



ENTERPRISE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT | SURVEY RESEARCH AND
ANALYSIS

Annual Member Insights

2024 Member Survey

CALSTRS®

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Introduction

The Member Survey is conducted annually to assess member satisfaction with CalSTRS' staff and service. Overall satisfaction with CalSTRS and satisfaction with staff and service were consistent with 2023. Generally, older members reported higher levels of satisfaction and engagement than younger members. Additionally, members who interacted with CalSTRS reported higher levels of engagement than those who did not interact with CalSTRS.

Methodology

Beginning January 11, 2024, CalSTRS emailed a survey invitation to a stratified random sample of 138,753 active and retired members. The survey closed February 12, 2024. A total of 3,082 members responded—2,076 active and 1,006 retired—resulting in a 2.2% response rate.

The stratified random sample of the membership is based on the following life stages, with the corresponding number of responses and response rate shown:

1. Active 20-29 (169 responses; 1.3% response rate)
2. Active 30-39 (501 responses; 0.9% response rate)
3. Active 40-49 (500 responses; 1.1% response rate)
4. Active 50-59 (500 responses; 4.0% response rate)
5. Active 60+ (406 responses; 6.8% response rate)
6. Newly Retired (members retired within the past five years; 504 responses; 11.1% response rate)
7. Enjoying Retirement (members retired for more than five years; 502 responses; 10.2% response rate)

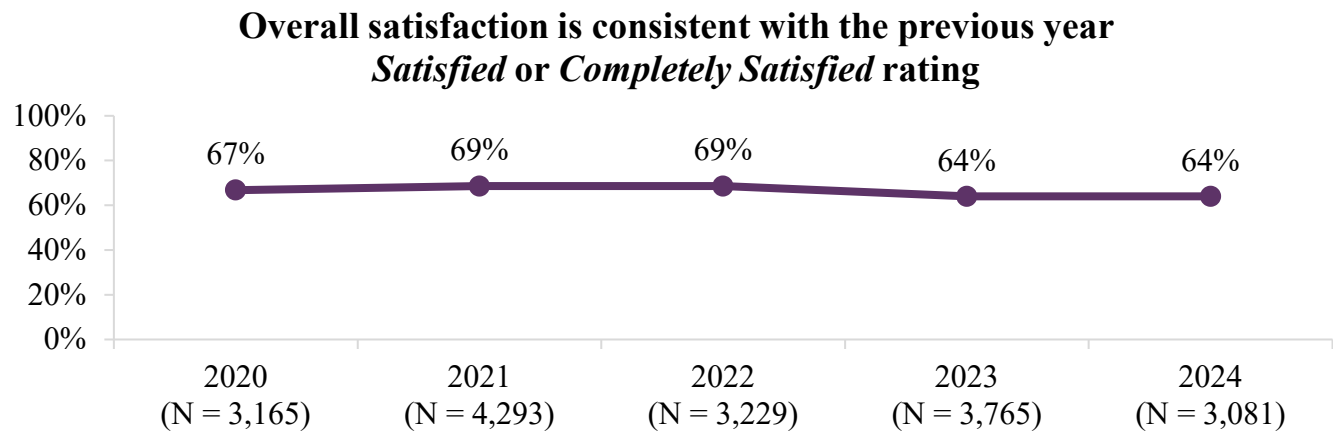
An interval around the mean (average) was calculated. This is commonly known as a confidence interval, which is used to calculate the margin of error for a sample. This diagnostic statistic provides perspective on the variation in the sample and allows for comparison to prior year results.

As of December 2023—just ahead of the survey launch—there were approximately 446,000 active members and 290,000 retired members. With 2,076 active responses and a 95% confidence interval, the margin of error for active member data is 2%. With 1,006 retired responses and a 95% confidence interval, the margin of error for retired member data is 3%.

Overall satisfaction with CalSTRS

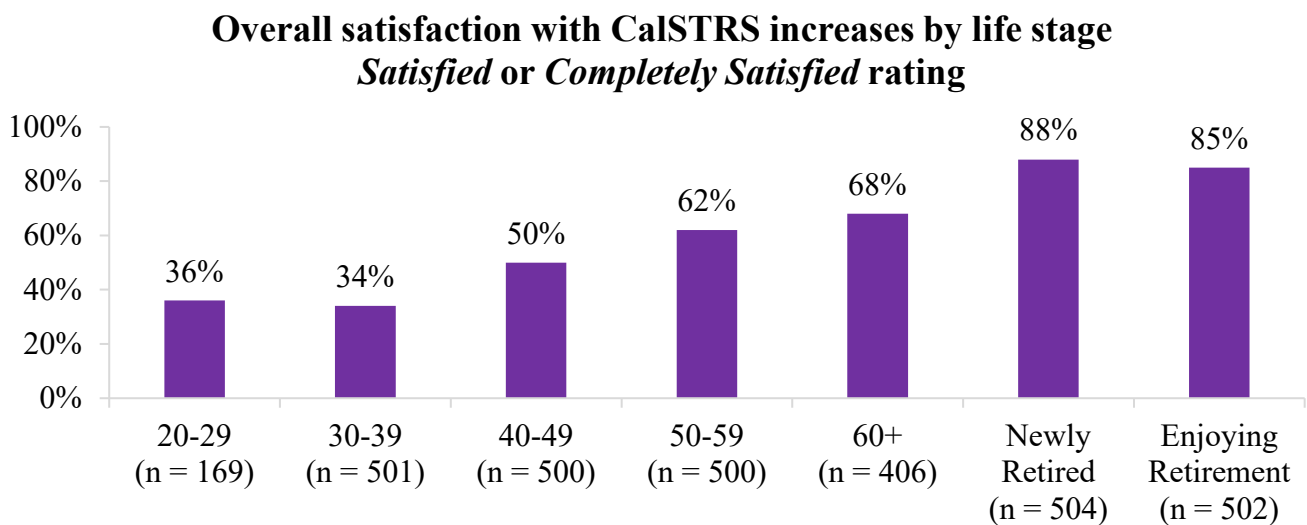
Consistent with 2023, 64% of respondents reported being Satisfied or Completely Satisfied with CalSTRS overall. This percentage represents those who responded *Satisfied* or *Completely Satisfied* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with CalSTRS overall. Approximately 33% responded being neutral (a rating of 3, 4, or 5) and 4% responded *Dissatisfied* or *Completely Dissatisfied* (a rating of 1 or 2).

Figure 1.



