

MFC 2017 Client Satisfaction Survey Elected Officials

The 2017 Client Satisfaction Survey for Elected Officials was distributed to Mayors, Wardens, Deputy Mayors, Deputy Wardens, and Councillors via the UNSM listserv as well as to the village commissioners through a direct email. The response rate was 27%. A prize draw was again offered which achieved a higher response rate compared to our highest response in 2010 (20%). The number of actual individuals who participated might have been affected by turnover in the October municipal elections which saw a 40% turnover in councillors.

Demographics

The respondents were asked to identify their role in municipal government. 62% were Councillors, 5% were Mayors, 8% were Deputy Mayors, 5% were Wardens, 5% were Deputy Wardens, 5% were Village Chairs and 10% were Village Commissioners. Of the elected officials who responded to this survey, 45% were from Towns; 32% were from Rural Municipalities; 8% were from Regional Municipalities, and 15% were from Villages.

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 2015 survey results for applicable questions.

Chart 2 – Knowledge of MFC			
Did You Know...?	Yes	No	Change since 2015
1. Municipalities are required to borrow from MFC for capital loans?	32%	68%	-52%
2. MFC offers loans with various terms (e.g. 3, 5, 10 or 15 years) to municipalities?	100%	0%	+5%
3. MFC can provide short-term bridge financing for capital projects?	88%	12%	+9%
4. MFC's long-term interest rates are lower than financial institutions' rates?	95%	5%	+4%
5. MFC offers programs other than capital financing?	88%	12%	+57%
6. MFC can help your staff to research and draft policies based	87%	13%	+28%

on financial management best practices for free?			
7. MFC has a tool (Debt Affordability Model) that can be used to assist councils in making sound long term financial decisions using current information, past trends and future projections?	100%	0%	N/A
8. MFC sponsors a municipal finance professional to attend the annual Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) every year, up to \$2,500?	87%	13%	+68%

There is a clear improvement in awareness for questions 2-6; particularly that MFC offers programs, can assist with policy research and the sponsorship to the annual GFOA Conference. However, there has been a significant drop in requirement to borrow from MFC, possibly due to the federal government stating they will be setting up an infrastructure bank soon

Communication with MFC

The 2017 survey gathered data on the main sources of information on the MFC for elected officials. Per this year's results, the most common sources are the MFC booth at the UNSM Fall Convention (50%), the staff at elected officials' own municipality (46%), UNSM mail outs (35%), and staff at the Department of Municipal Affairs (21%).

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.

Chart 4 – UNSM Booth		
1.	Brochures on MFC programs and services	72%
2.	Information on the debenture process and how to arrange for temporary borrowing resolutions	56%
3.	Information on the Debt Affordability Model	54%
4.	Testimonials from municipalities who have implemented our Financial Management Best Practices	52%
5.	Copies of our Annual Report	24%
6.	Applications for GFOA sponsorship	46%

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

Conclusion

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.