



## BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2023-41

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023 ONTARIO WORKS CLIENT SATISFACTION 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 2023 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, 2019, and 2021. A similar version of this survey was distributed in 2023 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 2023, surveys were distributed to all 2,714 clients on the OW caseload. 204 surveys were completed and returned, representing 7.5% of the total caseload. Due to low response rate, the results did not achieve statistical significance and therefore are not considered representative of the entire caseload.

This is a decrease in response rate compared to the surveys in 2019 and 2021, which were 13.6% and 8.23%, respectively. One likely reason for the decline in response rate is that Ontario Works payments are now paperless, so surveys are no longer sent out with the cheques.

Of note, when asked if “Staff are friendly, courteous and helpful,” 96.1% of respondents agreed. This represents a significant increase from 85.2% who responded positively to this question in 2021. Responses to this question indicate an overall positive view of interactions with TBDSSAB OW program staff.

In response to the statement “staff show you how to fill out your Statement of Income,” 53.9% of respondents responded affirmatively, representing a decrease from 65.9% in 2021 and 76.7% in 2019. This decrease is likely due to TBDSSAB’s change to exception reporting in 2018 in which a participant only submits a statement of income where income is received. This question will be removed for the next survey cycle as the question no longer applies to most clients.

Question 8, which asked whether their caseworker has informed them about other programs or services, saw a significant increase in all categories compared to 2021. Responses to this question reflect ongoing progress toward integrated delivery of social services as well as referrals to community partners.

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This survey aligns with the 2020-23 Strategic Plan vision of needs-centered client focus.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no financial implications related to this report.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the 2023 OW Client Satisfaction Survey provides TBDSSAB with information related to the areas in which TBDSSAB staff excel and areas where services can be improved in the delivery of Ontario Works.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1 [2023 Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey Results](#)

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**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

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**2023 Ontario Works Client Satisfaction  
Survey Results**

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# Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

## Introduction

As part of the fulfillment of the Strategic Plan directive to enhance communication with clients, as well as to gauge the success of current initiatives and supports, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) conducted a survey of Ontario Works (OW) recipients in 2023. This builds on surveys conducted biannually since 2019.

## Survey Distribution

The survey was distributed on paper to allow for easier responses for clients without internet access. A survey package was included with Ontario Works mail, as well as made available at the front desk of all TBDSSAB offices. The package included a pre-paid return envelope, a draw ballot, and the survey along with a letter outlining the intentions of the data collection.

The survey was conducted during the months of June and July 2023, with a closing date of July 17th; however, surveys were accepted via the internal drop box and Canada Post business return mail for an additional week.

