

MFC
2015 Client Satisfaction Survey
Elected Officials

The 2015 Client Satisfaction Survey for Elected Officials was distributed to Mayors, Wardens, Deputy Mayors, Deputy Wardens, and Councillors via the UNSM listserv. Of the over 400 elected officials asked to complete the survey, 62 elected officials responded. This provides a 15% response rate, on par with 2013's survey results of 15.29% but down from 20% in 2010. A prize draw was offered with this year's survey to try to improve results but there was little to no difference in participation among elected officials. This response rate could have been affected by the timing of the survey as a number of other surveys had recently been released and respondents may have been tired of being asked to complete them.

Demographics

The respondents were asked to identify their role in municipal government. Of the 62 respondents, 53% were Councillors, 14% were Mayors, 7% were Deputy Mayors, 19% were Wardens, and 7% were Deputy Wardens. Of the elected officials who responded to this survey, 41% were from Towns; 57% were from Rural Municipalities; and 2% were from Regional Municipalities. This represents a departure from the 2013 survey as more rural municipalities and their respective elected officials participated than their counterparts from towns than the previous survey.

Future Financing Requirements

In a new question, the 2015 survey asked respondents to pick the top 3 projects they would be interested in financing through the MFC in the up-coming year. Chart 1 summarizes their responses.

Chart 1 – Future Projects		
1.	Water	30%
2.	Streets	37%
3.	Buildings	53%
4.	Culture/tourism/sport/recreation infrastructure	42%
5.	Equipment	26%
6.	Sewage Treatment	47%
7.	Other	19%

This information is useful to the Corporation because it captures the financing requests to expect this year. Asking this question on future surveys would also provide information on what infrastructure needs exist in municipalities over time.

Elected Officials' Knowledge of MFC

The first questions asked in the survey were designed to determine the respondents' level of knowledge of MFC. The responses are in the chart below, along with a comparison to the 2013 survey results for applicable questions.

Chart 2 – Knowledge of MFC			
Did You Know...?	Yes	No	Change since 2013
1. Municipalities are required to borrow from MFC for capital loans?	84%	16%	+ 3%
2. MFC offers loans with various terms (e.g. 3, 5, 10 or 15 years) to municipalities?	95%	5%	+ 9%
3. MFC can provide short-term bridge financing for capital projects?	81%	19%	+ 1%
4. MFC's long-term interest rates are lower than financial institutions' rates?	91%	9%	+ 23%
5. MFC offers programs other than capital financing?	31%	69%	+ 6%
6. MFC can help your staff to research and draft policies based on financial management best practices for free?	59%	41%	N/A
7. MFC sponsors, up to \$2500 of total conference costs, a municipal finance professional to attend the annual Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) conference?	19%	81%	N/A
8. Fire departments may be eligible to borrow from MFC?	47%	53%	N/A
9. Villages and municipal enterprises require a municipal guarantee to borrow from MFC?	65%	35%	N/A

There is a clear improvement in awareness for questions 1-5; particularly that MFC offers interest rates that are lower than financial institutions' rates. There continues to be significant room for improvement in raising awareness that MFC offers programs and services other than capital financing, however.

This year's survey also posed four new questions (6-9). The majority of elected officials were not aware of MFC's GFOA Sponsorship Program or that fire departments may be eligible to borrow from MFC. Raising awareness of these services may help to increase uptake of these programs as well.

Requests for Site Visits

Respondents were asked if they would like a representative from MFC to give a face-to-face presentation to Council on any or all of the listed topics. The respondents were able to select as many options as they wanted.

1.	MFC – Who we are and What we do	44%
2.	Financial Best Practices	37%
3.	Municipal Finance	44%
4.	Debt Affordability Model	51%
5.	Temporary Borrowing Resolution	37%
6.	Issuing Long-Term Debt	21%

As indicated in chart 3, half of the respondents elected to have a presentation on the Debt Affordability Model, followed closely by either a presentation on what MFC does (44%) or general municipal finance topics (44%).

Communication with MFC

The 2015 survey gathered new data on the main sources of information on the MFC for elected officials. According to this year's results, the most common sources are the staff at elected officials' own municipality (77%), UNSM mail outs (53%), the MFC booth at the UNSM Fall Convention (53%) and staff at the Department of Municipal Affairs (40%).

A follow-up question was also posed about the UNSM Fall Convention booth. Every year, MFC sponsors an exhibit booth at the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) Fall Convention at the Westin Hotel in Halifax. The MFC booth offers various forms of information and has a prime location but is challenged to attract visitors to the table. Elected officials were asked for their feedback in this survey to determine what kind of information to provide to visitors in the future.

1.	Brochures on MFC programs and services	91%
2.	Information on the debenture process and how to arrange for temporary borrowing resolutions	51%
3.	Copies of our Annual Report	35%
4.	Applications for GFOA sponsorship	60%
5.	Testimonials from municipalities who have implemented our Financial Management Best Practices	42%
6.	Sign-up sheet for presentations to Council on the MFC	56%
7.	Information on the Debt Affordability Model	72%

As the findings in chart 4 attest, the most in-demand items are brochures on MFC programs and services, information on the Debt Affordability Model, and applications for the GFOA sponsorship program. This information will be useful in devising a more effective strategy for attracting visitors to the UNSM booth at the up-coming Fall Convention.

Finally, MFC has been exploring the use of information technology to disseminate information to elected officials. However, none of the respondents had visited the MFC's updated website yet. Additionally, 98% were not aware of the Corporation's new brand either. The majority of respondents (51%) were also not interested in using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) to access information on MFC. These results should drive MFC's strategy for raising awareness with elected officials in the future and indicate the most effective ways of disseminating information to this key stakeholder audience.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of elected officials (60%) reported being either very satisfied or satisfied with the products offered by MFC. Interestingly, however, the other 40% were neutral on this question. This finding may suggest that elected officials still lack awareness of MFC and what it does for municipalities. Although the elected officials who responded to this survey were relatively well-informed about MFC, there is still some room to improve communication and education, particularly about MFC's services beyond long-term financing. Despite the level of knowledge, many elected officials appear to be very interested in learning more about MFC, if not only for themselves, but for their Councils as well.