



# Wave 1 Satisfaction Survey Results

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Submitted to:  
Grants.gov Program Management Office

Submitted by:  
IBM Business Consulting Services  
and  
Rockbridge Associates, Inc.

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## Background and Methodology

- The purpose of the research is to measure users' satisfaction with the Grants.gov system and to assess the perceived value to their organizations.
- A ten-minute online survey was administered in April 2004 to Grant Community members and Grantor Agency Representatives who visited Grants.gov in the prior two months.
- The survey covered the following areas:
  - Overall satisfaction with Grants.gov
  - Satisfaction with Grants.gov attributes (e.g., navigation, look and feel, and content)
  - Usage of and satisfaction with customer support
  - Evaluation of Grants.gov compared to current grant processes
  - Organizational demographics
- The results of Wave 1 of the Satisfaction Survey were compared to the Apply Pilot Satisfaction Survey conducted prior to the launch of Grants.gov in October 2003.

## Background & Methodology (continued)

- A total of 259 online surveys were completed: 190 with Grant Community members and 69 with Grantors.
- As with all quantitative market research, every sample has a margin of error, or confidence interval. For example, if 50% of respondents have answered yes to a particular question and the confidence interval is +/- 5%, it is statistically reliable to state that 45–55% of people in the identified demographic group would also say yes to the same question. Confidence intervals are 95% accurate, which is the standard confidence level in the market research industry.
  - For the Wave 1 Grant Community sample size of 190, the 95% confidence interval is +/- 7%
  - For the Wave 1 Grantor sample size of 69, the 95% confidence interval is +/- 11%
- It is possible to make inferences from these findings, particularly if thresholds for making decisions fall within the confidence interval. For example, if an action should be taken if at least 33% answer a question in a certain way, and 40% of the Grant Community respond in that manner, action would be recommended; this is because it is highly unlikely a false conclusion would be made as a result of “sampling error.”
- Significant differences between Wave 1 and Apply Pilot Grant Community members are noted in graphics with an H or an L. Differences between Grantor groups are not noted, due to a small sample size for the Apply Pilot. Differences should be considered with caution.

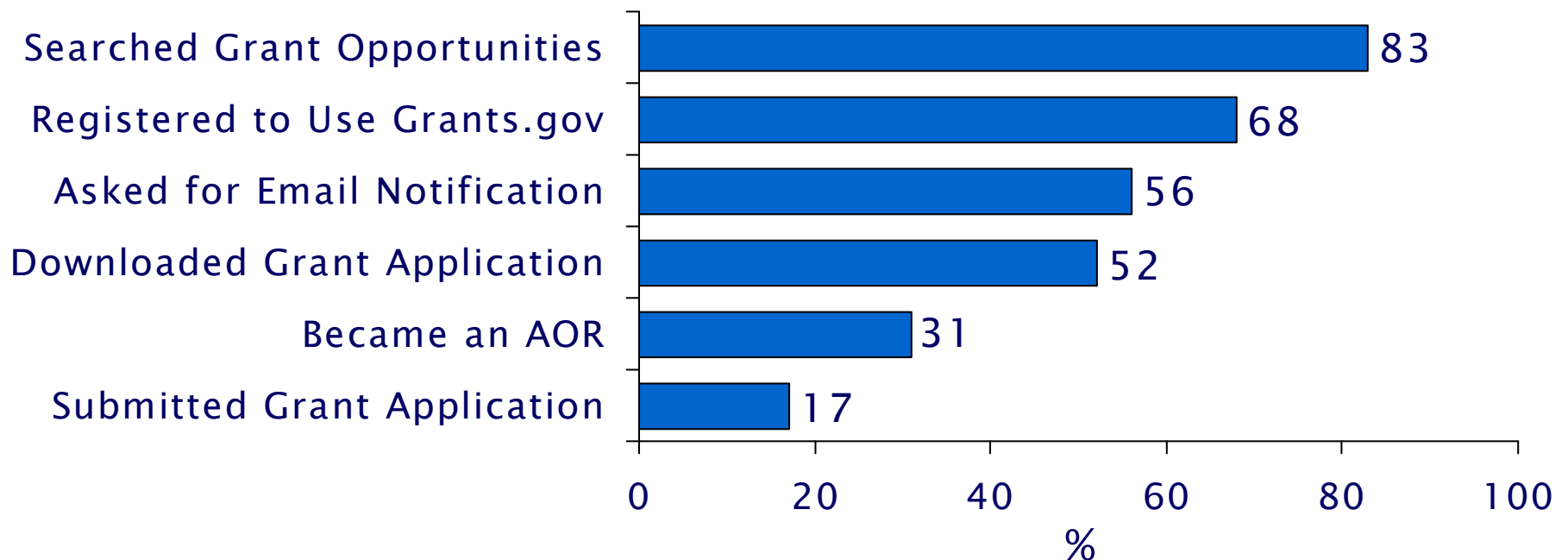
		Sample Size	Margin of Error
Grant Community	Wave 1	190	+/-7%
	Apply Pilot	47	+/-13%
Grantors	Wave 1	69	+/-11%
	Apply Pilot	18*	+/-24%

\* This is a very small sample size compared to the large numbers of potential agency users of Grants.gov, and readers should view results based on them as directional, versus statistically reliable and projectable. Despite the small sample size, we believe it is worthwhile to report these findings since the 18 users accounted for 17 of the 26 agencies that will use Grants.gov. However, we have avoided comparisons between the groups.

## Profile of Grant Community

- Most Grant Community members who completed the survey have searched for grant opportunities and registered to use Grants.gov.
- Half have asked for email notifications of updates to opportunity postings and downloaded grant applications.
- Members of the Grant Community hold a variety of roles within their organization, including Executive Director, Development Director, Grant Coordinator, and Grant Writer.
- 63% of Grant Community members submit their grant applications on paper, while 37% use an electronic system.

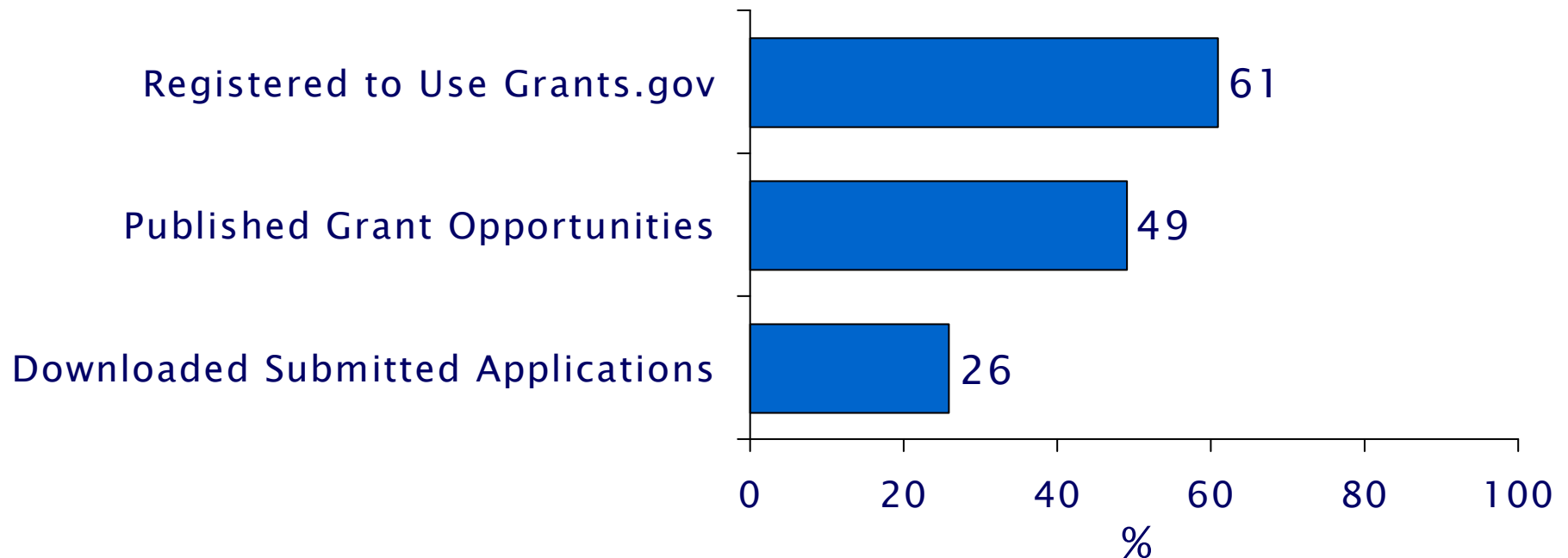
## Grant Community Activities



## Profile of Grantors

- Most Grantors who completed the survey have registered to use Grants.gov, and half have published grant opportunities on Grants.gov.
  - A quarter have downloaded submitted applications
  - A few have assigned user roles and managed users and sub-agencies
  - Much of their other activity on the site has been to train themselves and their staff and help their Grant Community Members use Grants.gov
- Grantor roles pertain mainly to grant administration (e.g., grant program manager, policy specialist/analyst, etc.).
- Three-quarters (74%) of Grantors receive grant applications on paper, and a quarter (26%) use an electronic process.