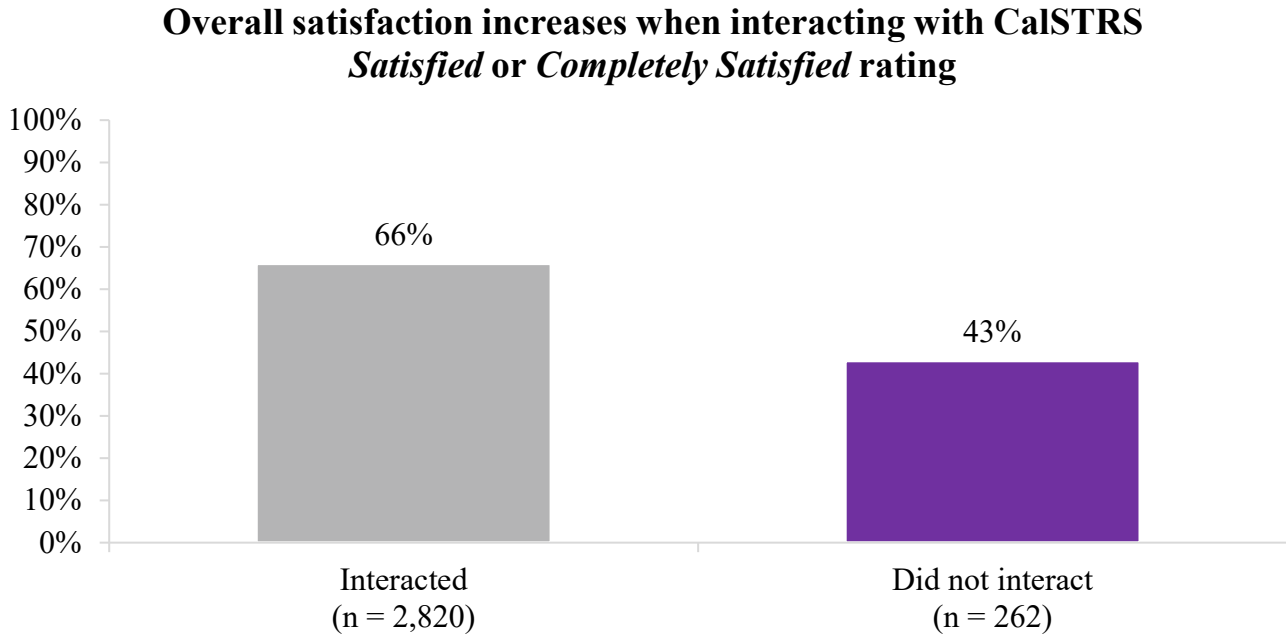
While members reported favorable satisfaction with CalSTRS overall, perceptions vary across life stage. A higher percentage of older members reported being *Satisfied* or *Completely Satisfied* with CalSTRS overall (Figure 2). This trend is consistent with previous years. Older member groups interact more frequently with CalSTRS, resulting in higher satisfaction ratings. However, younger member groups are not dissatisfied—they are neutral.

Figure 2.



Additionally, 66% of members who interacted with CalSTRS in the past year reported high levels of satisfaction compared to 43% of members who did not interact with CalSTRS, as seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3.



Engagement

Engagement is an active assessment of a relationship built over time. Engaged customers are more likely to try new products, speak highly or positively about an organization, demonstrate confidence and trust, and maintain the relationship through trying times.

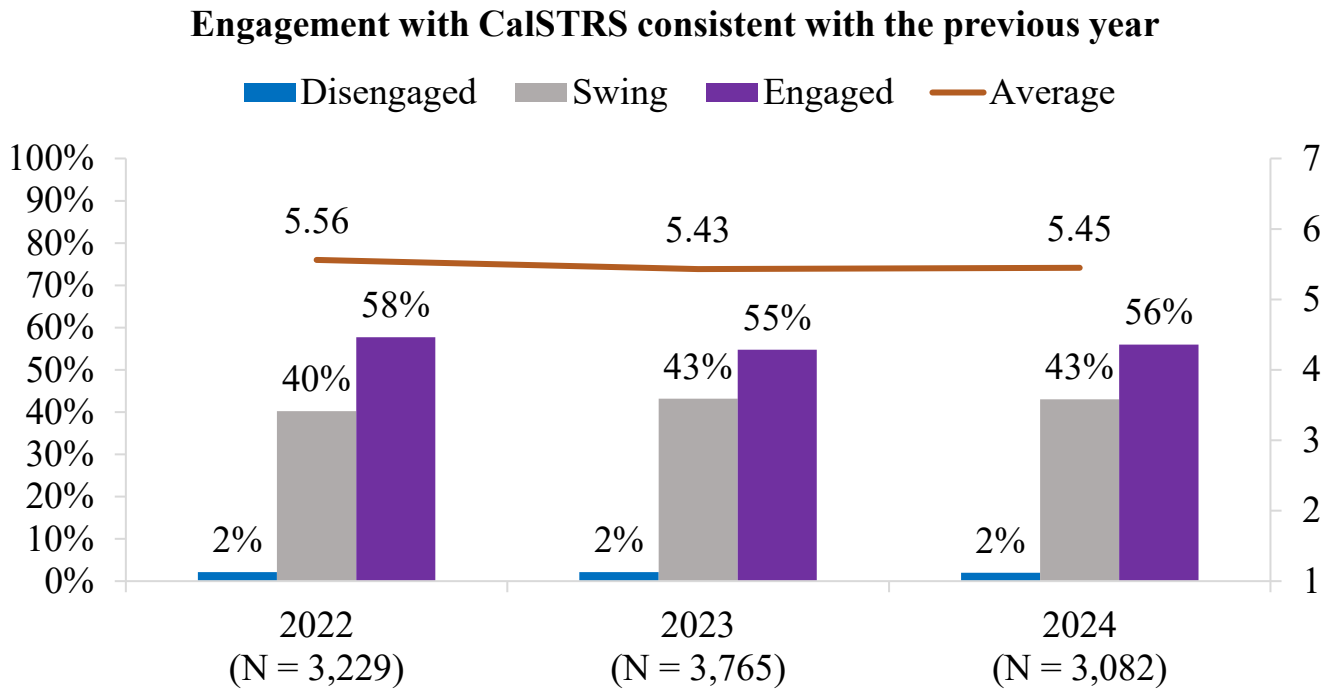
CalSTRS developed a custom set of survey items to assess member engagement. It can be informative to monitor member engagement relative to external events that can impact members but are outside of CalSTRS' purview (such as the economy and inflation).

