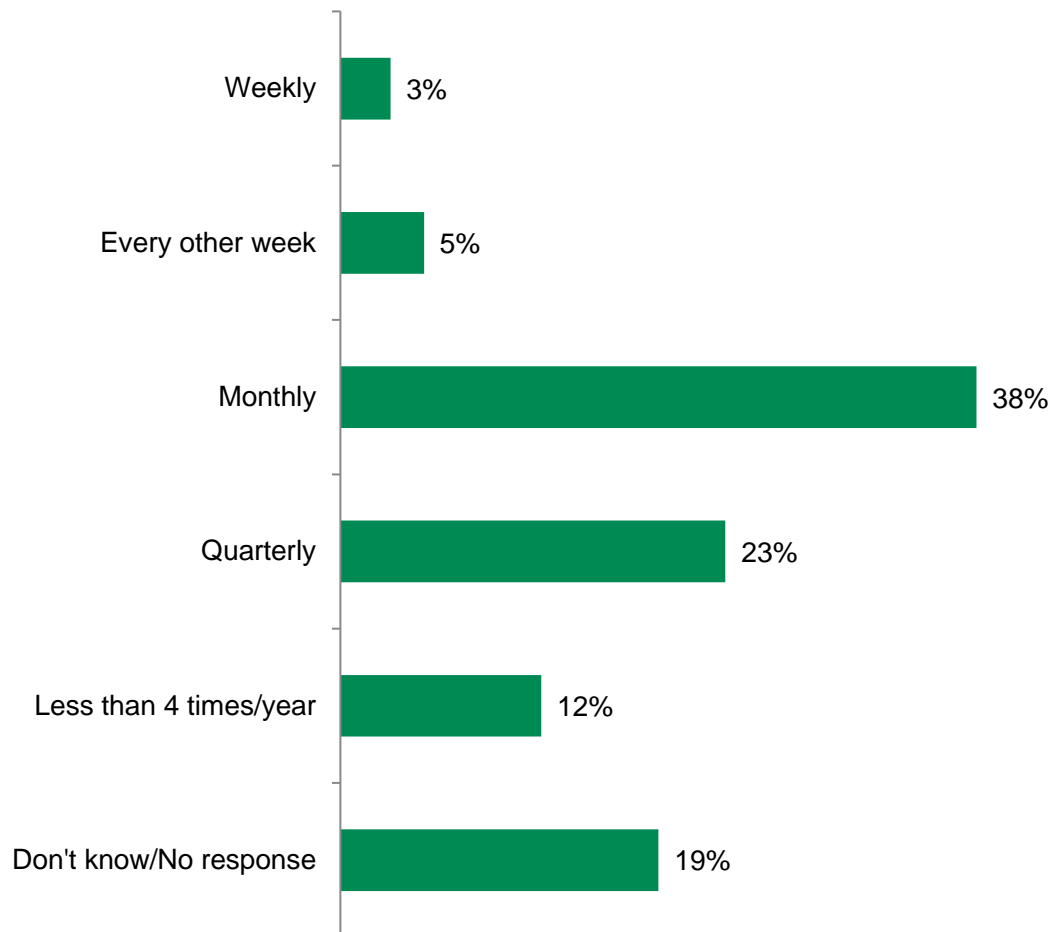
Younger members (under 35) are more likely than those who are older to say they always read the bill inserts while older members (55+) are more likely than those 35 to 54 to always read them.



Members prefer to receive email communications from VEC monthly (38%) or quarterly (23%).