### Grantor Activities



## Executive Summary and Implications

- The Grant Community and Grantors continue to see the potential for Grants.gov to be a solution for the cumbersome grant application process, but acknowledge that the system is still evolving. Both groups are only moderately satisfied at this point and are hoping for a more streamlined process and intuitive system in the future. In comparison to the Apply Pilot, their attitudes have changed little, although the Grant Community is slightly less satisfied in Wave 1.
  - It is important to remember that participants in the Apply Pilot were involved members of the Grant Community and Grantor agencies. Grant Community Apply Pilot participants were also operating in a manufactured environment during the Apply Pilot, rather than in real time with real applications, which may explain some of the differences in attitudes between the Apply Pilot and Wave 1 satisfaction ratings. Therefore, it is recommended that Grants.gov focus its improvement efforts on the current situation and less on the changes (or lack thereof) in the findings between the Apply Pilot and Wave 1.
- Grants.gov needs to focus on improving some specific aspects of the system to achieve long term success. These are areas that are important to current users of the system, but where they are dissatisfied.
  - For the Grant Community, Grants.gov needs to make the “Prepare to Apply” process (including e-authentication, AOR registration, and AOR assignment) processes easier from a Grant Community perspective. Application and submission processes also need to be improved to make them more user-friendly.
  - Grantors would like to see the completed application download process be more intuitive, clearer organization of information with understandable links and labels, and assurances that transactions are being processed properly.

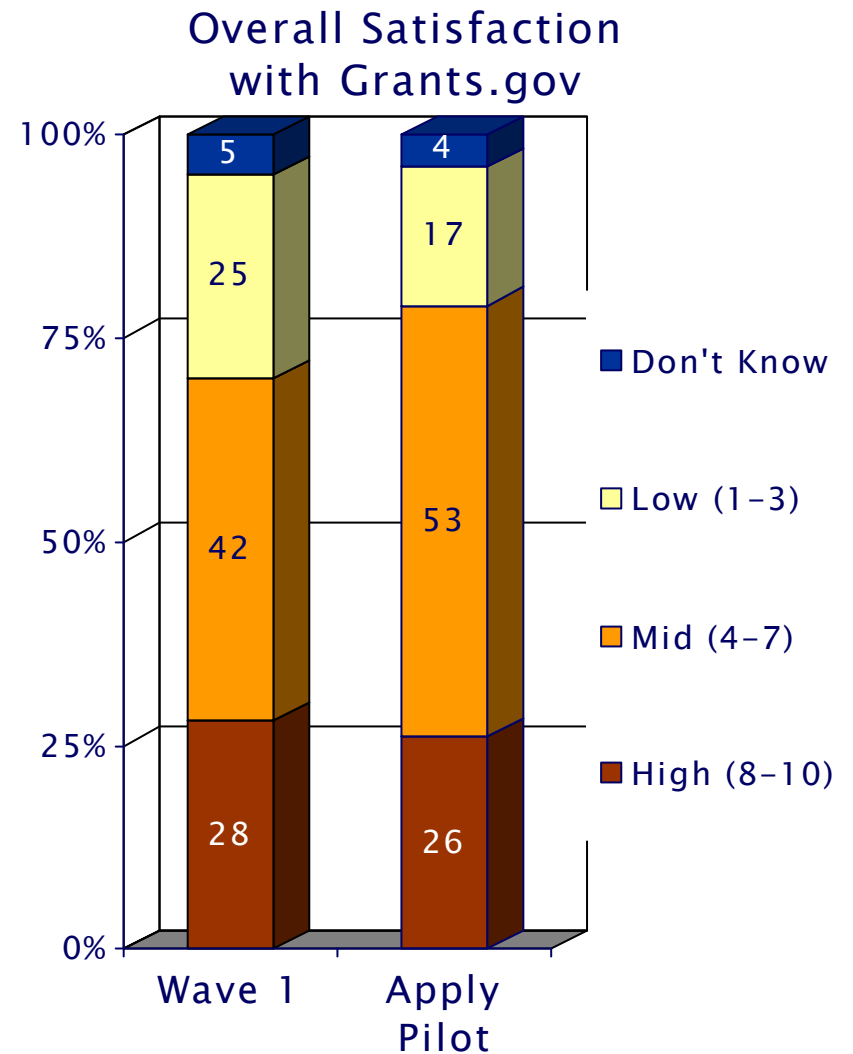
## Executive Summary and Implications

- The percentage of Grant Community members and Grantors who experienced problems using Grants.gov was reduced by more than a third from the Apply Pilot. Those who did have questions or concerns in Wave 1 continue to use all forms of customer support (e.g., online tools and the contact center) to help them resolve their issues.
  - While the reduction in the percentage of users who required support is positive, a lower percentage of Grant Community members who did experience issues indicate satisfaction with the resolution of them. This may be due to the nature of issues in the Apply Pilot versus Wave 1 (e.g., immediate functionality issues which had to be resolved to complete participation in the pilot, versus frustration with registration processes which is resolvable, but still difficult).
  - Grantors expressed similar satisfaction with customer support in Wave 1 as they did in the Apply Pilot.
- In sum, Grant Community members and Grantors clearly understand that Grants.gov is still in an early launch stage, and expect to see improvements to the functionality in the future that will help them meet their goals for easy-to-use electronic grants information and application processes.
  - Grants.gov should consider implementing a communications loop with the Grant Community to make them aware of impending process and site improvements and invite them to email suggested changes and feedback, in order to create a sense of shared goals and progress.



## Overall Satisfaction: Grant Community

- Similar to that of the Apply Pilot, a strong majority (70%) of Grant Community members are at least moderately satisfied with Grants.gov.
  - Slightly more than a quarter are highly satisfied.



## Reasons for Satisfaction Ratings: Grant Community

- Some Grant Community Members find the site easy to use with the right information.
- Others have problems with the functionality and user–friendliness of the site.

### Reasons for Satisfaction:

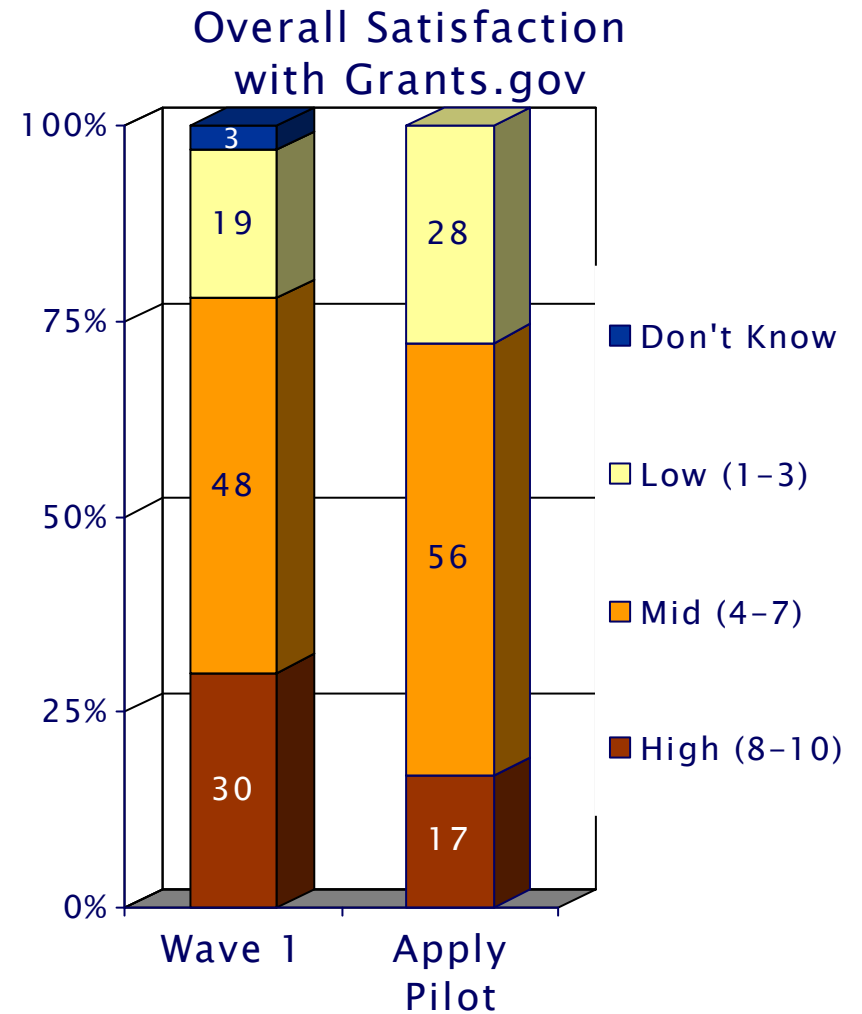
- Very user–friendly
- Great information and tools and well organized
- Like opportunity notification function
- Search capabilities are excellent
- Instructions and directions are clear
- Like going to one location for all grant functions (one–stop shopping, saves time)
- Great way to find grants
- All contact with help desk has been positive and productive
- Site has simplified the grant submission process (online submission vs. paper)
- Grant opportunities available appear to be good projects
- Inclusive of non–profits and other community based organizations as well as small businesses