## Response Rate

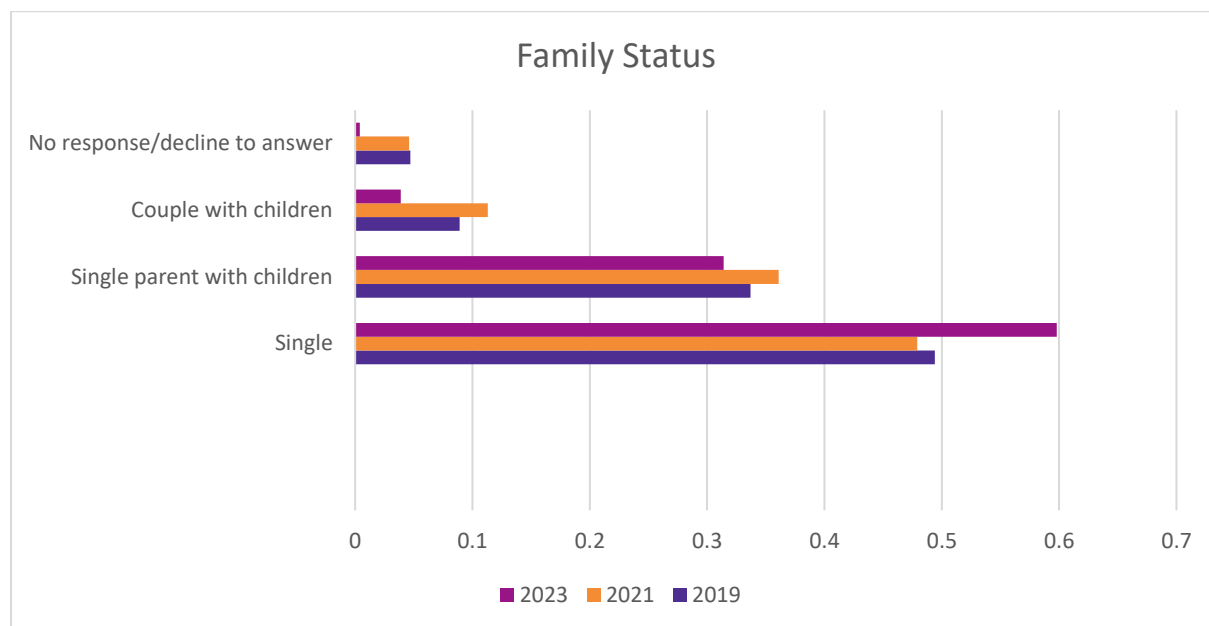
As of the end of the April, the official Ontario Works caseload was 2,714 clients. Surveys were distributed to all active individuals on the caseload. In total, 204 surveys were completed and returned to TBDSSAB, representing 7.5% of the total caseload, making the response rate not statistically significant. Therefore, the responses cannot be said to represent the entire Ontario Works caseload but reflect the individual opinions of those that chose to participate. There has been a downward trend in the OW Survey participation rate since 2019. As such, strategies for increased participation will need to be explored for the 2025 OW Survey.

## Response Analysis

### *Client Profile*

Similar to the previous survey, the majority of respondents identified as being single (59.8%), and there was a slight decrease in the number of single parents responding from the 2021 survey.

## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results



It is of note that clients identifying as single grew substantially, while there was also a significant decrease in the number of couples with children who responded.

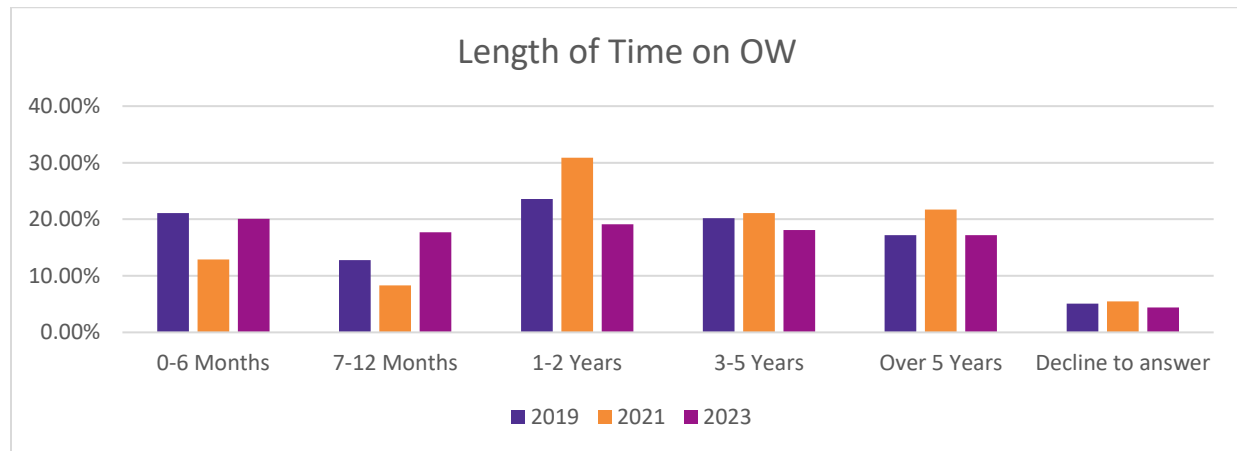
Age of Main Client	2019	2021	2023
Under 18 years	1.0%	0.4%	1.5%
18 – 24 years	9.8%	6.7%	5.9%
25 – 34 years	23.6%	26.8%	25.00%
35 – 44 years	23.1%	20.6%	24.5%
45 – 54 years	20.6%	17.1%	19.1%
55 – 64 years	17.4%	24.2%	20.6%
Over 65 years	3.2%	3.1%	1.5%
No response/decline to answer	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%

The age of the clients responding to the survey has stayed relatively consistent throughout the survey years with only a slight decrease in 2023 compared with 2021 for those aged 55-64.