The member engagement score is calculated using an average of the following five items:

- *How satisfied are you with CalSTRS overall?* (1–7 satisfaction scale)
- *I know CalSTRS operates in my best interest.* (1–7 agreement scale)
- *I feel confident my retirement is secure with CalSTRS.* (1–7 agreement scale)
- *CalSTRS sends communications that are relevant to my needs.* (1–7 agreement scale)
- *CalSTRS acts ethically.* (1–7 agreement scale)

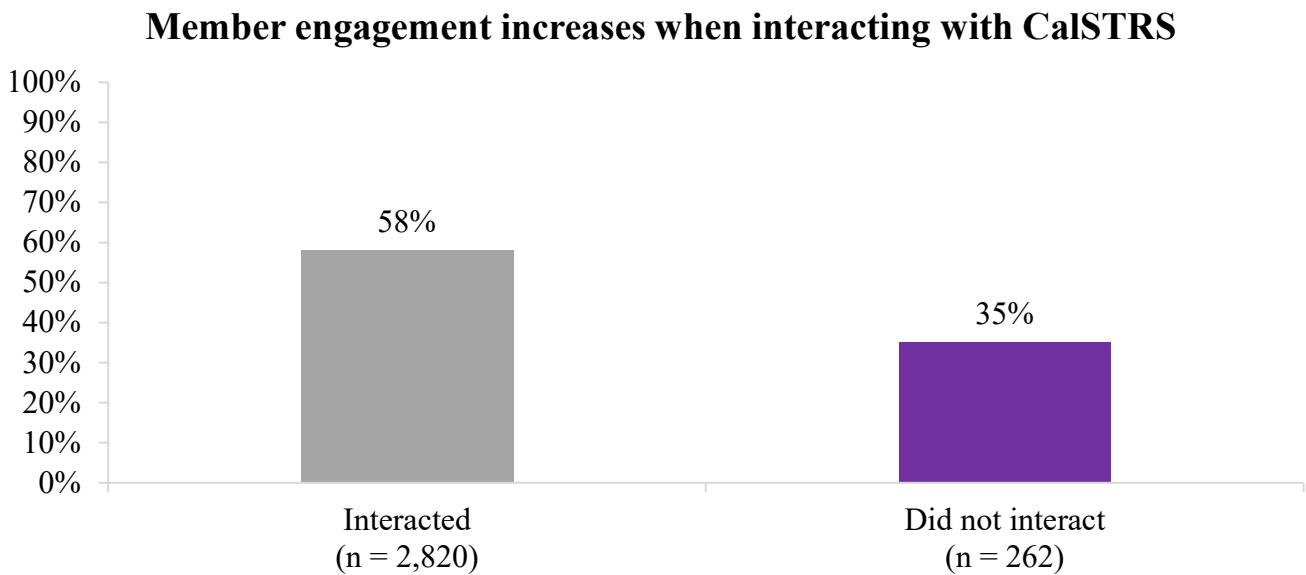
Cut-off scores determine the percentage of members who are engaged, neither engaged nor disengaged (swing), or disengaged. Members with an average score greater than 5.5 are categorized as engaged. Members with an average score less than or equal to 5.5, but greater than 2.5, are categorized as neither engaged nor disengaged (swing). Members with an average score less than or equal to 2.5 are categorized as disengaged. Engagement in 2024 is consistent with the previous year, as seen in Figure 4 on the next page.

Figure 4.



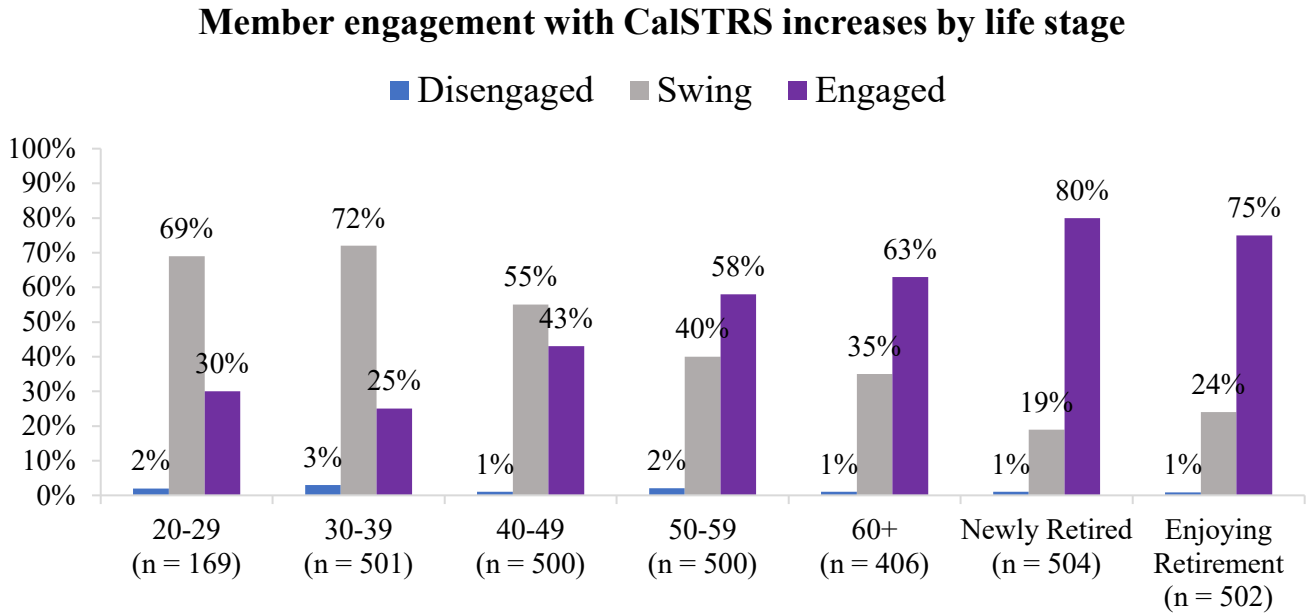
Members who interacted with CalSTRS in the past year reported being more engaged than those who did not, as seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5.



The data also suggests engagement increases with age, as seen in Figure 6 below. Members become more engaged with CalSTRS as they approach retirement; then they reduce interaction with the organization as their retirement progresses into later life.

Figure 6.



Engagement items

Consistent with previous years, *CalSTRS is an organization I can trust* was the highest rated engagement item at 73% Agree or Strongly Agree (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) as seen in Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 on the next page.

Items that received the lowest ratings were *CalSTRS listens to its members* (50%) followed by *CalSTRS operates with transparency* (53%). Neutral ratings (a rating of 3, 4, or 5) for all the engagement items ranged from 25% to 47%. Disagreement (a rating of 1 or 2) with any individual item did not exceed 5%.

Figure 7.1.