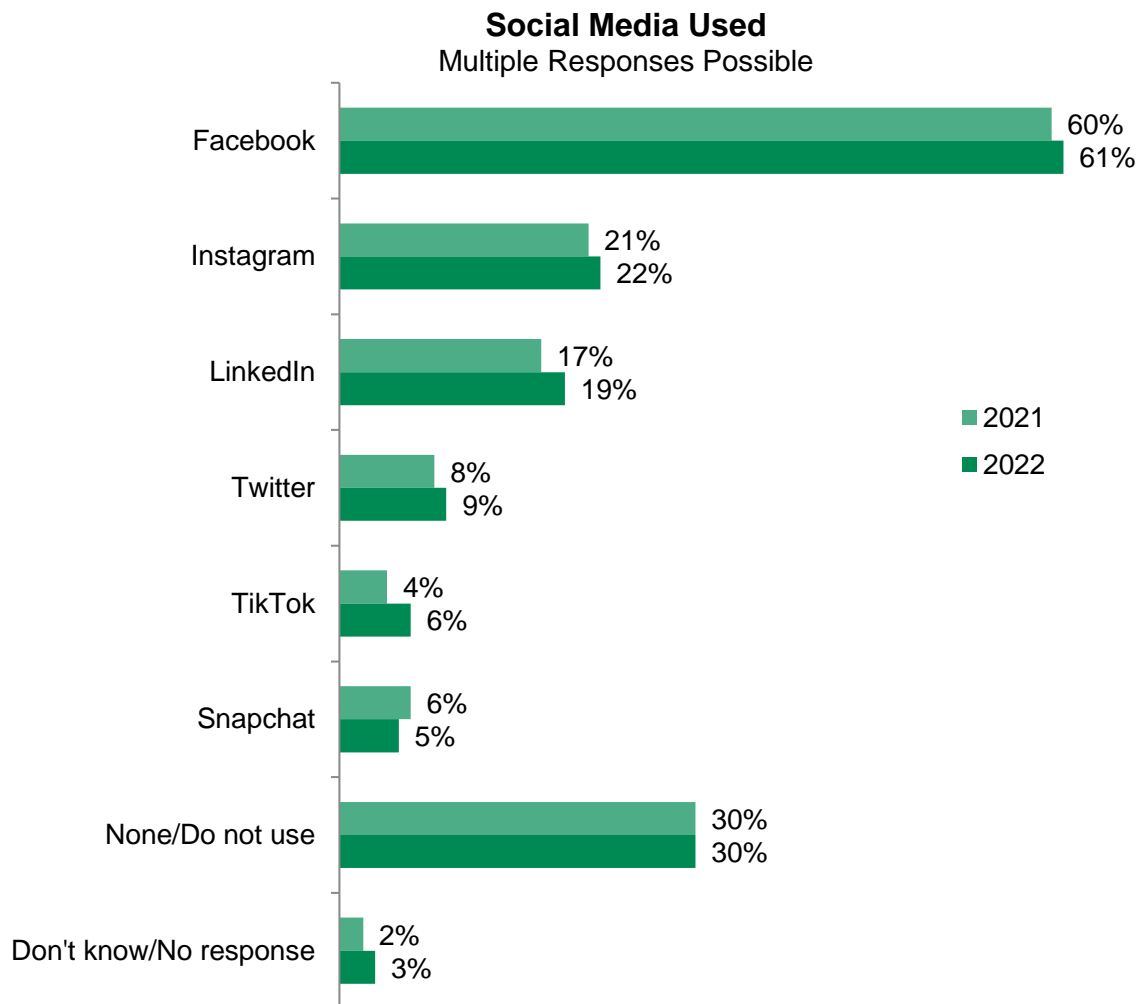
Younger members and those in larger households are more likely than older members or those living in smaller households to prefer less communication (fewer than quarterly).

How Often Would Like to Receive Email Information From VEC



Two-thirds of VEC's members say they use social media, most often Facebook. Not surprisingly, the use of social media is higher than it was in the studies between 2014 and 2016. Younger members, those living in larger households, those paying higher monthly electric bills, those with less formal education, those who are currently employed, and those with children in the home are more likely than their individual counterparts to use social media.

Those who use social media by far use Facebook the most (76%). This is also true for each individual member segment. However, there are member segments that are significantly more likely than their counterparts to use Facebook most. These include longer-tenured members, older members, renters, retired members, and less affluent members.

