



## **BOARD REPORT**

**REPORT No.: 2022-10**

**MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**

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### **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 Community Partners Survey.

### **BACKGROUND**

A Community Partners survey is an objective in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. The purpose is to better understand how TBDSSAB is doing as service system manager.

In September 2021, TBDSSAB distributed the 2021 Community Partner Survey to community partners, municipalities, stakeholders, and funded agencies to gauge knowledge and request feedback for TBDSSAB's services.

### **COMMENTS**

61 responses to the survey were received, which is a 35.9% response rate from the successful emails. 118 responses were needed for statistical significance. As this response rate is not statistically significant, responses can only be interpreted in the context of those who responded, not as representative of the greater community opinion of TBDSSAB.

Of the responses received, the results were generally positive. The results of the 2021 Community Partners Survey indicate that TBDSSAB's community partners have a fairly strong understanding of TBDSSAB's role as service system manager and are generally pleased with service quality. There is however, room for improvement as we strive to better serve our communities.

From the survey responses there are several key findings that are summarized below.

- **Did you know that TBDSSAB offers the following programs and services?** – the responses throughout the various service categories show that TBDSSAB has done well in communicating what it provides to the community. Understanding the ‘business’ that TBDSSAB is in, and how we serve the community, is an important deliverable under our Mission and Vision, and the Strategic Plan.
- **TBDSSAB staff possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide quality services.** – 90.1% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, reflecting that the delivery of the services we offer is done professionally and with quality staff.
- **Although I may not always agree with their decisions, I feel staff treat me in a courteous and respectful manner.** – 95% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, indicating a high level of integrity and support shown by staff, even where decisions may not meet the expectations. Though TBDSSAB may not always be in a position to make everyone happy, we are seen as respectful in how we deliver.
- **TBDSSAB works collaboratively with service providers to plan and improve programs to better serve clients.** – 81.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this, reinforcing our Strategic Plan direction to engage in partnerships. Strong efforts are made to engage with partners to support the delivery of services and supports to the community.
- There are also areas where improvements can be made. **Contracts are updated, reviewed and signed in a timely fashion.** – 29% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. This response identifies that there is some improvement to be made in this area, either to expedite the contract function or to better communicate and manage expectations around this function.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted certain processes, including contract development and administration. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to determine if this situation is an anomaly or an ongoing concern, as the exact nature of this concern is not identified within the survey. Further research will be done to determine specific challenges as well as opportunities for improvement.

In addition, to ensure continuous improvement of the process in general, a process review of grants and funding processes is taking place in Q1 of 2022. This review may help to improve satisfaction around contract functions.

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This report aligns with Objective 30 under Strategy 6 of the 2023 Strategic Plan: Involve and empower effective community partnerships.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no financial implications related to this report.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that TBDSSAB has addressed the 2023 Strategic Plan objective to get feedback from community partners about how TBDSSAB is doing as service system manager through the 2021 Community Partners Survey. Further, the results of the survey will influence program and policy decisions moving forward.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1 [2021 Community Partners Survey – Results Report](#)

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
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THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Community Partners Survey

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## RESULTS REPORT

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**January 31, 2022**

## Background

In September 2021, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) distributed the 2021 Community Partner Survey to community partners, municipalities, stakeholders, and funded agencies to gauge knowledge and request feedback for TBDSSAB's services. This survey was included as an objective in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, to better understand how TBDSSAB is doing as service system manager.

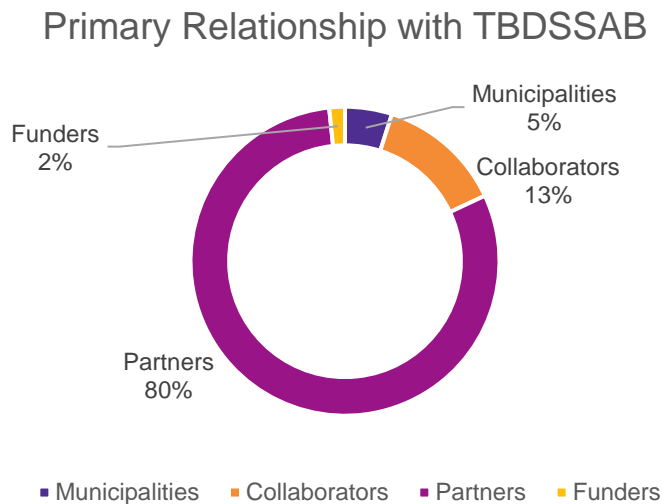
The survey was conducted online using the SimpleSurvey software; a link to the survey was sent out via email from the Communications team to 191 contacts. 21 requests bounced back and were not resent, while 170 were successfully delivered.