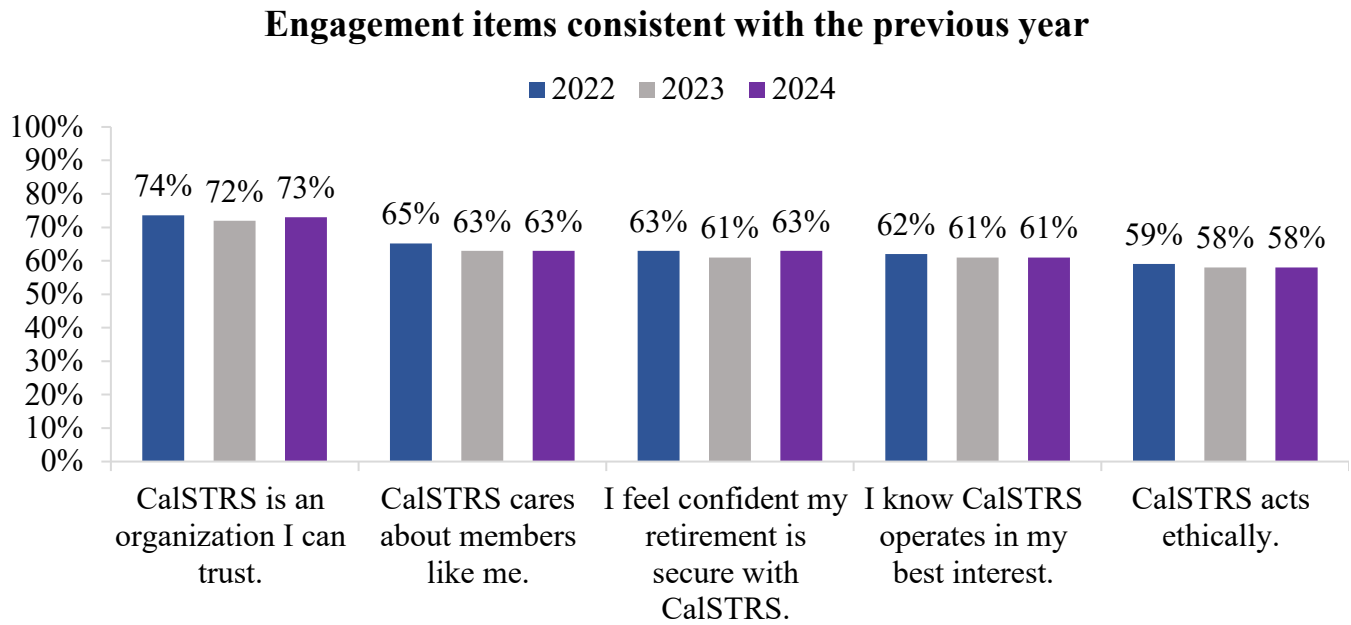
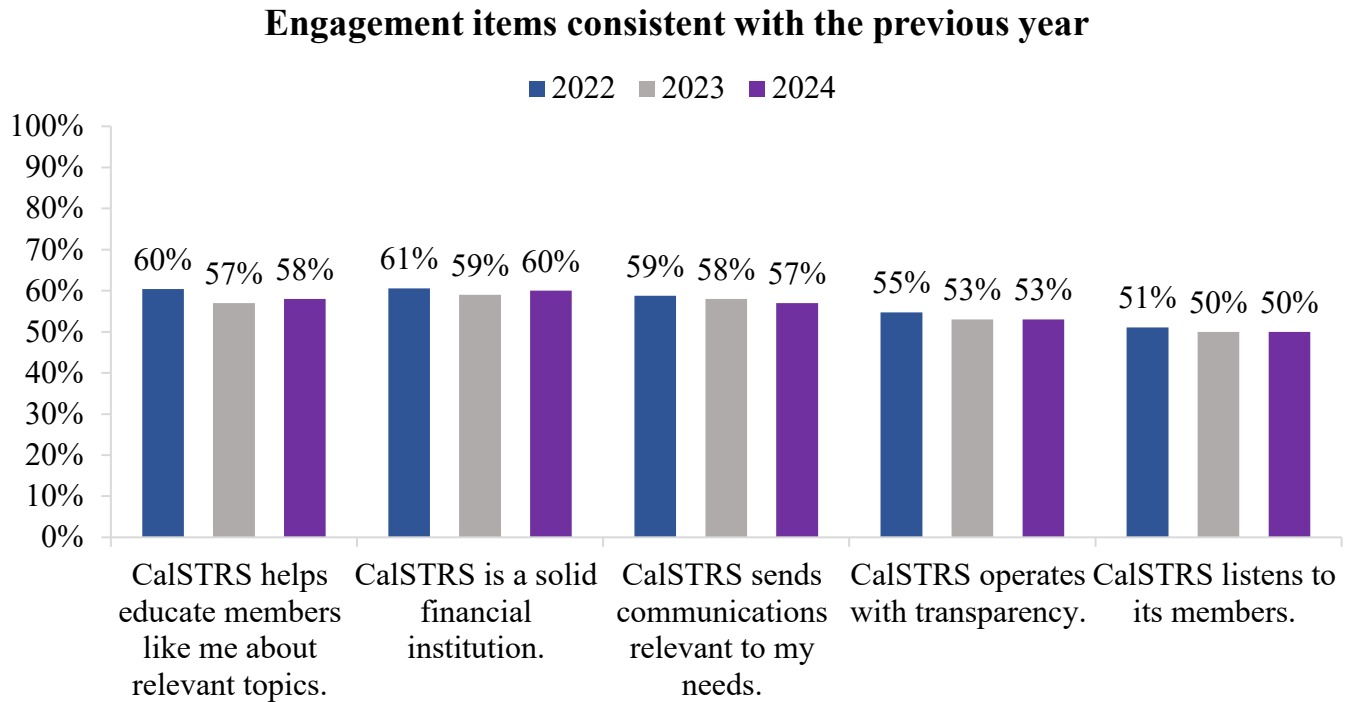


Figure 7.2.