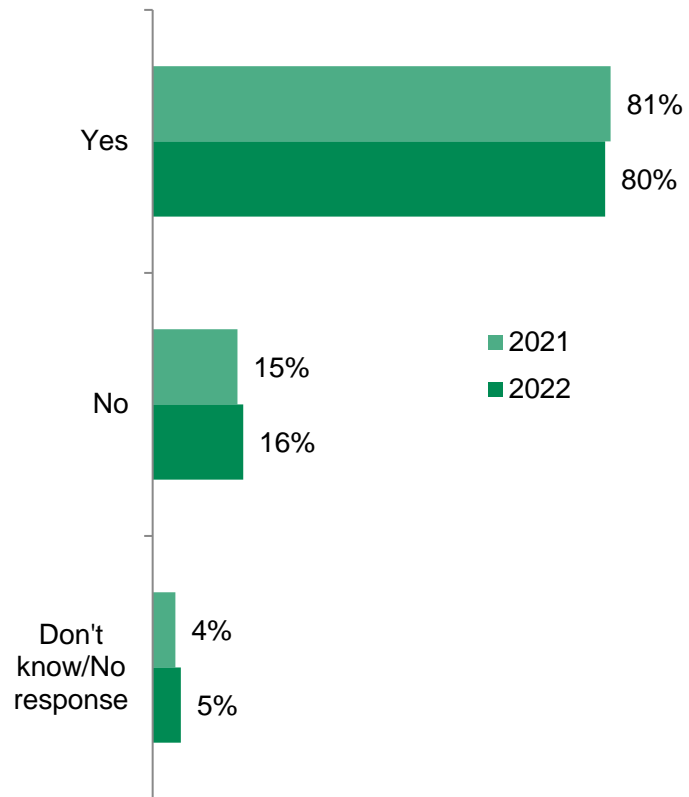


Fully eight in ten members use VEC's SmartHub online tool. This is almost identical to the 2021 study.

Younger members, those living with at least one other person, members with less formal education, those paying higher electric bills, and those who are currently employed are more likely than their counterparts to use SmartHub.

One-quarter of the members who do not use SmartHub did not give a reason for not using it. Among those that gave a response, preferring to use their bank's bill pay service or not liking being online/using computers are the top reasons given. A full listing of responses can be found in Appendix C.

Uses VEC's SmartHub Online Tool



Co-op Membership

Thirty-nine percent view themselves as a member of the co-op as opposed to feeling like a customer. That is, they view themselves as a member/owner (11%) or both a member/owner and a customer (28%). This is consistent with most of the previous studies, but it is lower than in the Co-op Norms. Trending graphed on next page.

Member segments that are more likely than their counterparts to have member identity include:

- Longer-tenured members
- Those more satisfied with VEC
- Older members
- Those living alone or with one other person
- Those paying lower electric bills
- Those with more formal education
- Retired members
- Those without children in the home

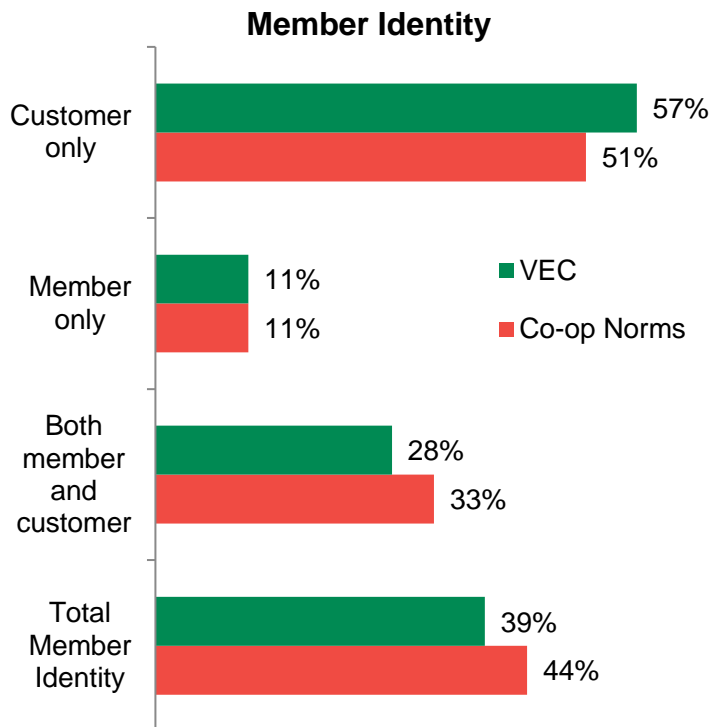
Member identity is important because those with member identity are more satisfied with the co-op and give higher ratings on all of the performance attributes. They are also more likely to:

- Receive the newsletter in print form
- Always or usually read the newsletter
- Prefer email communications from VEC more frequently (monthly as opposed to less often than quarterly)
- Sponsor solar panels in VEC's community solar program
- Currently own/lease an electric vehicle
- Feel it is important for utilities to provide power from wind, solar, hydro, and bio-mass
- Feel it is important to receive renewable energy regardless of where it is generated
- Be aware they may receive a member capital allocation

Conversely, "customers" are more likely to:

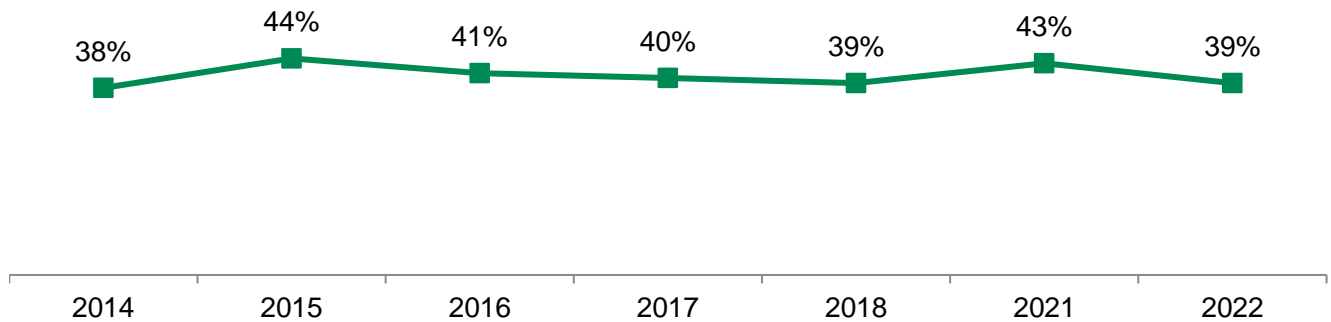
- Use social media
- Give higher ratings for the importance of low-cost energy (as opposed to receiving renewable and/or carbon free energy)

Although "members" are less likely to use social media overall, among those who do use social media, "members" are more likely to use Facebook and LinkedIn most while "customers" are more likely to use Instagram most.



As mentioned previously, overall member identity is consistent with almost all of the previous studies. It is interesting to note that while overall member identity is lower in 2022 than it was in 2015, that is at least partially due to a higher proportion of members who weren't sure how they view themselves or did not answer the question. In fact, the proportion of members who feel they are a member of VEC is actually higher than it was in 2015.