61 responses to the survey were received, which is a 35.9% response rate from the successful emails. 118 responses were needed for statistical significance. As this response rate is not statistically significant, responses can only be interpreted in the context of those who responded, not as representative of the greater community opinion of TBDSSAB.

## Results

### Relationship with TBDSSAB

80% of respondents considered themselves a Community Partner, which was defined as a member of an organization that received financial or in-kind support from TBDSSAB, or provides support to TBDSSAB and/or service users. The majority of respondents had over 10 years experience with TBDSSAB.



## Understanding of TBDSSAB's Role as Service System Manager

Respondents were asked if they knew TBDSSAB offered a number of programs and services. The majority of respondents answered yes, indicating a strong understanding of what TBDSSAB does:

| <b>Did you know that TBDSSAB offers the following programs and services?</b> |               |       |
|--|---------------|-------|
| Delivery of Ontario Works  | Yes           | 96.7% |
|  | No            | 0.0%  |
|  | I wasn't sure | 1.6%  |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Employment supports to OW recipients (training, education etc.)              | Yes           | 85.2% |
|  | No            | 4.9%  |
|  | I wasn't sure | 9.8%  |
|  | No Response   | 0.0%  |
| Landlord of direct-owned community housing properties                        | Yes           | 77.0% |
|  | No            | 11.5% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 9.8%  |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Community housing supports, including Rent Geared to Income                  | Yes           | 93.4% |
|  | No            | 1.6%  |
|  | I wasn't sure | 3.3%  |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Funding for community partners for homelessness prevention initiatives       | Yes           | 73.8% |
|  | No            | 16.4% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 8.2%  |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Funding for licensed Child Care and Early Years centres                      | Yes           | 70.5% |
|  | No            | 16.4% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 11.5% |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Child care fee subsidy for families  | Yes           | 68.9% |
|  | No            | 14.8% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 14.8% |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |

Respondents were also asked if they realized TBDSSAB did not offer some services. A “yes” response to this question indicates the respondent knew TBDSSAB does not provide that service. Of note, 37.7% of respondents assumed or were not sure if TBDSSAB delivers Ontario Disability Support Programs.

| <b>Did you know that TBDSSAB does NOT offer the following programs and services?</b> |               |       |
|--|---------------|-------|
| Delivery of Ontario Disability Support Programs (ODSP)                               | Yes           | 60.7% |
|  | No            | 24.6% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 13.1% |
|  | No Response   | 1.6%  |
| Direct operations of Child Care and Early Years centres                              | Yes           | 72.1% |
|  | No            | 13.1% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 14.8% |
|  | No Response   | 0.0%  |
| Child Welfare Services   | Yes           | 75.4% |
|  | No            | 14.8% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 9.8%  |
|  | No Response   | 0.0%  |
| Emergency Medical Services   | Yes           | 75.4% |
|  | No            | 14.8% |
|  | I wasn't sure | 9.8%  |
|  | No Response   | 0.0%  |