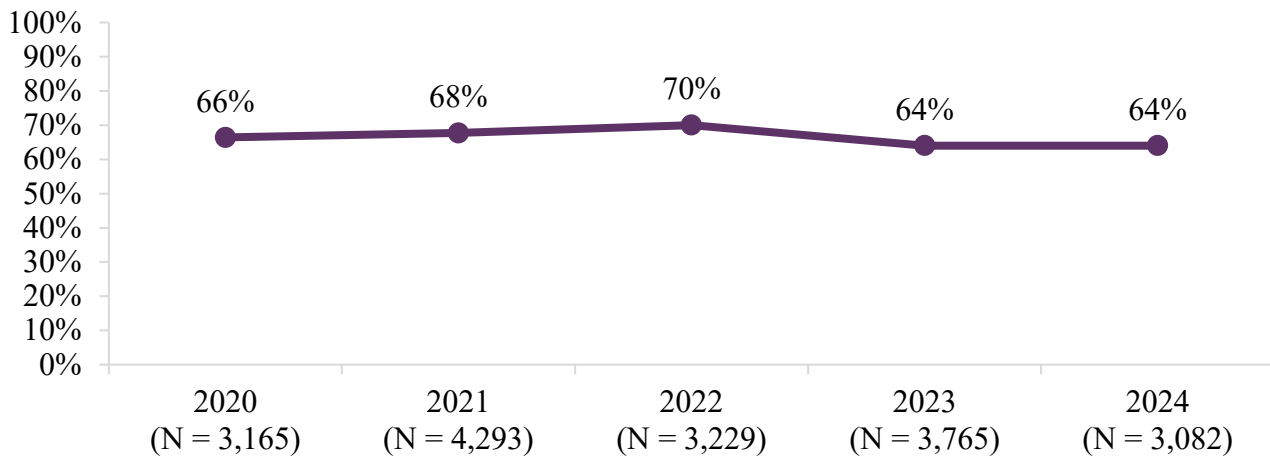


CalSTRS staff and service ratings

Sixty-four percent of members responded *Satisfied* or *Completely Satisfied* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with CalSTRS' services, as seen in Figure 8 below. Approximately 33% responded neutral (a rating of 3, 4, or 5) and 2% responded *Dissatisfied* or *Completely Dissatisfied* (a rating of 1 or 2).

Figure 8.

Satisfaction with services consistent with the previous year *Satisfied or Completely Satisfied* rating

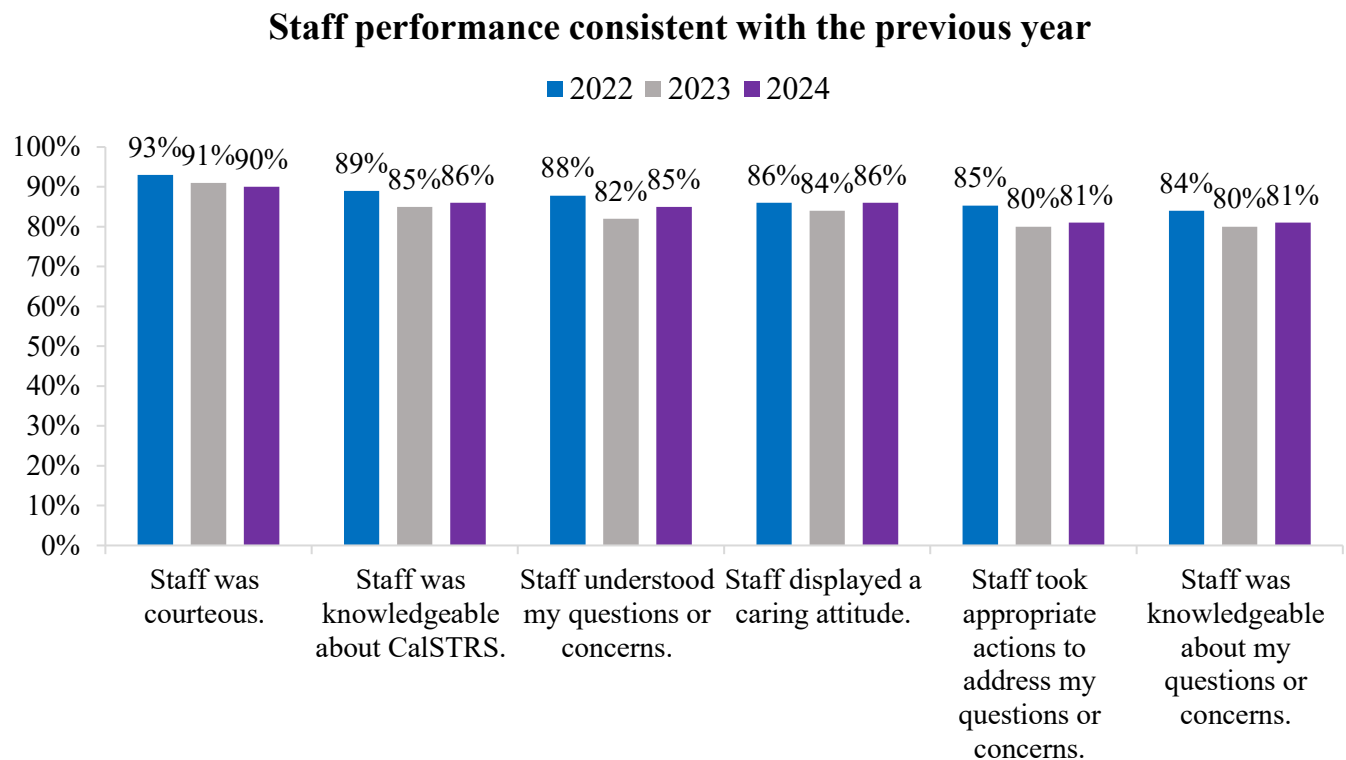


Staff performance

Members were asked to rate the effort to reach a CalSTRS staff member. Sixty-three percent responded it was *Easy* or *Very Easy* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) to reach a CalSTRS’ staff member.

Of the 21% of members who indicated they interacted with CalSTRS’ staff in the past year, 81% to 90% responded *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) on staff performance measures. Members rated CalSTRS’ staff highest on courtesy, as seen in Figure 9 below. All staff performance items are consistent with the previous year.

Figure 9.

