



	<b>REPORT No.: 2021-53</b>
<b>MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2021</b>	<b>DATE PREPARED: SEPTEMBER 27, 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT: 2021 ONTARIO WORKS CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY</b>	

### **RECOMMENDATION**

For information only.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with the results from the 2021 Ontario Works (OW) Client Satisfaction Survey.

### **BACKGROUND**

To help fulfill the 2020 Strategic Plan directive to enhance communication with clients, as well as to gauge the success of current initiatives and supports, Research and Social Policy previously conducted a survey of clients in receipt of OW assistance in 2016 and 2019. A similar survey was distributed in 2021 as part of the ongoing commitment to engage with clients.

The OW Client Satisfaction Survey was distributed with a letter detailing that the survey was voluntary and anonymous. The survey asked a variety of questions pertaining to the clients' experiences with TBDSSAB staff.

### **COMMENTS**

In 2021, 2,356 surveys were distributed to clients on the OW caseload. 194 surveys were completed and returned to TBDSSAB, representing 8.23% of the total caseload; the responses will represent the entire OW caseload 95% of the time, plus or minus 7%. This is a significantly lower response rate compared to the 2019 survey, which had 407 surveys returned, representing 13.6% of the total caseload. Possible reasons for low response rate include survey fatigue and other factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similar to the 2019 survey, clients from the City of Thunder Bay constitute the majority of respondents (86%). The 2021 survey had nearly twice as many respondents from other member municipalities compared to 2019.

Of note, 68.56% of respondents strongly agreed that OW program staff are knowledgeable (question 8b), which is a 5% increase from 2019. Including “somewhat agree” responses, positive responses account for 90.7% of the responses received regarding the knowledge of OW program staff, 1.8% higher than in 2019. Positive responses also account for 89.2% of responses received regarding consistent and clear information from OW program staff (question 11b). This is 4.4% higher than 2019.

The survey results indicate that there has been a decrease in caseworkers thoroughly explaining processes to clients, which may be attributable to decreased in-person service due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in 2021, 6.5% less respondents reported remembering their caseworker explaining their rights and responsibilities (question 9d) than in 2019. Other examples include how to fill out a statement of income (question 9c) or how to make an appeal (question 9e). This is an area that may see improvement as services resume in-person.

One new question was added to gather insight into caseworker’s ability to meet life stabilization needs (question 9f). 72.92% of respondents responded yes when asked, “Has your OW caseworker worked with you to establish a plan for the future, understanding your needs and goals?”, 8.33% said no, and the rest indicated they couldn’t remember, it did not apply, or didn’t answer. Moving forward, with the change in focus from eligibility determination to case management, caseworkers will be able to spend the majority of client facing time in discussions about needs and goals.

In response to question 10, “Has your caseworker told you about helpful programs?”, satisfaction has, overall, decreased since 2019. For example, 14.3% fewer respondents reported having been told about OW Employment Programs, and there was a 10% decrease in the number of respondents reporting being told about subsidized housing programs. A large number of respondents left this question blank for 2021. This is an area that Social Assistance Programs management will ensure caseworkers focus on moving forward.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**



There are no financial implications related to this report.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that the 2021 OW Client Satisfaction Survey provides the TBDSSAB with reliable information pertaining to areas in which TBDSSAB staff excel and areas where services can be improved in the delivery of OW.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED**

Attachment #1 2021 Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey Report

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