### **Time Receiving Social Assistance**

There has been a large decrease in the number of individuals who have indicated that they have been receiving Ontario Works for over 12 months. In 2019, 61% of respondents had received Ontario Works for over 1 year. In 2021, this rose to 73.7%. However, in 2023, this has decreased to 54.4% of respondents.

## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

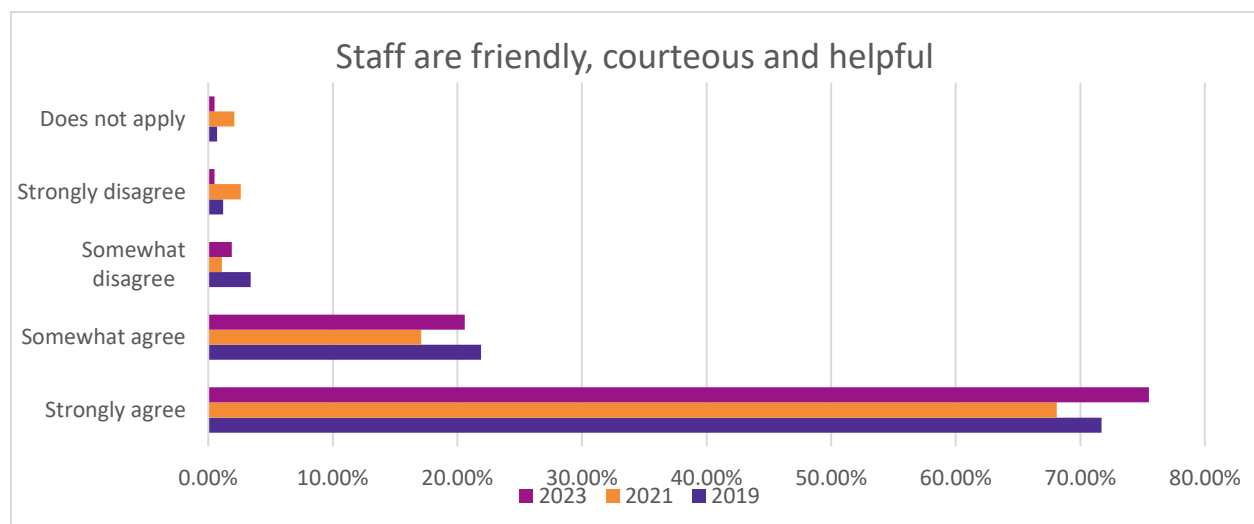


When asked how many times they had applied for Ontario Works assistance, 73.5% of respondents answered 2 or less. The answers on this question are consistent with the 2019 and the 2021 surveys.

How many times applied for OW	2019	2021	2023
One	51.1%	59.8%	51.9%
Two	20.6%	16.5%	21.6%
Three	8.4%	5.7%	10.3%
Four	2.0%	1.2%	0.5
Five+	4.1%	1.9%	3.4
Does not apply	13.8%	14.9%	9.3%

### Ontario Works Program Staff Questions

When asked if “Staff are friendly, courteous and helpful,” 96.1% of respondents agreed. This represents a significant increase from 85.2% who responded positively to this question in 2021. Responses to this question indicate an overall positive view of interactions with TBDSSAB OW program staff.



## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

For “staff are knowledgeable,” 92.7% of respondents answered favourably; this is a slight increase from 90.8% in 2021.