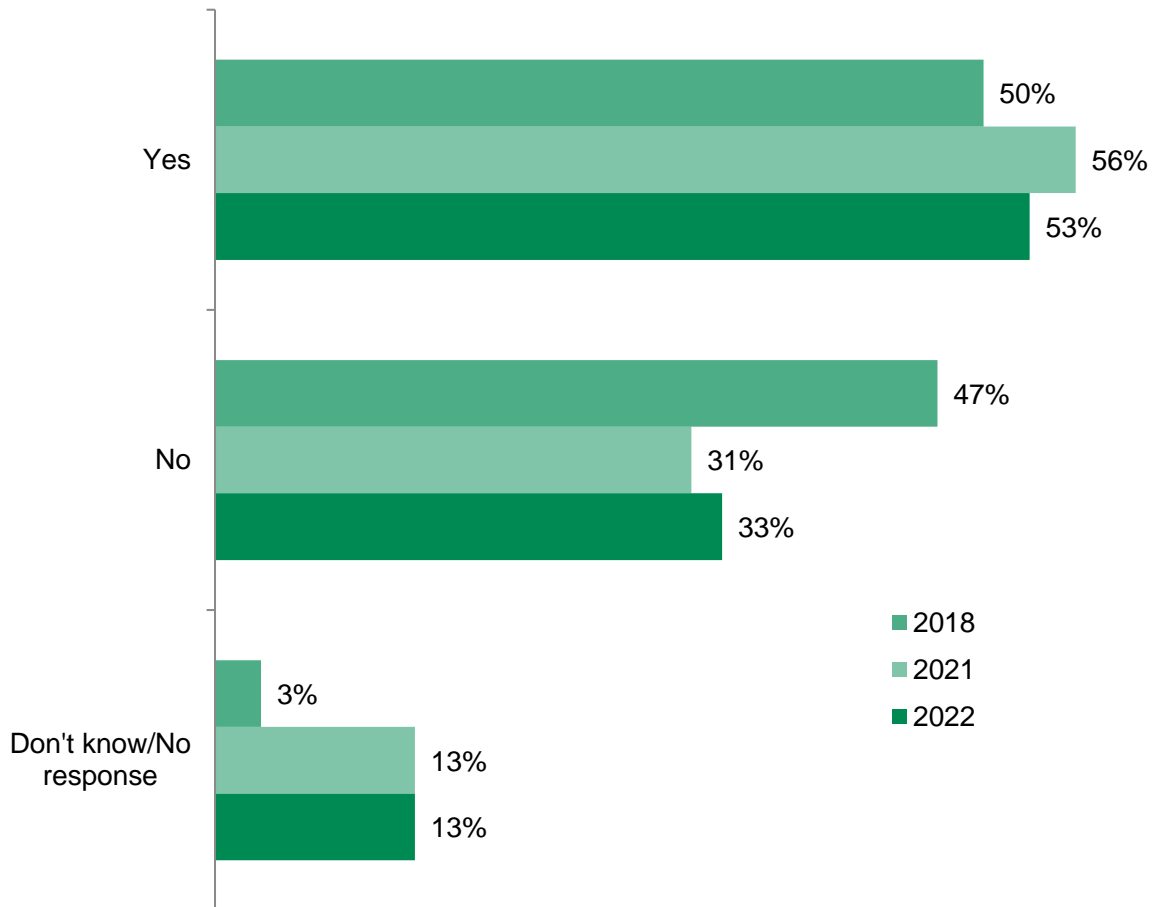
Member Identity By Year



Just over half of the members are aware they may receive a member capital allocation as a member of VEC nonprofit cooperative.

Longer-tenured members, older members, those living alone or with one other person, homeowners, those with more formal education, retired members, and more affluent members are more likely than their counterparts to be aware they may receive a member capital allocation.

Aware as Member of VEC Nonprofit Cooperative, They May Receive a Member Capital Allocation



Member Demographics and Segmentation

On average, VEC members are approximately 57.5 years of age* and have household income of approximately \$73,600. The vast majority own their home and 54% are married. While most of the members have lived in their home for at least 10 years, 21% have been in their home for 2 years or less. Almost six in ten have not pursued additional education after high school*. (Asterisked items are based on the head of household.) Appendix A contains tables that break down all of the information obtained in the demographic data append.

Older members give higher satisfaction ratings than do younger members. Differences are significant between those who are under 55 and those who are 65 or older. Those living in smaller households, those paying lower monthly electric bills, and retired members are also more satisfied than are their individual counterparts.

These segments also tend to give higher ratings on the service performance attributes, with most of the differences being statistically significant.

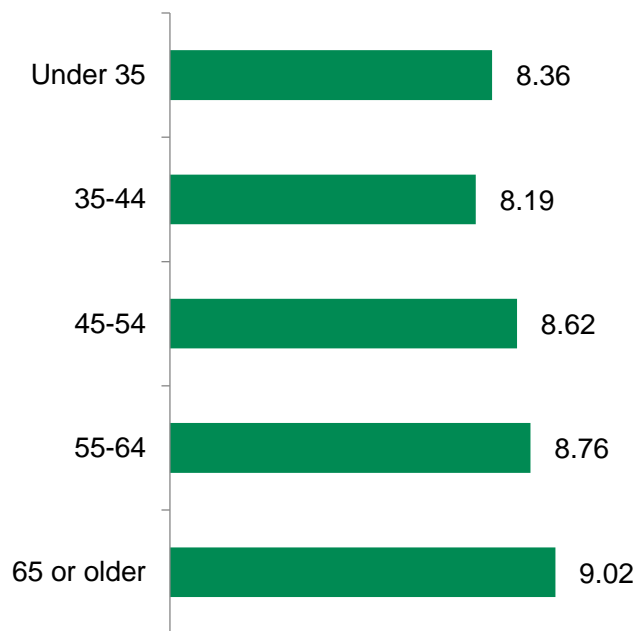
In addition to giving higher satisfaction and attribute ratings, older members are significantly more likely than younger members to:

- Receive *Co-op Life*, get it in the printed version, and always read it
- Receive their electric bill only in printed form
- Use Facebook most (among those who use social media)
- Sponsor solar panels in VEC's Co-op Community Solar program
- Already own or lease a plug-in electric vehicle
- Have a standby generator
- Believe it is important for VEC to provide energy from hydro
- Feel they are a member of VEC and be aware that as a member, they may receive a member capital allocation

Conversely, younger members are significantly more likely to:

- Receive their bill in both print and digital formats and always read their bill inserts
- Want less frequent email communications from VEC
- Use social media and SmartHub
- To own or lease on-site back up battery storage in the next 5 years

Satisfaction Mean Ratings by Age



With the smaller number of non-residential responses, there are not a lot of statistically significant differences between residential and non-residential members. Therefore, the statements below do not always reflect a significant difference, but are more focused on those differences that may be of interest to the co-op.

- The mean rating for *keeping members informed on the status of outages* is higher among non-residential members.
- The mean ratings for the seriousness of inconsistent power quality and 5-10 minute power outages are about the same in both groups. Non-residential members give higher ratings for the seriousness of power outages lasting 3 to 4 hours.
- Residential members are more likely to receive *Co-op Life* only in print form while non-residential members are more likely to receive it both digitally and in print. Non-residential members are also more likely to say they always read it.
- Residential members are more likely to receive their bill digitally only while non-residential members are more likely to receive their bill both digitally and in print.
- Non-residential members are more likely to already lease or own a plug-in electric vehicle, on-site back up battery storage, and/or a backup generator.
- Non-residential members give higher ratings for the importance of utilities providing “green power” from a number of renewable/sustainable sources with the differences being significant for wind and solar.

Members in District 7 give the highest satisfaction ratings (9.10), significantly higher than those in Districts 1, 5, and 6 (8.67, 8.45, and 8.59, respectively).

Significant differences in the performance attributes ratings are shown in the table below. In general, those in District 7 tend to give the highest ratings while those in Districts 5 and 6 tend to give the lowest ratings.

Significant Differences in Performance Attributes by District	Highest Ratings	Lowest Ratings
The overall customer service they provide	7	1, 4-6
Delivering good value for the money	2, 3	6
Resolving any issues or problems	3, 7	2, 4-6
Having professional employees	7	1-2, 4-6
Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests	3, 7	6
Communicating with members and keeping them informed	7	5-6
Operating with concern for the environment	7	5-6
Supporting the local community	3-4, 7	1, 6
The speed and efficiency of responding to customers	7	1, 3-6
Courtesy, understanding, helpfulness of employees	7	1-2, 4-6
Keeping blinks, momentary outages to a minimum	2, 7	1, 4-6
Keeping number of longer outages to a minimum	2, 7	1, 4-6
Reliability of service, frequency of interruptions	2, 7	1, 4-6
Restoration of power after an outage	7	1, 4-6
Keeping members informed on the status of outages	7	2, 4-6
Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts	2, 7	1, 4-6
Charging reasonable rates	3, 7	6
Providing accurate, easy to understand bills	7	4-6
Having convenient payment options	7	1, 4-6
Helping customers keep bills as low as possible	3	6
The accuracy of meter reading and billing	2, 7	1, 6
Helping members to be more efficient in their use of electricity	2, 7	5
Inconsistent power quality such as surges, blips, dips, or other voltage variations	3	2
Power outages lasting 3 to 4 hours	4-7	2

Other Significant Differences by District	Most Likely	Least Likely
Always read <i>Co-op Life</i>	1-2	5, 7
Always read bill inserts	1-3, 6	5, 7
How often would members like to receive email communications		
Weekly	1	7
Every-other-week	1, 3	7
Quarterly	7	1, 6
Use SmartHub	4-5	2
Currently own/lease plug-in electric vehicle	7	1
Likely to own/lease plug-in electric vehicle in next 5 years	2-7	1
Own/lease on-site back up battery storage for home in next 5 yrs	5	1-2
Own backup generator:		
Standby generator	3-5	7
Portable generator	4-6	2
Importance of providing green power from:		
Wind	5	1, 6
Solar	2-3, 5	1
Bio-mass	3-4	1
Natural gas	6	5
Importance of receiving:		
Low-cost energy	1, 6	3, 5
Renewable energy generated locally	2-3	1
Renewable energy generated in-state	2-3	1
Renewable energy regardless of where generated	5, 7	1
Carbon free energy generated locally	2-3	1
Have some level of member identity	3	1
Aware may receive member capital allocation	4-5	1-2
Age 65 or older	2, 7	1, 4-6
Live alone	2, 7	4, 6
Employment status		
Work full-time	3-6	7
Retired	2, 7	3-5
Own home	4-5	2
Average monthly electric bill		
\$50 or less	1	2, 4-6
Over \$200	6	2-3, 7