### Reasons for Dissatisfaction:

- Registration process is very complicated, too time consuming
- Downloading an application is complicated
- Instructions are unclear, incomplete, complicated
- Search function is complicated and not effective
- Grant descriptors are not helpful, have to research the grant individually
- Small font size on site forces adjustments on computer monitor
- Application file is not useful or effective (to not lose work and time must be completed in one sitting, cannot save work or return later to complete)
- No grant opportunities for individuals or certain groups

## Overall Satisfaction: Grantors

- Three-quarters of Grantors are at least moderately satisfied with Grants.gov, and nearly a third are highly satisfied.



## Reasons for Satisfaction Ratings: Grantors

- Some Grantors feel that Grants.gov has the information and tools they need, is easy to use, and is improving.
- Other Grantors have had great difficulty using the site, which decreases their satisfaction.

### Reasons for Satisfaction:

- Is easy to use
- Reaches applicants effectively
- Has all the tools I need, including all information required by my position
- Grants.gov staff and help desk have been very responsive
- The system has great potential and has been making slow but constant progress
- Is low maintenance
- Has been a very useful and efficient way of searching for federal grants because it is centralized
- An amazing accomplishment in a very short time, federally speaking

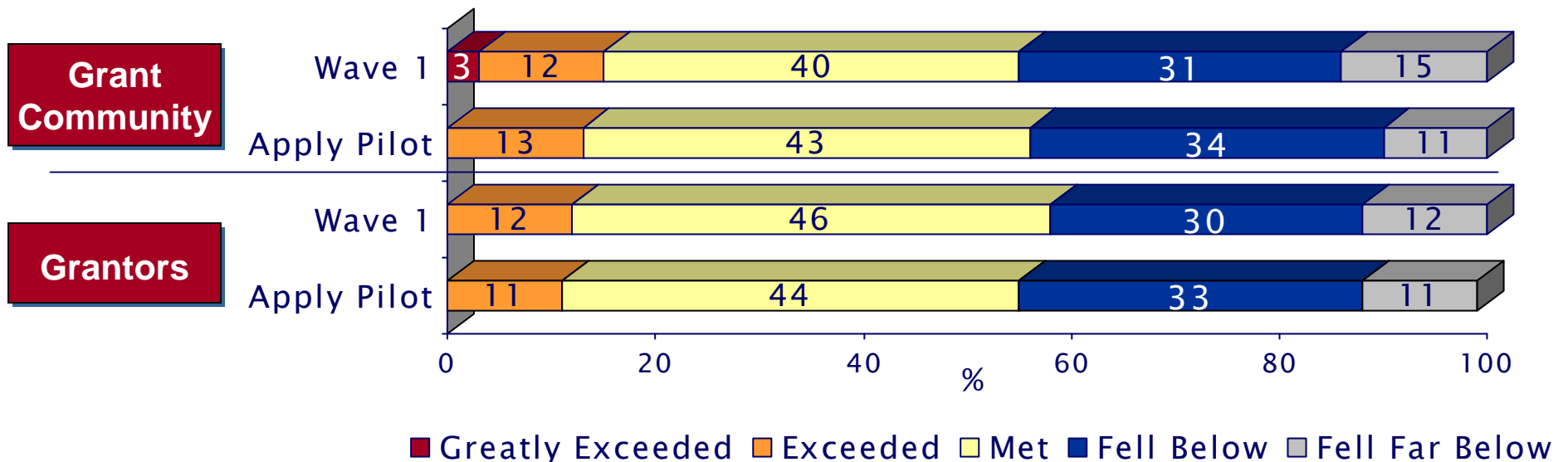
### Reasons for Dissatisfaction:

- System is confusing, complex, difficult to navigate, counterintuitive
- Process to post grant opportunities is cumbersome
- Difficult to download applications
- Registration process is cumbersome
- Business rules and roles not clearly defined within the system
- Took much effort to obtain a CFDA number and tailor application requirement to the Grants.gov framework
- No response when help was requested
- Grants.gov did not accept application packages because of data analysis requirements
- Has to be web based to work, cannot rely on compatibility with client side software and systems
- Grants.gov is a roadblock to submissions by applicants: quality of applications is down

## Living Up to Expectations

- A majority of Grantors and Grant Community members feel the site meets or exceeds their expectations, which is similar to opinions in the Apply Pilot.
  - The site meets or exceeds expectations because it provides the information Grant Community members and Grantors need, is easy to use, and does what it is designed to do.
- Still, the remainder do not feel the site meets their expectations.
  - This is primarily because it is difficult to use, particularly the registration process.

Extent to which Grants.gov Met Expectations



## Reasons for Low Grants.gov Usage

- 5% of Grant Community Members (10 people) and 19% of Grantors (13 people) only registered to use Grants.gov; they did not do any other activities on the site.
- Some have not done more on Grants.gov because they had problems using the site, while others just have not had the need to move forward with other activities.
- Some feel that Grants.gov does not apply to their organization.

### Reasons for Low Activity on Grants.gov

#### Grant Community:

- Confused about how to download applications
- Layout and organization of site is not clear
- Confused about how to write grant proposals
- Problems registering, becoming AOR, using passwords
- Have not had a need to do more on the site yet
- Grants.gov does not cover applicable grants
- Organization is not eligible
- Respondent does not participate in grant application details

#### Grantors:

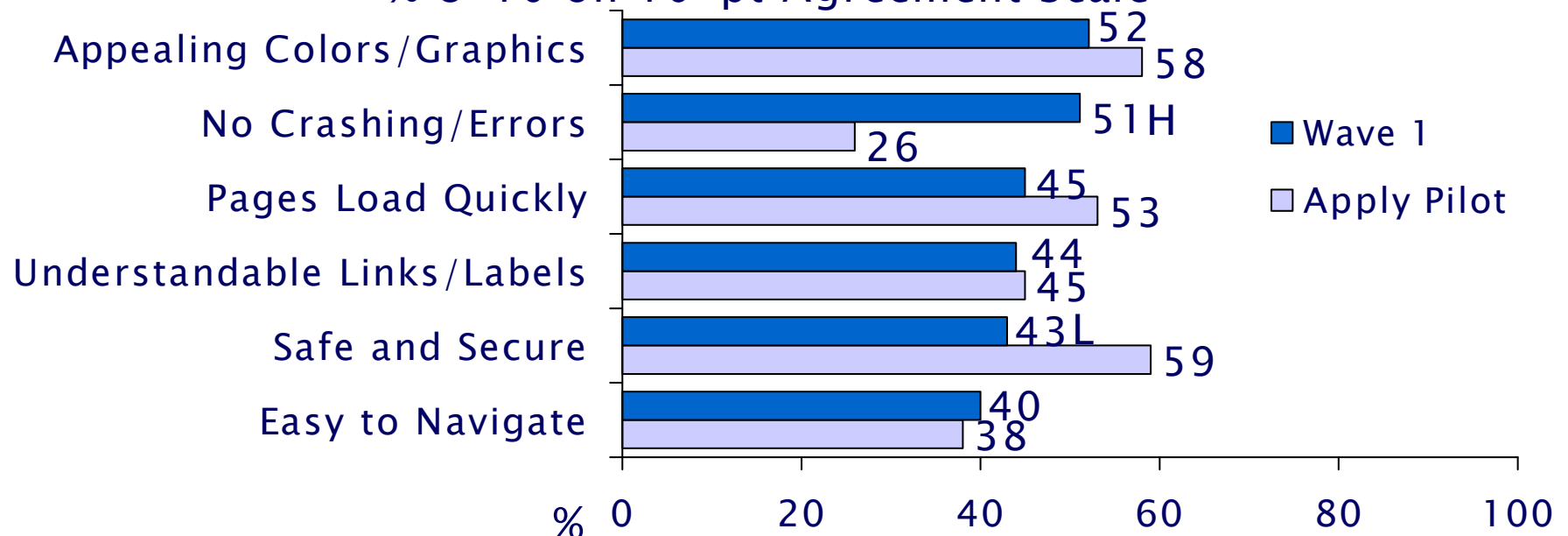
- Problems registering agency
- Still using traditional process
- Have not had a need to do more on the site yet
- Time constraints
- Lack of agency coordination
- Grants.gov not applicable (i.e., individuals cannot apply, not accessible to impaired users, few discretionary programs)

## Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality Grant Community

- Grant Community members are moderately satisfied with the basic functionality of Grants.gov.
  - Half feel the site has appealing colors and graphics and is reliable.
  - About four-in-ten believe the pages load quickly, the links and labels are understandable, and the site is secure and is easy to navigate.
- Grant Community members feel the site has improved in reliability from the Apply Pilot. Apply Pilot users experienced significant technical difficulties, and these appear to be fixed in Wave 1 and reflected in the higher rating.
- However, the Grant Community is less likely to feel the site is safe and secure. Apply Pilot participants may have felt safer and more secure due to their familiarity with the system and its sponsor.

### Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality

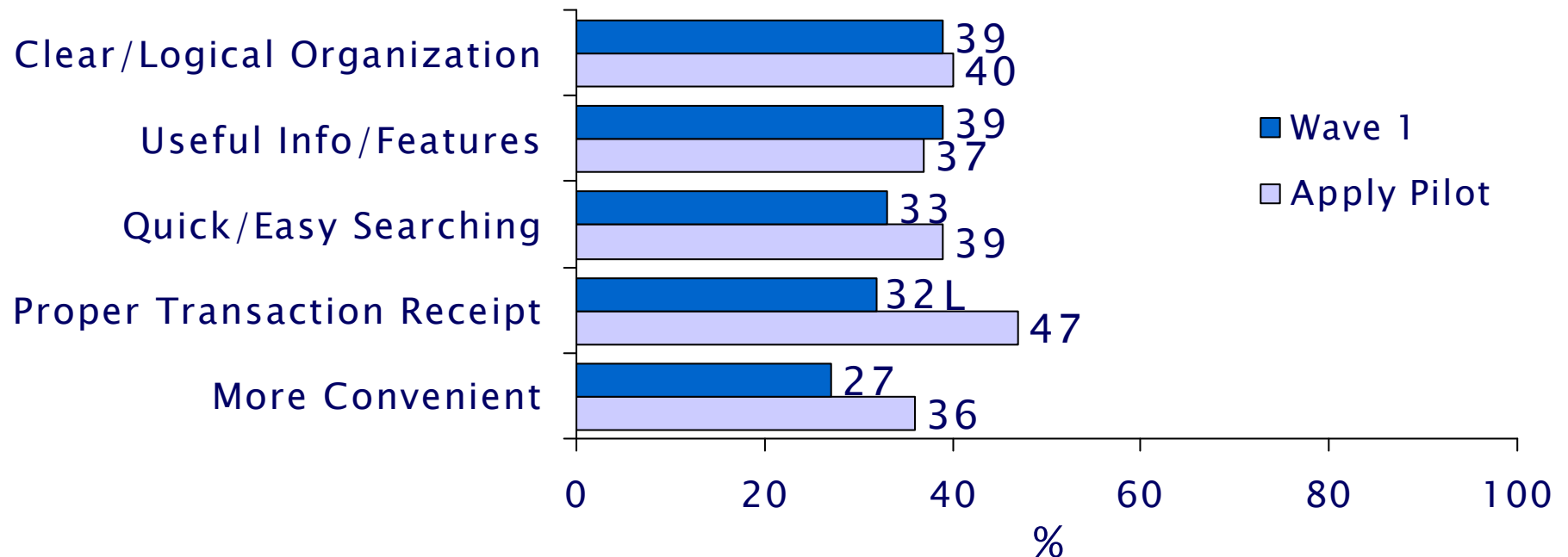
– % 8–10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale –



## Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality Grant Community (continued)

- Less than 4-in-10 members of the Grant Community find the site well-organized, full of useful information and features, and easy to search.
- Compared to the Apply Pilot, fewer users of Grants.gov perceive that they receive a confirmation that their transaction is being processed properly, and less than a third find Grants.gov more convenient than other methods.

### Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality (cont.) – % 8–10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale –

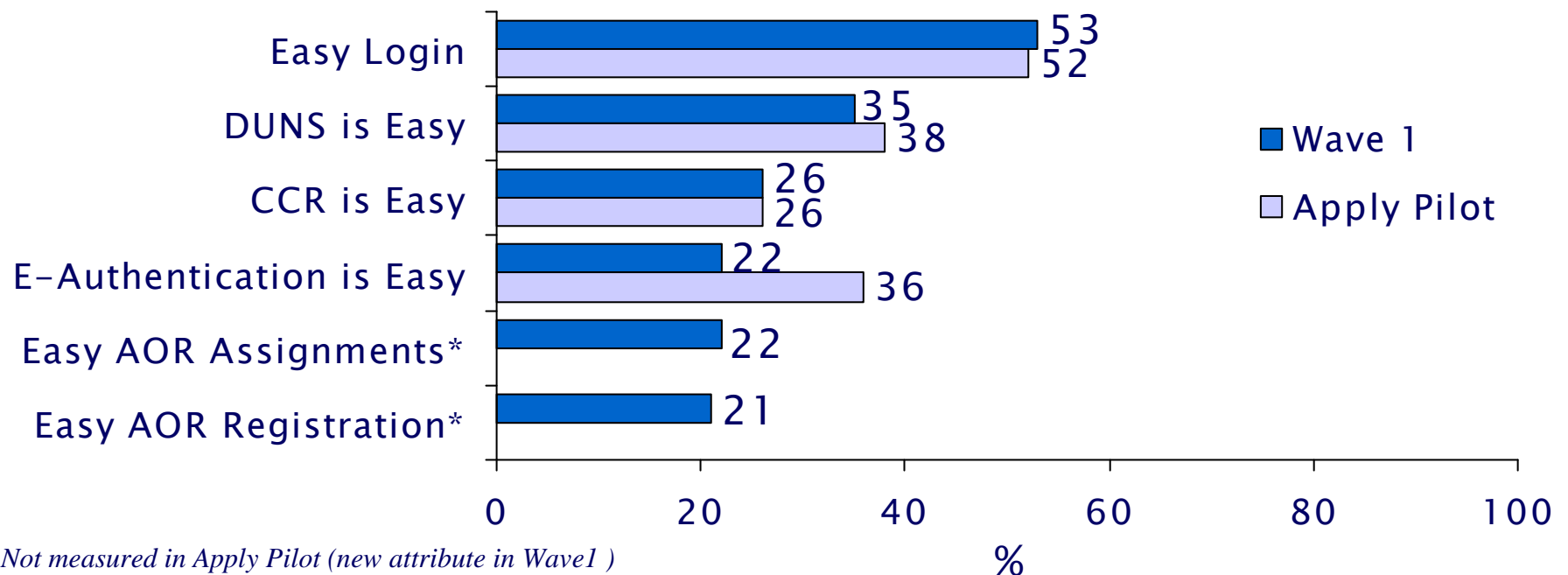




## Strengths and Challenges: Account Set-up and Access Grant Community

- The account set-up and login process continues to cause many Grant Community members problems.
- The Grants.gov login process is easy for only half of the Grant Community, and about a third find it easy to acquire a DUNS number.
- CCR registration, E-Authentication, AOR assignment, and AOR registration are even more difficult.

### Strengths and Challenges: Account Set-up and Access – % 8–10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale –

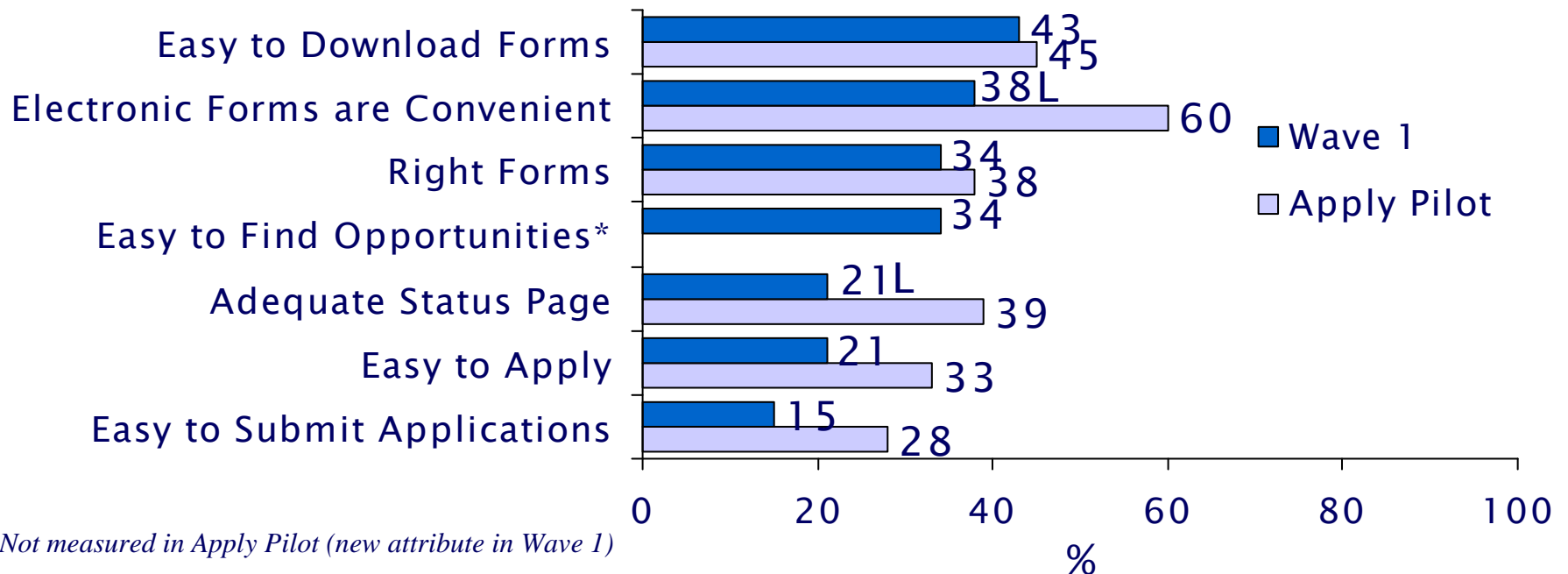


## Strengths and Challenges: Grant Functionality Grant Community

- Grant Community members are most pleased with the electronic forms and related tasks.
  - More than 40% find it easy to understand how to download application forms.
  - More than a third feel the forms are convenient to fill out online; yet this has declined since the Apply Pilot.
  - The forms are also the correct ones they need to complete the application for more than a third of members.
- The Grant Community struggles most with applying (including submission) and obtaining the needed information on the application status page.

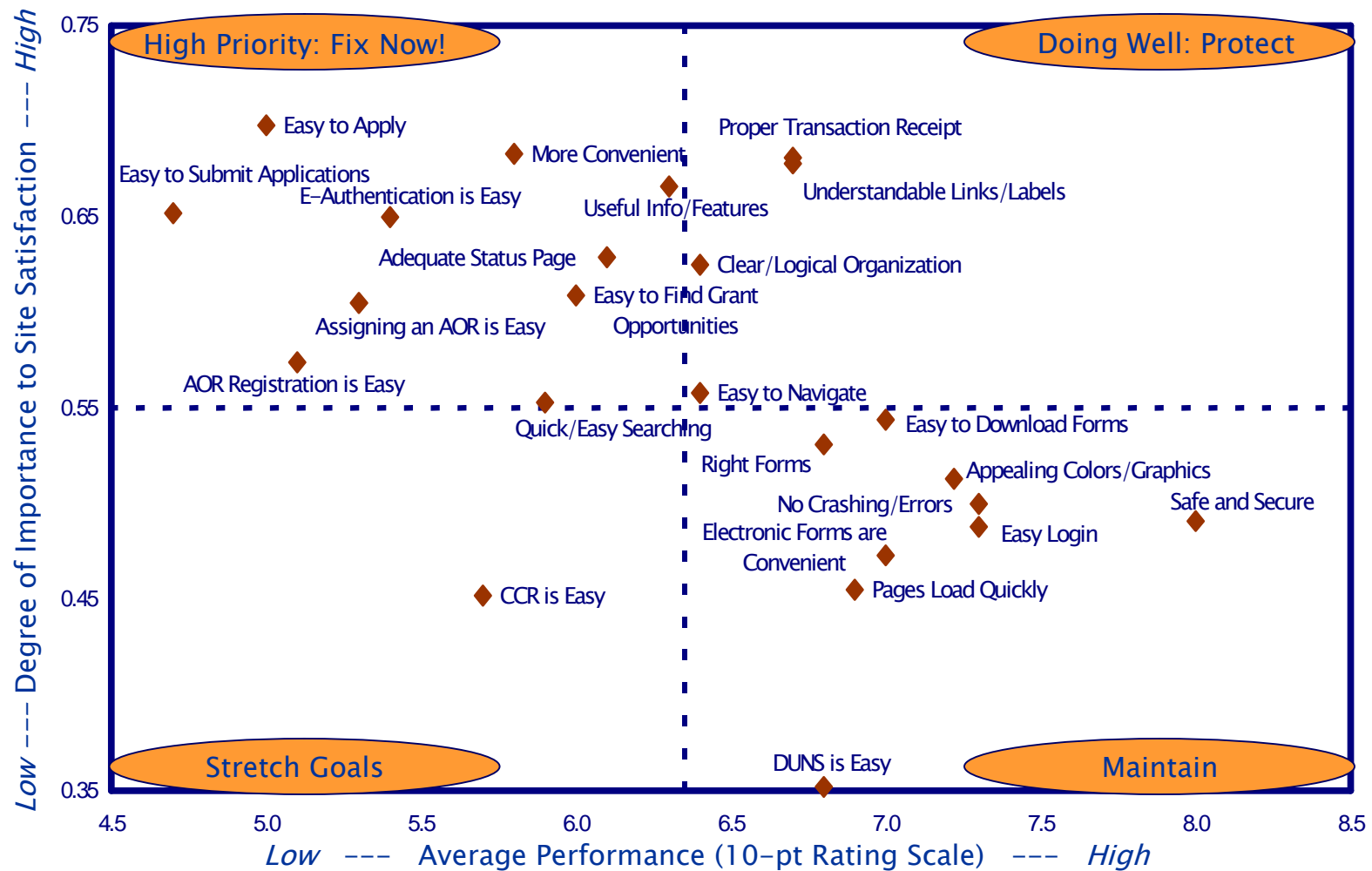
### Strengths and Challenges: Grant Functionality

- % 8-10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale -



## Grant Community Perceptions of Performance

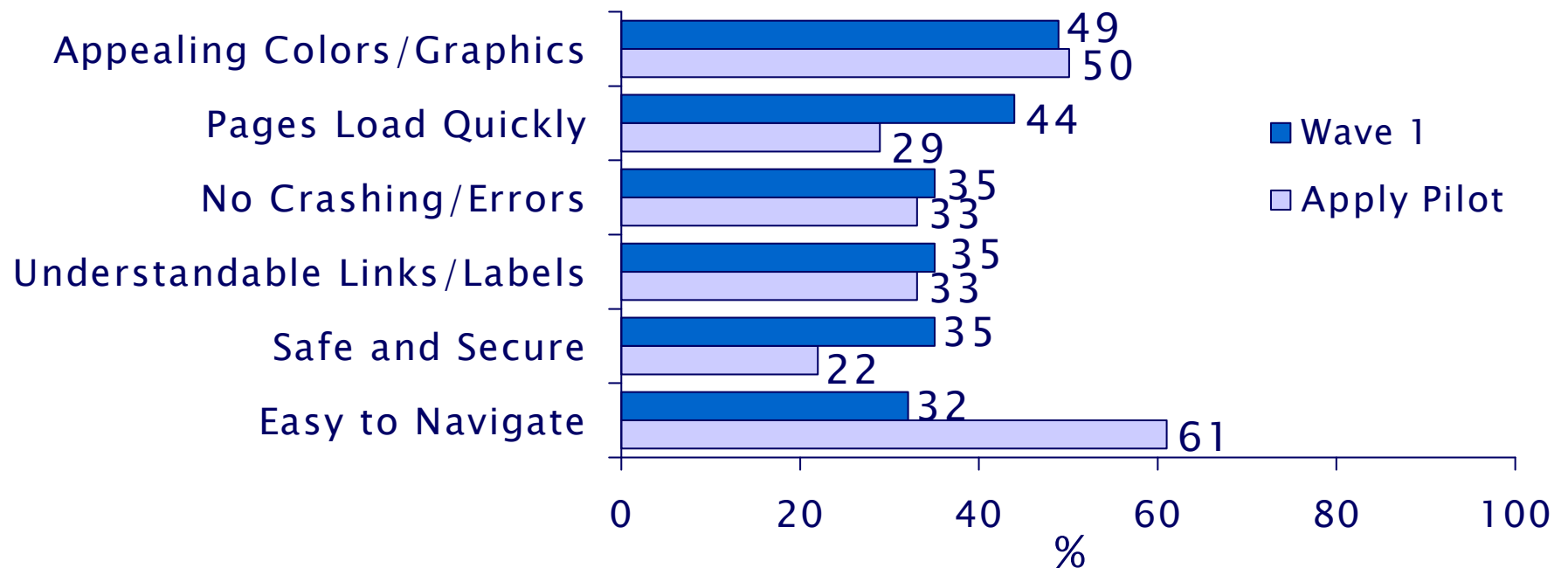
- The graph below considers the individual areas of performance relative to overall satisfaction and helps to prioritize areas that need more attention.
- Areas to improve (see upper left corner) include user registration (i.e., E-Authentication and AOR activities), Find and Apply processes, submission, and the status page, in addition to making the process more convenient overall.



## Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality Grantors

- Grantors are also moderately satisfied with the basic site functionality of Grants.gov.
  - Half find the colors and graphics appealing, while fewer feel the pages load quickly, and that the site is reliable, understandable, safe, and easy to navigate.

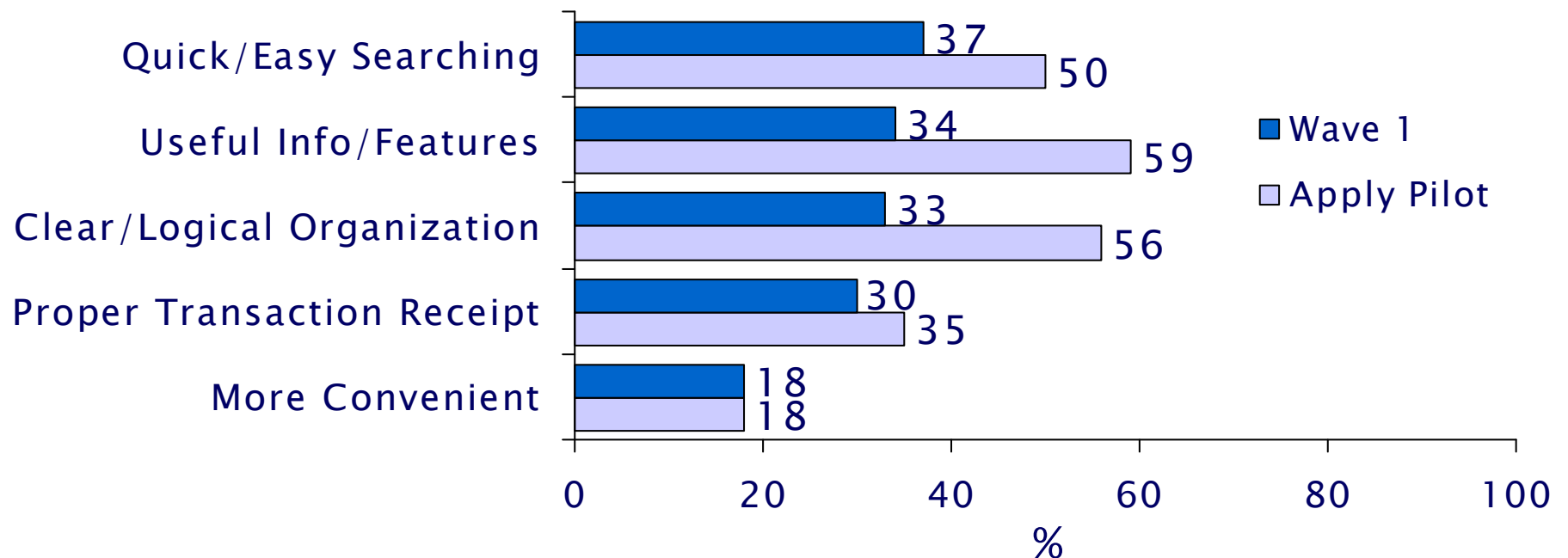
### Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality - % 8-10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale -



## Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality Grantors (continued)

- About a third of Grantors feel the search capabilities are easy to use, the information and site features are useful, and the site is organized clearly.
- Less than a third believe they received information that their transactions were processed properly and that the site is more convenient than using other methods.

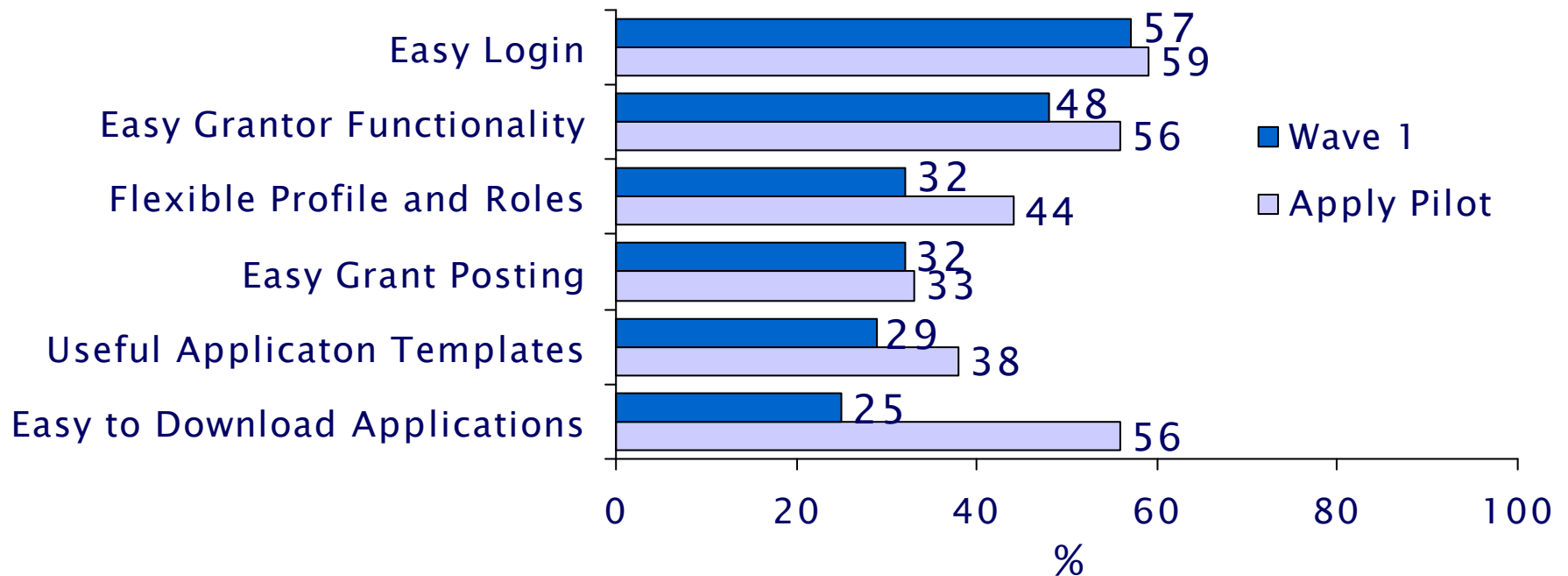
### Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality (cont.) – % 8–10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale –



## Strengths and Challenges: Site Functionality Grantors (continued)

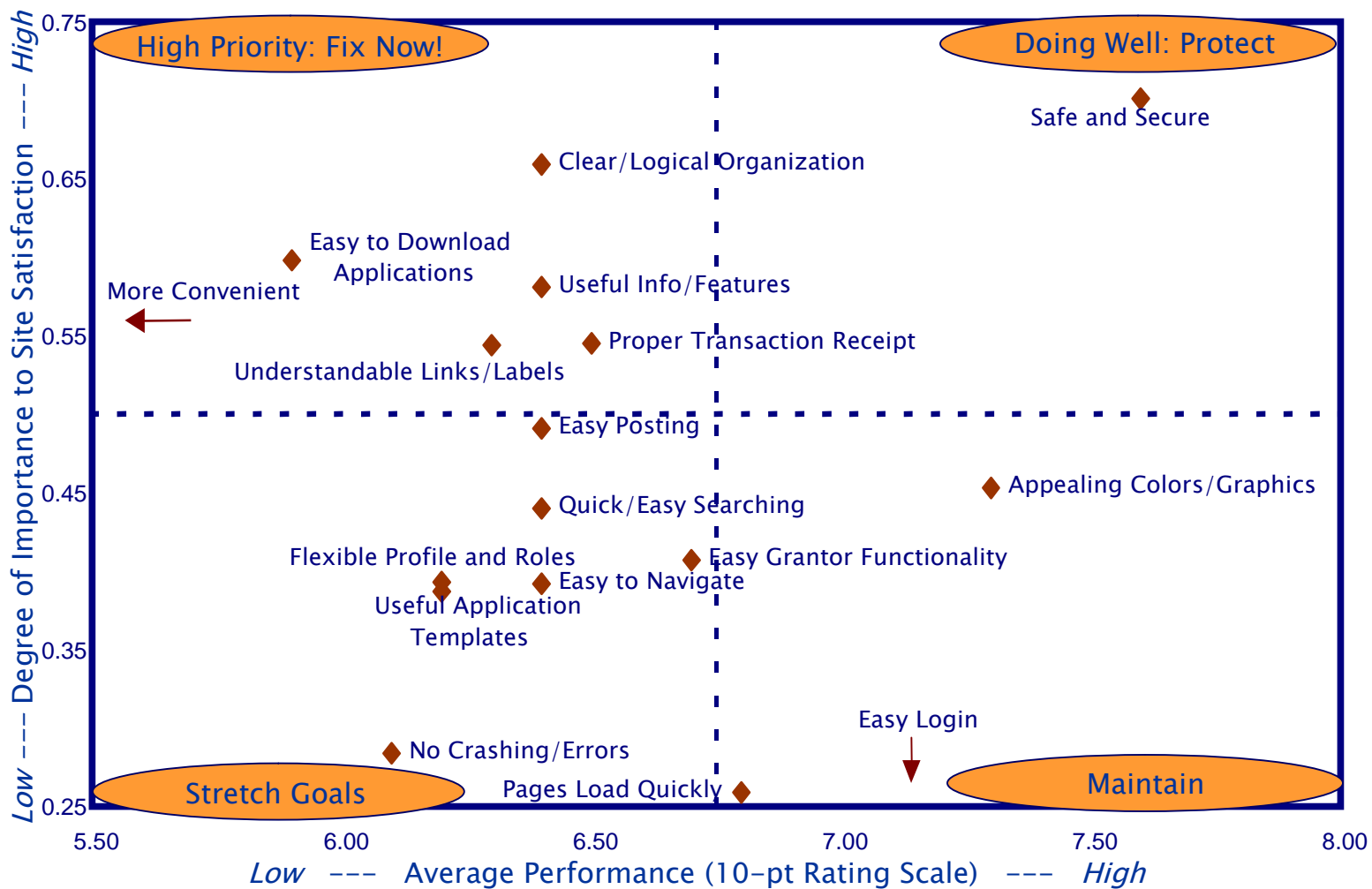
- With the exception of the user login, the Grantor functionality also needs to be improved to satisfy the majority of Grantors.
  - Nearly half believe the Grantor functionality is easy to understand.
  - But, less than a third find the agency profile and user roles flexible enough for their organizations, and the process of downloading and posting grant opportunities is not easy for most.
  - The application templates also need some improvement to be more useful to Grantors.