Staff are knowledgeable	2019	2021	2023
Strongly agree	63.9%	68.6%	67.7%
Somewhat agree	25.1%	22.2%	25.0%
Somewhat disagree	5.7%	2.6%	3.4%
Strongly disagree	1.5%	1.6%	0.9%
Does not apply	0.5%	1.6%	0.9%

For the statement “staff respect your culture,” 84.3% of respondents answered favourably; this is a significant increase from 75.8% in 2021.

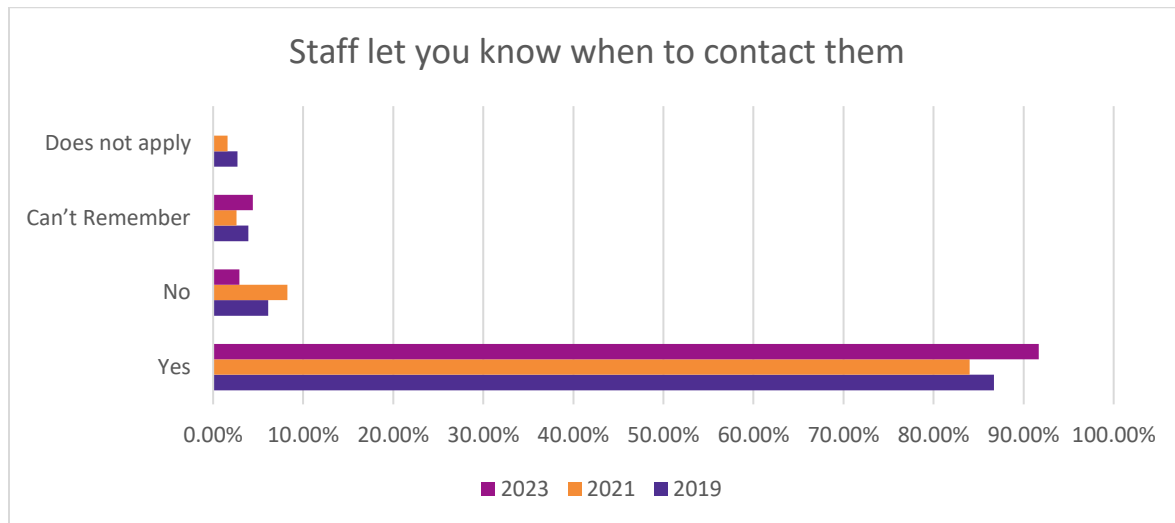


For the statement “staff protect your privacy,” respondents answered favourably 94.1% of the time. This is a slight increase from 90.7% in 2021.

Staff protect your privacy	2019	2021	2023
Strongly agree	71.7%	77.8%	80.9%
Somewhat agree	16.5%	12.9%	13.2%
Somewhat disagree	3.2%	0.5%	0.0%
Strongly disagree	2.2%	1.0%	1.5%
Does not apply	2.5%	4.1%	1.9%

For the statement “staff let you know when to contact them,” 91.7% of respondents answered affirmatively, showing an increase of 7.7% compared to 2021.

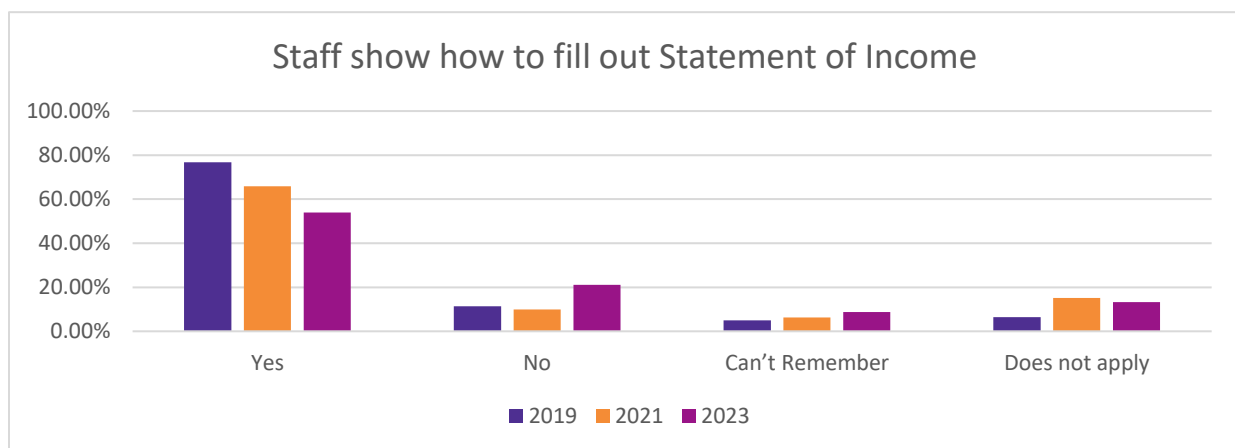
## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results