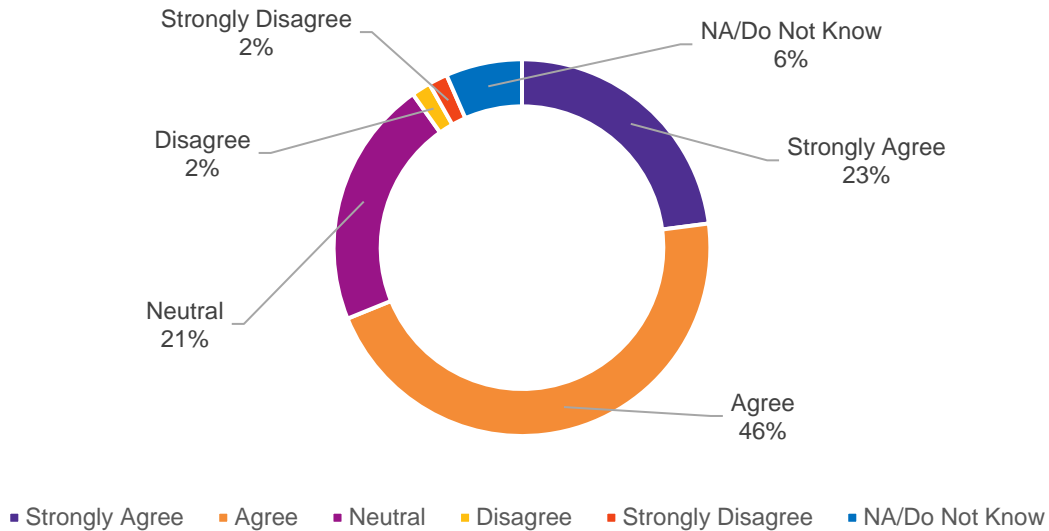
When asked if TBDSSAB fairly distributes resources throughout all the communities in the District of Thunder Bay, 68.9% of respondents answered positively, while 16.4% responded neutral, and 6.6% disagreed.

When asked if TBDSSAB makes every effort to understand the unique social, economic, regional, and demographic forces that impact the local needs of the communities in the District of Thunder Bay, 75.4% of respondents answered positively, 14.8% answered neutral, and 6.6% disagreed.

When asked if TBDSSAB oversees systems planning and manages the delivery of local human services in a way that is integrated, people-focused and outcomes-driven, 62.3% of respondents answered positively.

When asked if they had a strong understanding of TBDSSAB’s role as a service manager, 68.9% responded positively.

### Understanding of TBDSSAB's Role as a Service System Manager



### Funding Application Process

77% of respondents indicated that their organization applied for funding from TBDSSAB previously (47 people). Participants who responded yes were directed to 4 questions regarding the funding process. Participants who indicated no on this question were skipped to the next section. The chart below indicates the percentage of those who answered the question:

|   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | NA/Do Not Know |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| The application process or service agreement process was easy to complete | 21.3%          | 57.4% | 8.5%    | 8.5%     | 0.0%              | 4.3%           |
| Funding recognition requirements were easy to follow                      | 14.9%          | 66.0% | 6.4%    | 8.5%     | 2.1%              | 2.1%           |
| TBDSSAB followed up and I felt supported                                  | 23.4%          | 40.4% | 21.3%   | 10.6%    | 2.1%              | 2.1%           |
| There were opportunities to ask questions, give feedback                  | 14.9%          | 46.8% | 21.3%   | 12.8%    | 2.1%              | 2.1%           |

Respondents were asked which program area they primarily interact with but could choose multiple options. 60.7% of respondents reported interacting with Housing and



Homelessness Programs, 49.2% reported interacting with Child Care and Early Years Programs, and 42.6% reported interacting with Social Assistance Programs and Employment Supports. 9.8% of respondents reporting having interactions with all 3.

## Staff Interactions

All respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with statements regarding staff interactions. Of note, 90.2% of respondents responded positively when asked if staff possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide quality services, and 95.1% responded positively when asked if staff treat them in a courteous and respectful manner.

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | NA/ Do Not Know |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| TBDSSAB staff possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide quality services.                               | 31.1%          | 59.0% | 6.6%    | 3.3%     | 0.0%              | 0.0%            |
| Printed and web-based materials on TBDSSAB's programs and services are readily available and easy to understand.     | 14.8%          | 57.4% | 11.5%   | 9.8%     | 0.0%              | 6.6%            |
| Referrals made to service providers are thorough and accurate with respect to client needs, placement, and progress. | 14.8%          | 45.9% | 21.3%   | 3.3%     | 0.0%              | 14.8%           |
| TBDSSAB offices and hours of operation are convenient.   | 16.4%          | 50.8% | 9.8%    | 9.8%     | 1.6%              | 11.5%           |
| TBDSSAB staff respond appropriately to requests  | 27.9%          | 57.4% | 6.6%    | 3.3%     | 0.0%              | 4.9%            |
| Staff answer my questions or refer me to the appropriate person/agency for the answer                                | 31.1%          | 52.5% | 8.2%    | 4.9%     | 0.0%              | 3.3%            |
| Although I may not always agree with their decisions, I feel staff treat me in a courteous and respectful manner.    | 31.1%          | 63.9% | 0.0%    | 0.0%     | 0.0%              | 4.9%            |

Potential places for improvement include referrals made to service providers being thorough and accurate, where only 60.7% of respondents answered positively (24.6% responded neutrally or negatively), and TBDSSAB hours of operation being convenient, where 67.2% responded positively (21.3% responded neutrally or negatively).