### Strengths and Challenges: Grantor Functionality - % 8-10 on 10-pt Agreement Scale -



## Grantor Perceptions of Performance

- Priorities for improvement include making it easier to download applications, and providing clearer organization of information, understandable links and labels, more useful features, and assurances that transactions are being processed properly.
- Overall, Grantors would like the site to be more convenient to use than other methods.



## Customer Support Needs

- Half of Grantors (55%) and the Grant Community (50%) had questions or problems using Grants.gov, representing a significant reduction from the percentage of Apply Pilot participants who had questions or problems using the site (79% and 83%, respectively). A summary of Wave 1 concerns are listed below.

### Problems/Questions

#### Grant Community:

- Registering
- Submitting applications electronically is very complicated, problematic, time consuming
- Finding grants that individual/organization can qualify to receive
- Help Desk is not able to resolve problems
- Difficult to find phone number to Help Desk
- Problems using DUNS, getting CCR numbers and AOR authorizations
- Downloading grant applications is difficult, time consuming, unsuccessful
- Search function is ineffective (results are unrelated to search criteria, no sort option, e.g. "Search by Due Date")
- Logging in is confusing (many numbers to keep track of: TPIN, MPIN, Code Key #, User Name, User ID, passwords, etc.)
- Finding applications for grants that could not be submitted electronically

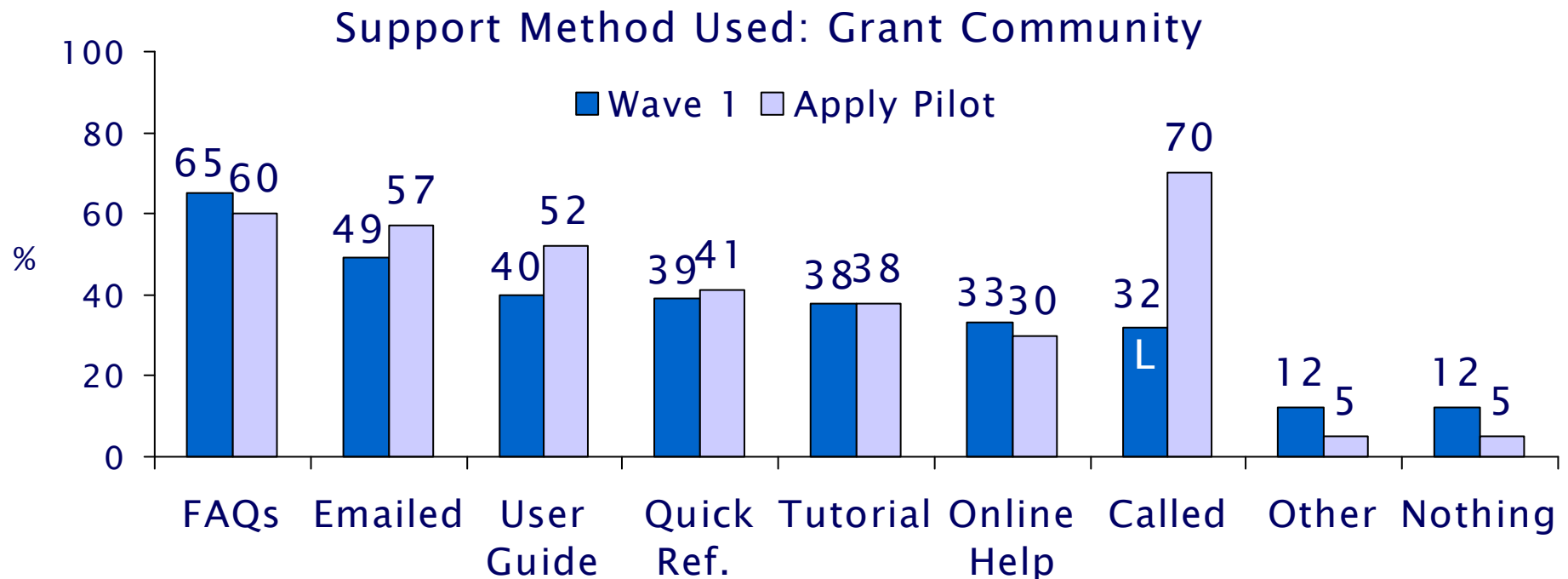
#### Grantors:

- Registering
- Uploading grant applications, information, instructions
- Viewing applications submitted to agency and sub-agencies
- Logging in (error messages, passwords do not work)
- Finding/locating pages/information within the site ("Build Announcement," Tutorial, support phone number)
- Documents and applications submitted must fit Grants.gov format (too generic)
- Downloading/uploading times on dial up connections
- Problems using DUNS number, establishing CFDA number for agency
- Transitions to new versions of the system deleted work that was saved or posted on previous versions
- Applicant issues with submission
- Help Desk personnel need proper training and cannot help most of the time
- Too many "bugs" in the system



## Customer Support Usage: Grant Community

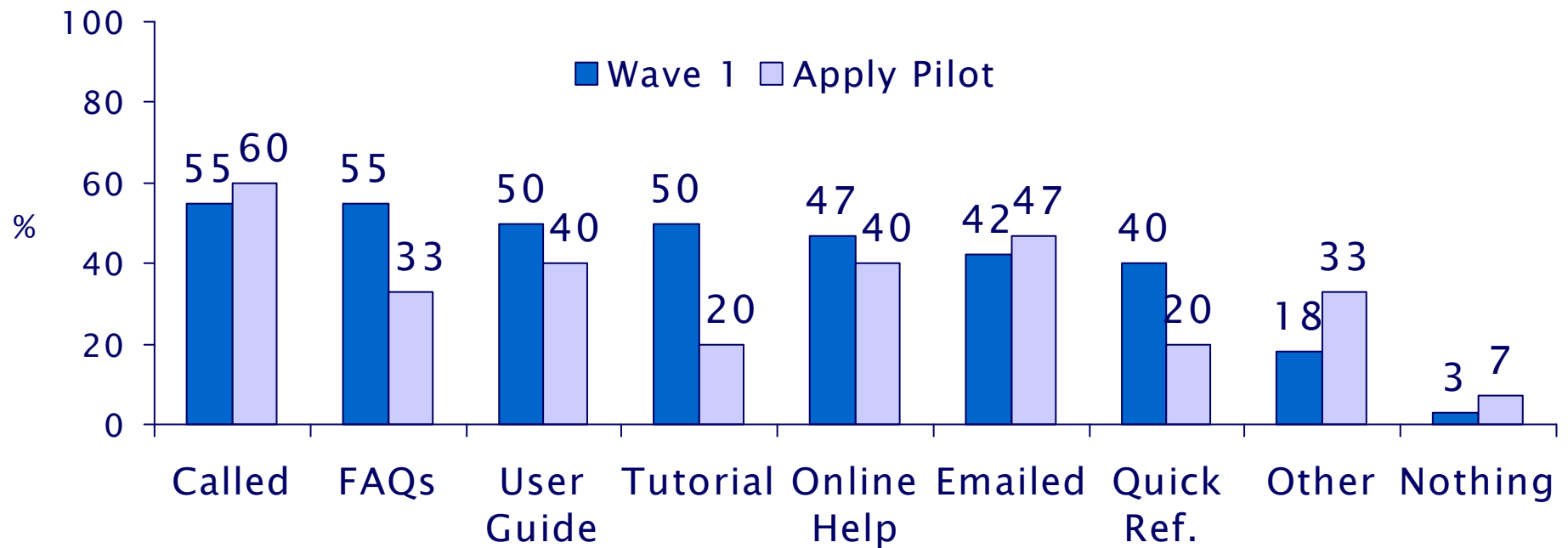
- Grant Community members use FAQs, email, and the User Guide most to get answers to their questions.
  - During the Apply Pilot, calling customer support was used more, but this may be due to technical difficulties they were experiencing with the pilot.
- Only 30% of Grant Community participants' questions or problems were fully resolved, compared to 73% during the Apply Pilot. This may be due to the fact that more Grant Community members called customer support during the Apply Pilot, and telephone customer support may be more effective at resolving their problems.