For the statement “staff explain when you need to report changes to circumstances,” 88.7% of respondents answered affirmatively.

Staff explain when you need to report changes to circumstances	2019	2021	2023
Yes	87.7%	88.7%	88.7%
No	4.9%	1.0%	3.9%
Can't Remember	3.4%	3.6%	1.5%
Does not apply	3.0%	3.6%	1.5%

For the statement “staff show you how to fill out your Statement of Income,” 53.9% of respondents responded affirmatively, representing a decrease from 65.9% in 2021 and 76.7% in 2019. TBDSSAB adopted exception reporting in 2018 in which a participant only submits a statement of income where income is received.



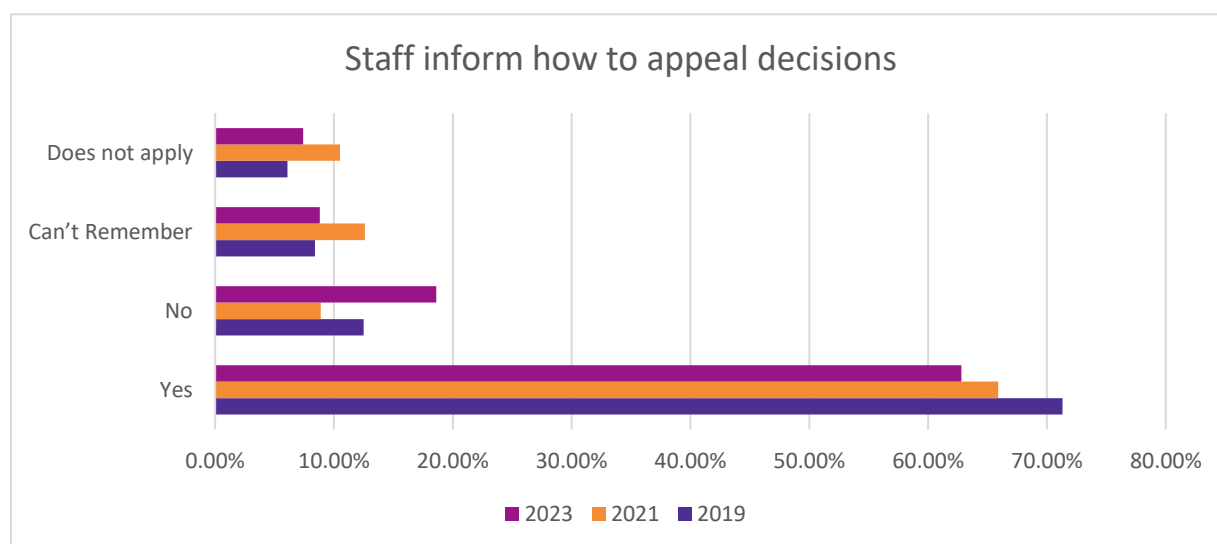
For the statement “staff explain your rights and responsibilities,” 84.8% of respondents answered affirmatively, showing a slight increase compared with 2021.



## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

Staff explain your rights and responsibilities	2019	2021	2023
Yes	88.9%	83.8%	84.8%
No	5.7%	2.6%	4.9%
Can't Remember	3.2%	7.9%	6.7%
Does not apply	1.5%	4.2%	0.5%

For the statement “staff inform you of how to appeal decisions you disagree with,” 62.8% of respondents answered affirmatively, continuing a downward trend from 65.9% in 2021 and 71.3% in 2019. This downward trend may be due in part to reduced face-to-face interactions in 2020 related to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the implementation of Centralized Intake in 2021. A closer look at contributing factors as well as any opportunities for improvement will be explored in 2024.