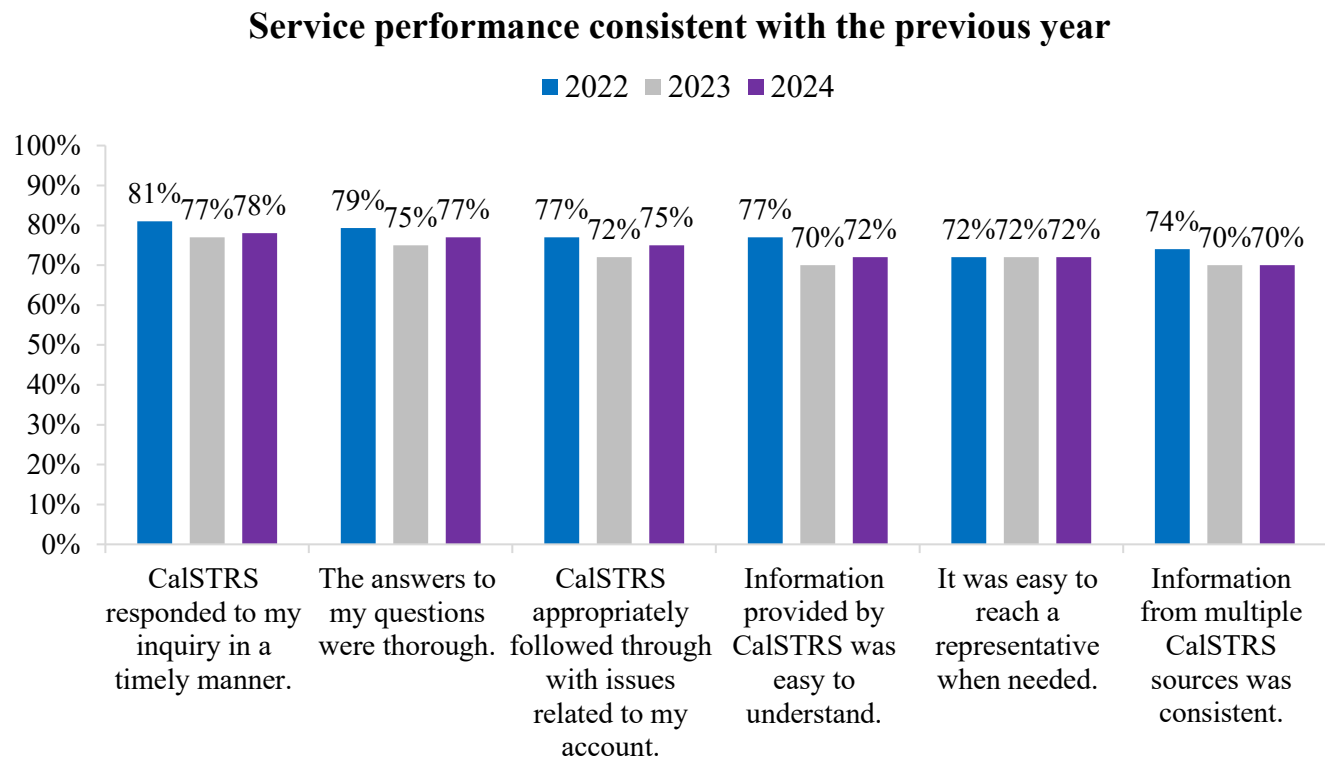


Service performance

Members were asked to rate the effort to get a resolution to their concern or question. Sixty-two percent responded it was *Easy* or *Very Easy* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) to get a resolution to their concern or question.

Between 70%–78% of members responded *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) on service performance measures. The highest rating was for responses to inquiries in a timely manner, as seen in Figure 10 below. All service performance items are consistent with the previous year.

Figure 10.



Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score is used to gauge the likelihood of a customer to recommend a product or service to a friend or colleague. The score is derived from a single question and reported with a number from -100 to +100, where a higher score represents greater loyalty of customers to a company. Respondents provide a rating between 0 (Not At All Likely) to 10 (Extremely Likely) and the score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of “Promoters” from the percentage of “Detractors.”

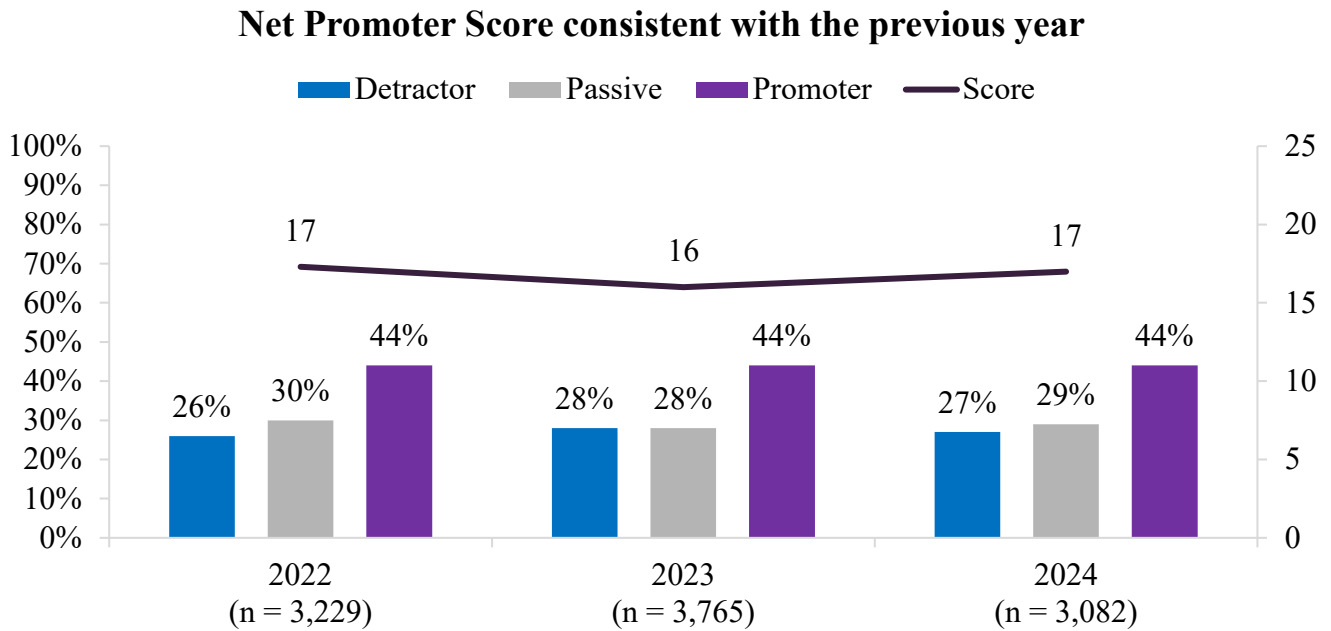
Depending on the response to the Net Promoter Score question, the respondent is categorized as follows:

- **Promoters** respond with a score of 9 or 10. They are considered likely to exhibit value-creating behaviors, such as buying more, remaining customers for longer, and making positive referrals to other potential customers. In the case of CalSTRS, it would suggest they are more likely to speak highly and promote the organization to others.
- **Passives** respond with a score of 7 or 8. The behavior of Passives falls between Promoters and Detractors.
- **Detractors** respond with a score of 0 to 6. Detractors are considered unlikely to exhibit value-creating behaviors.

Membership in the Defined Benefit Program is required, meaning CalSTRS does not “compete” for referral business in the traditional sense. To account for this distinction, the Net Promoter Score question was altered slightly to gauge member likelihood to recommend/promote CalSTRS as a *great organization*.

As shown in Figure 11 on the next page, the percentage of promoters was unchanged from the previous year. However, there was a 1% shift from Detractors to Passives, resulting in a Net Promoter Score of 17 in 2024.

Figure 11.



Similar to member engagement, likelihood to recommend/promote CalSTRS increases with age, as seen in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12.