## Customer Support Usage: Grantors

- Grantors who had a question or problem tend to call customer support, and use the FAQs, User Guide, and Tutorial most.
- More than a third (37%) of Grantors had their question or problem about Grants.gov fully resolved, compared to 47% during the Apply Pilot. (Caution: small sample sizes in both cases, so not statistically projectable).

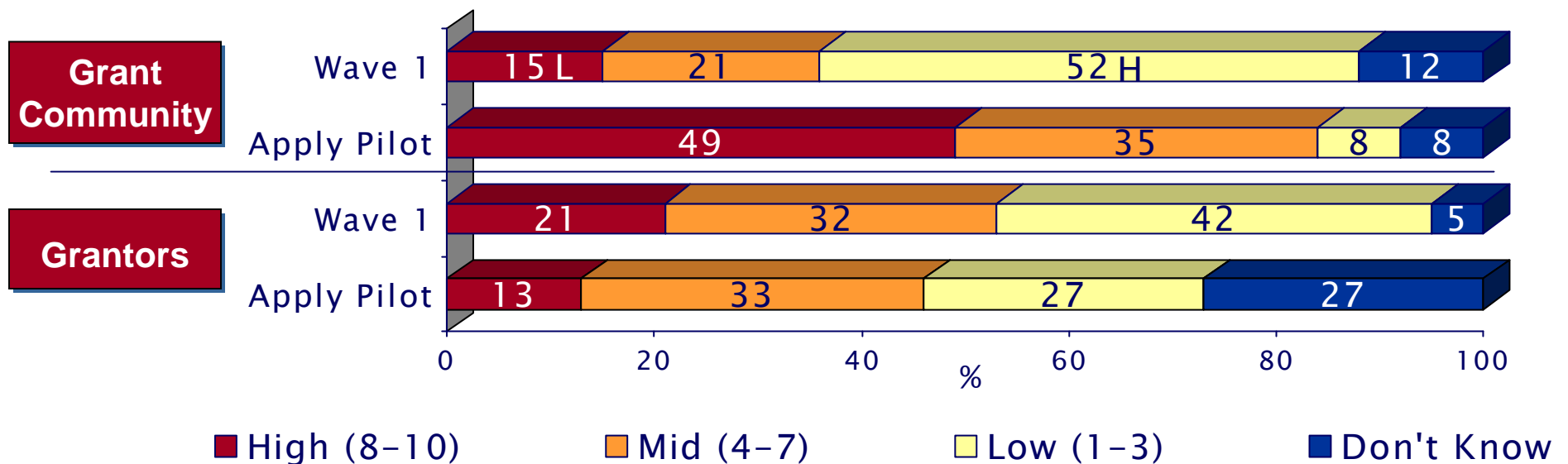
### Support Method Used: Grantors



## Satisfaction with Customer Support

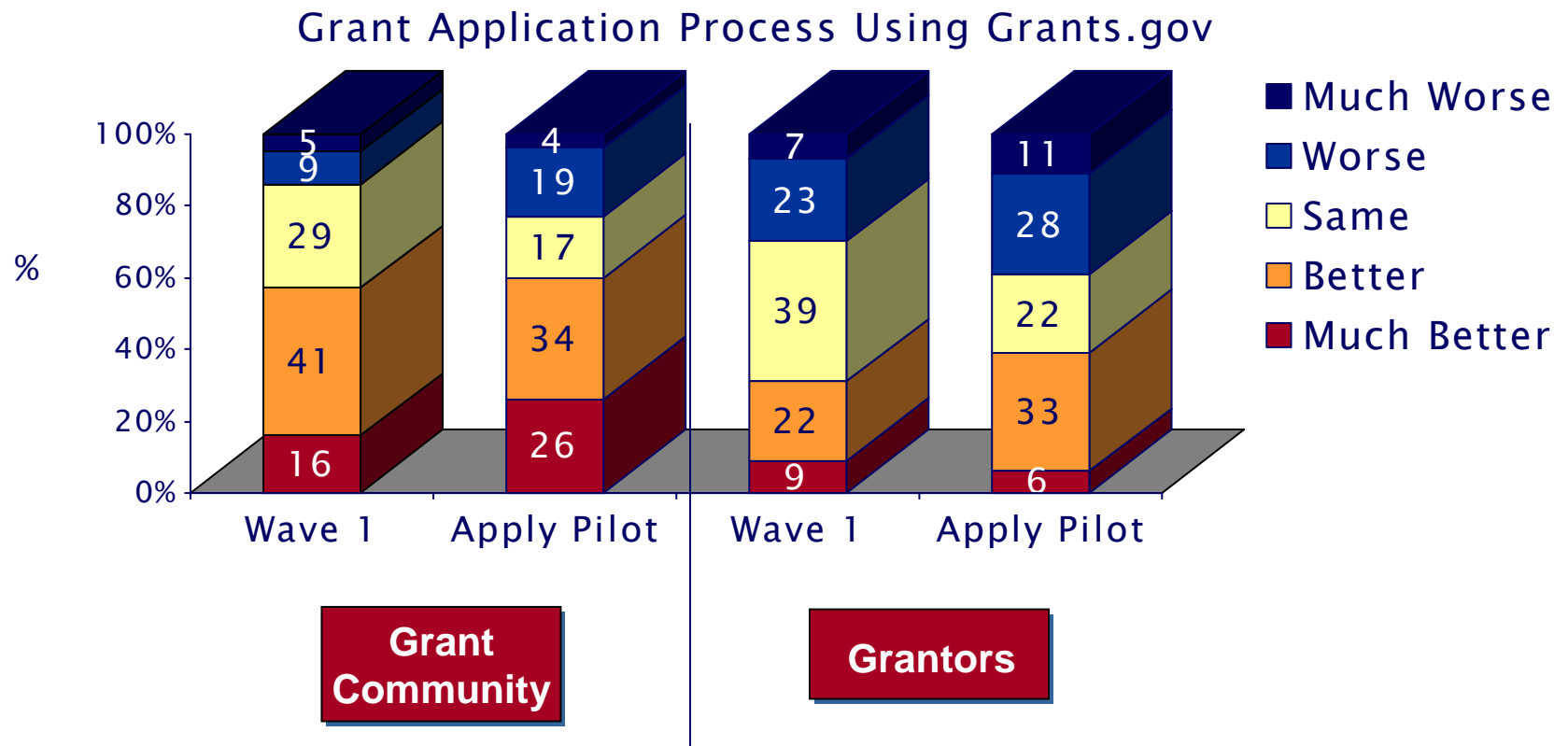
- Grant Community members are less satisfied with customer support for Grants.gov than they were for the Apply Pilot.
- Grantors' satisfaction has changed very little.
- Nearly half (46%) of the Grant Community and 71% of Grantors feel they were given enough information, training, and support to correctly use Grants.gov.
  - Grant Community members were slightly happier with training and support during the Apply Pilot; but 68% believe they were given adequate support.

### Satisfaction with Customer Support



## Comparison of Grants.gov vs. Traditional Process

- More than half (57%) of Grant Community Members and a third (31%) of Grantors feel that Grants.gov makes the grant application process better.
  - This has not changed much from the Apply Pilot, although Grant Community Members are slightly less likely to say the process is “much” better.



## Preference for Future Usage

- Despite their issues in using the site, the majority of Grant Community members prefer to use Grants.gov instead of their original processes.
- Grantors are split between favoring Grants.gov and their original processes.

Preference Between Grants.gov and Original Process