## **Funded Organizations**

Respondents were asked if their organization is receiving funding from TBDSSAB. 62.3% of respondents answered yes (38 people). If a participant answered no on this question, the survey ended. If yes, they were asked 16 additional service and contract administration questions. The following questions are proportions of those that answered the questions.

Of note in the Services Administration questions, 81.6% of respondents answered positively when asked if TBDSSAB works collaboratively with other service providers for programming, and 86.8% responded positively when asked if services are managed with professionalism and accountability.

24% of respondents answered Neutral or Disagree when asked if Service Providers had access to information to support their decision making and to continually improve their service delivery, indicating an area for improvement.

The Contract Administration questions offer some areas to improve. Only 36.8% of respondents who answered indicated that conflicts and disputes are responded to within two business days, and 29% responded negatively when asked if contracts are updated, reviewed, and signed in a timely fashion.

## Services Administration Questions

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | NA/Do Not Know |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| TBDSSAB works collaboratively with service providers to plan and improve programs to better serve clients.                       | 21.1%          | 60.5% | 10.5%   | 7.9%     | 0.0%              | 0.0%           |
| TBDSSAB regularly seeks feedback from service providers on the quality of services.  | 13.2%          | 55.3% | 21.1%   | 5.3%     | 0.0%              | 5.3%           |
| The quality of service is monitored to achieve the best possible outcomes.   | 16.2%          | 54.1% | 18.9%   | 2.7%     | 0.0%              | 8.1%           |
| Information about the TBDSSAB's activities and decisions is appropriately shared with service providers.                         | 15.8%          | 52.6% | 26.3%   | 5.3%     | 0.0%              | 0.0%           |
| Service providers have access to information to support their decision making and to continually improve their service delivery. | 13.2%          | 52.6% | 18.4%   | 5.3%     | 0.0%              | 10.5%          |
| Services are managed with professionalism and accountability.  | 28.9%          | 57.9% | 10.5%   | 2.6%     | 0.0%              | 0.0%           |

| <b>Contract Administration Questions</b>   |                |       |         |          |                   |                |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------|
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | NA/Do Not Know |
| Contracts are updated, reviewed and signed in a timely fashion.                                      | 13.2%          | 42.1% | 7.9%    | 21.1%    | 7.9%              | 7.9%           |
| Opportunities for improvement are positively received.   | 13.2%          | 50.0% | 28.9%   | 0.0%     | 0.0%              | 7.9%           |
| Conflicts and disputes are responded to within two business days.                                    | 13.2%          | 23.7% | 21.1%   | 5.3%     | 0.0%              | 36.8%          |
| Administrative processes are streamlined to minimize the impact on child care and EarlyON providers. | 5.3%           | 42.1% | 15.8%   | 5.3%     | 0.0%              | 31.6%          |
| Reporting requirements are clearly articulated.  | 16.2%          | 56.8% | 16.2%   | 8.1%     | 0.0%              | 2.7%           |
| A process is in place for service providers to report 'serious incidents'.                           | 18.4%          | 50.0% | 5.3%    | 0.0%     | 0.0%              | 26.3%          |
| Funding is provided in an accurate and timely fashion.   | 21.1%          | 44.7% | 13.2%   | 13.2%    | 2.6%              | 5.3%           |

## Conclusion

The results of the 2021 Community Partners Survey indicate that TBDSSAB's community partners have a fairly strong understanding of TBDSSAB's role as service system manager and are generally pleased with service quality. There is, however, room for improvement as we strive to better serve our communities.

The results indicate that some areas of program delivery may require attention, especially around contract administration for funded partners. Further, increasing opportunities for knowledge exchange may help increase community understanding of what programs TBDSSAB does—and does not—offer.