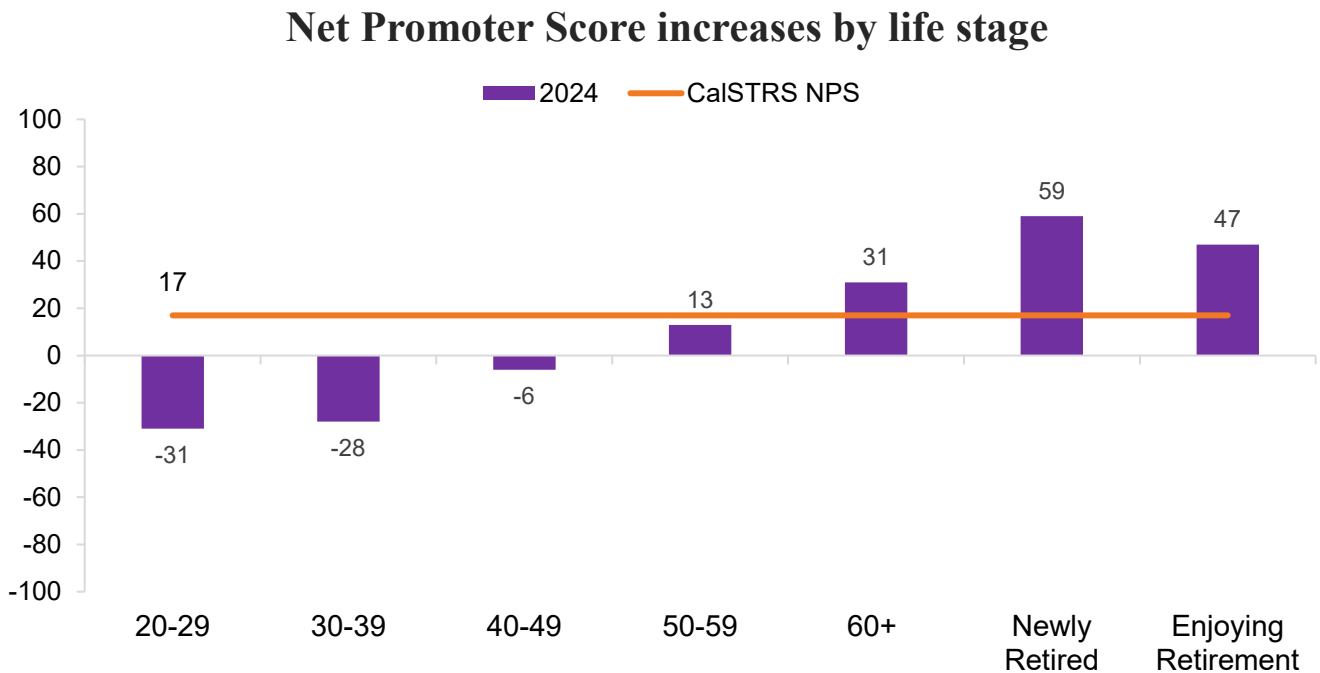
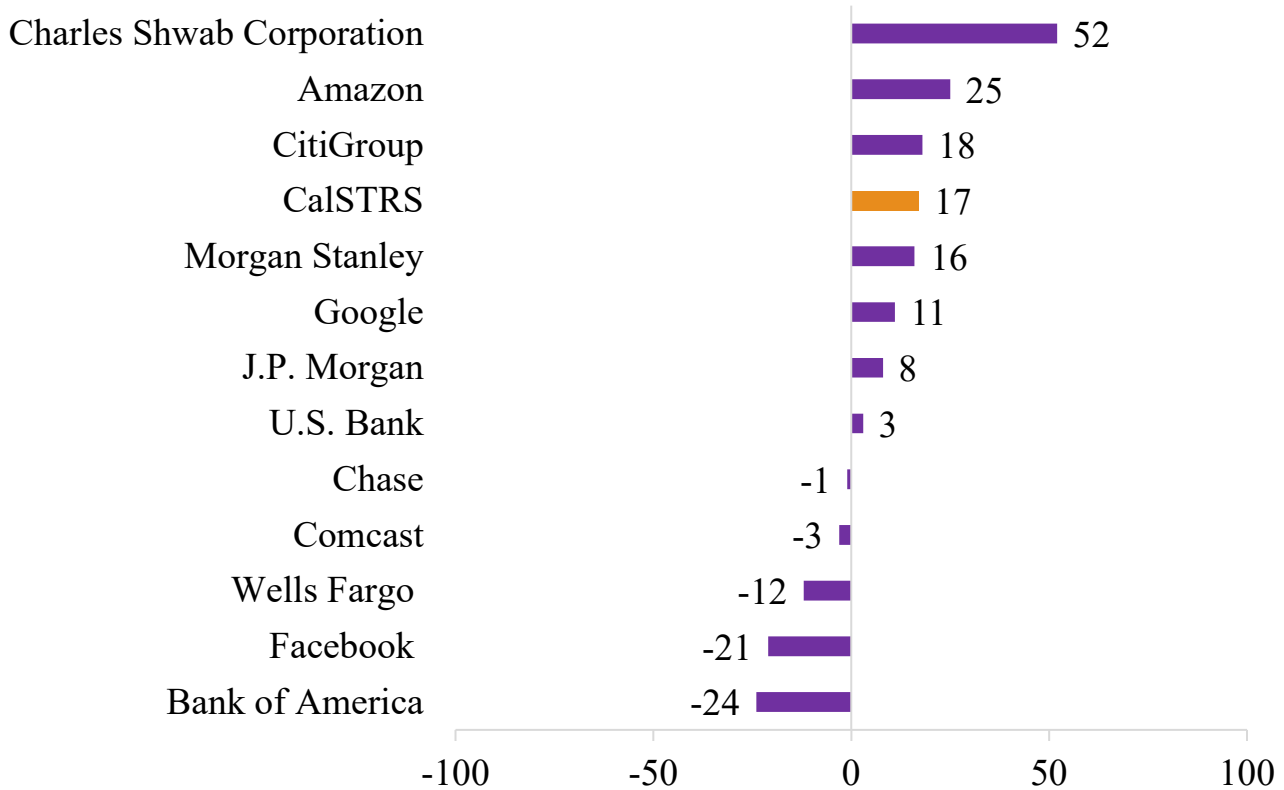


Figure 13 on the next page shows the CalSTRS Net Promoter Score relative to a sample of scores from common brands in 2024. The brand scores were collected from <https://customer.guru/net-promoter-score/benchmarks> as of August 2024.

Figure 13.