The following table outlines responses for all survey respondents when asked if “your caseworker told you about any of the following.” While it is important to note that some of these topics would not be applicable to all clients, there has been a fairly substantial increase in every category in this question.

Has your caseworker told you about any of the following: <sup>1</sup>	2019 Yes	2021 Yes	2023 Yes
OW Employment Programs	49.4%	36.1%	70.1%
ODSP	33.1%	29.9%	43.1%
Community Employment Programs	21.7%	24.2%	41.3%
Education Programs	25.1%	26.3%	34.8%
Child Support	15.1%	9.8%	16.2%
Child Care Costs	15.6%	14.4%	19.6%
Subsidized Housing	33.3%	24.2%	40.2%

<sup>1</sup> Note - Respondents could choose more than one option. Totals will not add to 100%.

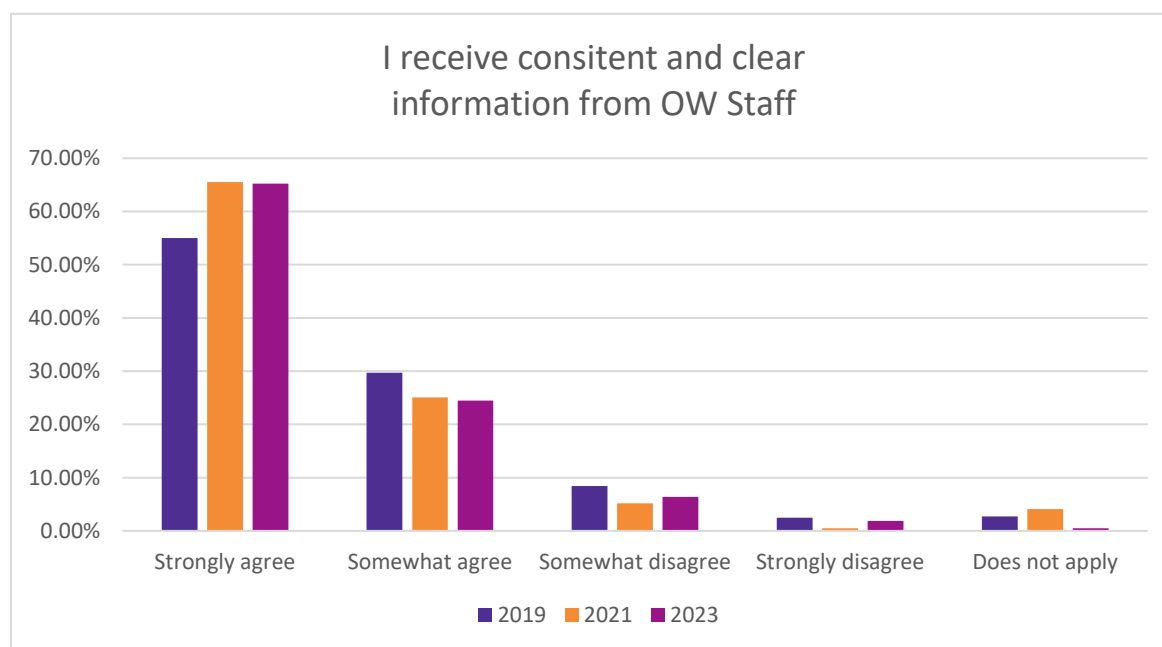
## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

Community Health Programs	17.5%	18.1%	29.4%
No Response	20.2%	40.2%	16.3%

When asked if clients knew who to contact in case of a question or issue, 92.6% responded favourably, which is a small increase from 89.1% in 2021.