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire

**2022 VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
SATISFACTION AND CO-OP COMMITMENT SURVEY**

FINAL 5/20/22
New questions in red

INTRODUCTION

1. How long have you received your electric service from Vermont Electric Cooperative? (*tenure1*)

- 1 Less than 1 year
- 2 1 to 2 years
- 3 3 to 5 years
- 4 6 to 9 years
- 5 10 to 14 years
- 6 15 to 19 years
- 7 20 years or more
- 8 Not sure

SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES

2. Please consider all your experiences to date with Vermont Electric. Overall, how satisfied are you with Vermont Electric Cooperative? (*satis*)

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very satisfied

3. How would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op's performance on the following? (**Randomize after b**)

	Very Poor				Excellent	DK
a. The overall customer service they provide (<i>cust_svc</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Delivering good value for the money (<i>value</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Resolving any issues or problems (<i>resolve</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Having professional employees (<i>htemp</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests (<i>best_int</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Communicating with you and keeping you informed (<i>communic</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Operating with concern for the environment (<i>environ</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Supporting the local community (<i>community</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. The speed and efficiency of responding to customers (<i>respond2</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. The courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems (<i>courtesy</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6

ELECTRIC SERVICE

4. How would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op's performance on the following? (**Randomize after b**)

	Very Poor				Excellent	DK
a. Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum (<i>limit_bl</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum (<i>limit_ou</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (<i>elec_svc</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The restoration of power after an outage (<i>retore2</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Keeping you informed on the status of outages (<i>outinfo2</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (<i>pwr_qual2</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. How would you rate the seriousness of the impact of experiencing:

	Not at all serious				Extremely serious	DK
a. Inconsistent power quality such as surges, blips, dips, or other voltage variations	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Power outages lasting 5 to 10 minutes	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Power outages lasting 3 to 4 hours	1	2	3	4	5	6

RATES AND FEES

6. How would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following? (*Randomize*)

	Very Poor				Excellent	DK
a. Charging reasonable rates (<i>reasrate</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Their monthly service fees (<i>svcfees</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (<i>clearbil</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Having convenient payment options (<i>payoptn</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Helping customers keep bills as low as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The accuracy of meter reading and billing	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Helping you to be more efficient in your use of electricity (<i>efficien</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6

COMMUNICATION

7. Do you receive the VEC “Co-op Life” newsletter in print or digital form or both?

- 1 Print
- 2 Digital
- 3 Both
- 4 Don’t receive (**SKIP TO Q9**)
- 5 Not sure

8. How often do you read “Co-op Life” in either printed or digital form?

- 1 Always
- 2 Usually
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Rarely
- 5 Never
- 6 Not sure

9. Do you receive your bill in print or digital form or both?

- 1 Print
- 2 Digital
- 3 Both
- 4 Don’t receive (**SKIP TO Q11**)
- 5 Not sure

10. How often do you read bill inserts in either printed or digital form?

- 1 Always
- 2 Usually
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Rarely
- 5 Never
- 6 Not sure

11. How often would you like to receive email communications from VEC?

- 1 Weekly
- 2 Every-other-week
- 3 Monthly
- 4 Quarterly
- 5 Less often than 4 times/year
- 6 Not sure

12. Which of these social media platforms do you use? (*select all that apply*)

- 1 Facebook
- 2 Twitter
- 3 Instagram
- 4 Snap Chat
- 5 Tik Tok
- 6 LinkedIn
- 7 None/Do not use (**SKIP TO Q14**)
- 8 Not sure

13. Which one do you use most? (*List only those given in Q12*)

- 1 Facebook
- 2 Twitter
- 3 Instagram
- 4 Snapchat
- 5 TikTok
- 6 LinkedIn
- 7 Not sure