CalSTRS Net Promoter Score compares favorably to common brands



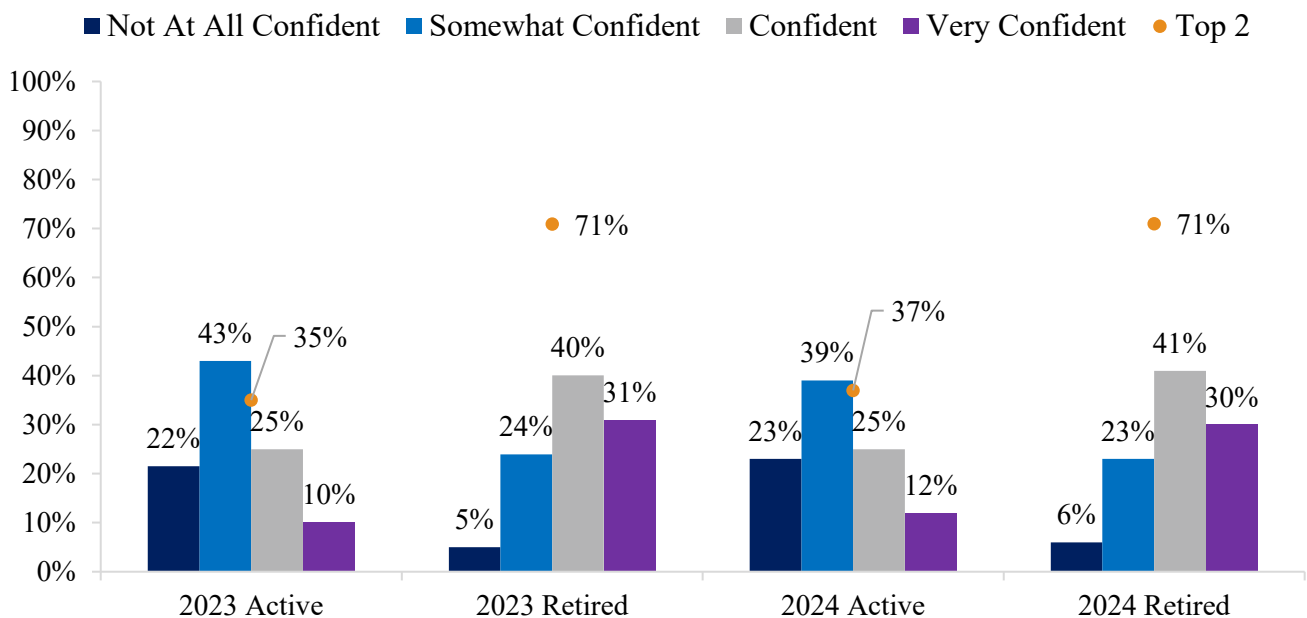
Confidence meeting financial needs in retirement

Confidence meeting financial needs in retirement remained consistent with the previous year, as seen in Figure 14 below. Thirty-seven percent of active members responded *Confident* or *Very Confident* (a rating of 3 or 4 on a 4-point scale) on the item *How confident are you that you will have enough money to live comfortably throughout your retirement years?* Seventy-one percent of retired members responded *Confident* or *Very Confident*.

Two items that influence confidence are *the cost of health care* and *the economy*—with the latter a possible proxy for the uncertainty imposed by the high inflationary environment entering 2024.

Figure 14.

Confidence meeting financial needs in retirement consistent with the previous year

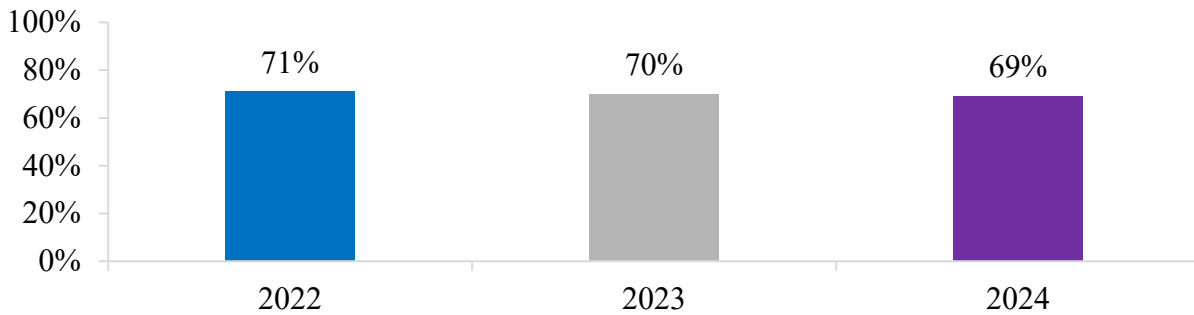


Satisfaction with retirement

Retired members were asked to rate their effort navigating the CalSTRS retirement process. Consistent with the prior year, 69% responded the retirement process was *Easy* or *Very Easy* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) as seen in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15.

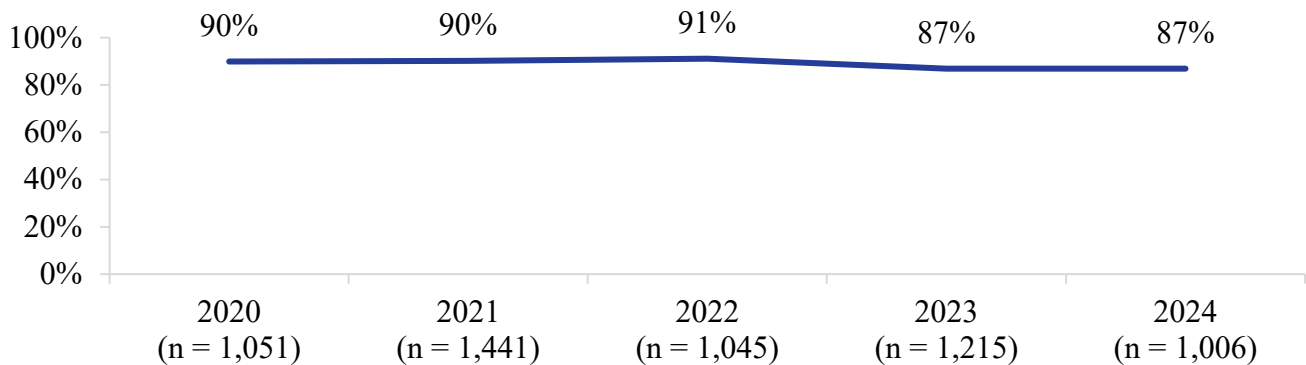
The retirement process is easy for the majority of members *Easy or Very Easy* rating



Retired members were also asked to rate their satisfaction with retirement. Consistent with previous years, 87% of retired members responded *Satisfied* or *Completely Satisfied* (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with their retirement overall, as seen in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16.

Satisfaction with retirement remains high *Satisfied or Completely Satisfied* rating



Conclusion

The Member Survey is a tool to assess member satisfaction with CalSTRS. Overall satisfaction with CalSTRS remained consistent with the previous year. As seen in previous years, older members and members who interacted with CalSTRS reported the highest levels of satisfaction.

The survey also explores other customer-focused concepts such as engagement and Net Promoter Score. Engagement and the Net Promoter Score were consistent with the previous year. Similar to overall satisfaction, members who interacted with CalSTRS responded with higher ratings than those who did not interact with CalSTRS.

This annual research reflects a commitment to improvement based on member feedback.