I know who to get in touch with if I have a question or problem	2019	2021	2023
Strongly agree	67.1%	70.3%	76.9%
Somewhat agree	26.0%	18.8%	15.7%
Somewhat disagree	3.4%	2.1%	3.4%
Strongly disagree	1.5%	1.0%	1.5%
Does not apply	1.0%	1.0%	0.5%

When asked if they receive consistent and clear information from OW staff, 89.7% responded positively. This has decreased slightly from 90.6% in 2021.



When asked if things are well explained, 90.2% of respondents answered positively, but this still represents a slight decrease from 92.2% in 2021.

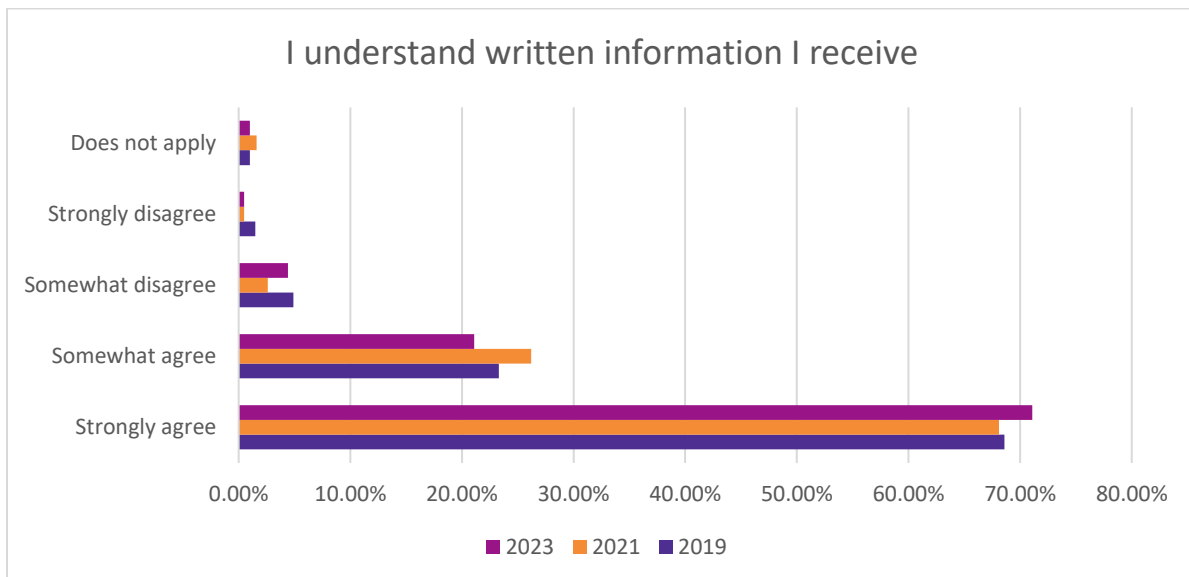
Things are well explained to me	2019	2021	2023
Strongly agree	61.9%	63.9%	64.2%
Somewhat agree	25.8%	28.3%	26.0%
Somewhat disagree	7.1%	3.7%	5.9%
Strongly disagree	3.0%	1.1%	1.0%
Does not apply	1.2%	2.1%	1.0%

## Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey 2023 Results

When asked if they were informed about what to bring to appointments, 95.5% responded positively, indicating clients feel prepared for appointments. This represents a small increase from 93.1% in 2021.

I know what information I need to bring to my appointment	2019	2021	2023
Strongly agree	73.5%	72.6%	76.9%
Somewhat agree	20.9%	20.5%	18.6%
Somewhat disagree	2.7%	2.1%	2.4%
Strongly disagree	1.0%	0.5%	0%
Does not apply	1.2%	4.2%	0.5%

When asked if they understand the written information TBDSSAB provides, 91.9% of clients responded positively; this indicator remains constant from 2021.



## Conclusion

The results of the 2023 OW Client Satisfaction Survey indicate that social assistance recipients are predominantly positive about the quality of service they receive from TBDSSAB staff. The results of this survey also present an opportunity to continue improving the quality of service for OW clients throughout the District of Thunder Bay, especially in the clarity and consistency of information being provided to clients.