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

14. Do you utilize VEC's SmartHub online tool for bill pay, usage information, or notifications?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No → What would be the main reason you don't use SmartHub? _____
- 3 Not sure

15. Do you sponsor solar panels in VEC's Co-op Community Solar program?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No → What would be the main reason you don't sponsor solar panels? _____
- 3 Not sure

16. How likely is it that you will own or lease a plug-in electric vehicle in the next 5 years?

- 1 Not at all likely
- 2 Somewhat unlikely
- 3 Somewhat likely
- 4 Very likely
- 5 Already have one
- 6 Not sure

17. **[IF DO NOT ALREADY HAVE EV]:** What is the biggest obstacle to you purchasing or leasing an electric vehicle?

18. How likely is it that you will own or lease on-site back up battery storage for your home in the next 5 years?

- 1 Not at all likely
- 2 Somewhat unlikely
- 3 Somewhat likely
- 4 Very likely
- 5 Already have one
- 6 Not sure

19. Do you currently own a back up generator to power your home or business if the power is out? If yes, is it a standby or portable generator?

- 1 Yes, own standby generator
- 2 Yes, own portable generator
- 3 Do not own generator
- 4 Not sure

POWER SOURCES

20. How important is it to you for utilities to provide power from the following energy sources? (*Randomize*)

	Not at all important				Extremely important		DK
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
a. Wind	1	2	3	4	5	6	
b. Solar	1	2	3	4	5	6	
c. Hydro	1	2	3	4	5	6	
d. Bio-mass	1	2	3	4	5	6	
e. Natural gas	1	2	3	4	5	6	
f. Nuclear	1	2	3	4	5	6	

21. How important is each of the following to you personally? (*Randomize*)

	Not at all important				Extremely important		DK
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
a. Low cost energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	
b. Receiving power from renewable energy that is generated locally (close to where the energy is consumed)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
c. Receiving power from renewable energy that is generated in-state	1	2	3	4	5	6	
d. Receiving power from renewable energy regardless of whether generated locally or in-state	1	2	3	4	5	6	
e. Receiving carbon free energy that is generated locally (close to where the energy is consumed)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
f. Receiving carbon free energy that is generated in-state	1	2	3	4	5	6	
g. Receiving carbon free energy regardless of whether generated locally or in-state	1	2	3	4	5	6	

COOPERATIVE COMMITMENT

22. Do you view yourself as a member-owner or as a customer of your electric co-op or both?

- 1 Member/owner
- 2 Customer

- 3 Both
- 4 Not sure

23. Are you aware that as a member-owner of the VEC nonprofit cooperative, you may receive a member capital allocation through an annual bill credit which is your share of the money that remains at the end of the year after VEC pays its operating expenses?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Not sure

DEMOGRAPHICS – RESIDENTIAL ONLY

Thank you for your patience. There are just a few final questions that are used for classification purposes only. This information is completely confidential.

24. Into which category does your age fall?

- 1 Under 25
- 2 25 to 34
- 3 35 to 44
- 4 45 to 54
- 5 55 to 64
- 6 65 or older

25. How many people live in your household including yourself?

- 1 1 – self only
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5
- 6 6 or more

26. Do you rent or own your home?

- 2 Rent
- 1 Own

27. What is your current employment status?

- 1 Work full-time
- 2 Work part-time
- 3 At home full-time family care giver
- 4 Retired
- 5 Student
- 6 Not employed, not looking
- 7 Not employed, but looking

28. What is your average monthly electric bill?

- 1 \$50 or less
- 2 \$51 - \$100
- 3 \$101 - \$150
- 4 \$151 - \$200
- 5 \$201 - \$250
- 6 \$251 - \$300
- 7 Over \$300
- 8 Not sure

29. Additional comments you would like to make about Vermont Electric Cooperative: _____

Thank you for your time and cooperation. It is very much appreciated.

Post-data collection coding – also include in verbatims:

Q14 if no, coding could include:

Don't know about it

Not interested

Tried, not useful to me/Didn't like

No reason/Don't know

Q15 if no, coding could include:

Don't know about it

Not interested

Have solar panels at home

Not sure is a good value

No reason/Don't know

Q17 coding could include:

Cost of vehicle

Battery range

Lack of public charging