

Student Financial Assistance
2010 Client Satisfaction Survey

NWT Bureau of Statistics

June 2010

Student Financial Assistance 2010 Client Satisfaction Survey Highlights & Methodology

Introduction

The NWT Bureau of Statistics was contracted by the Department of Education, Culture & Employment (ECE) to conduct a client satisfaction survey with recipients of Student Financial Assistance (SFA). The questionnaire was designed by the NWT Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with staff from the Income Security Programs Division of ECE and the survey was conducted in March 2010.

The first part of this report highlights the findings of the survey, the second part documents the methodology and the full set of statistical tables may be found in Appendix A.

Highlights

Overall, 95% of students were very satisfied or satisfied with the services provided by SFA. Looking at overall levels of satisfaction by various characteristics, there was not a great deal of variation between demographic groups.

Students are predominantly applying for SFA using a paper application (83%) as opposed to on-line applications. Generally, students agreed that it was easy to apply for SFA, it was clear what information was needed to apply, the applications were processed in a timely manner and the SFA application deadlines were clear.

Of the SFA recipients who contacted SFA staff within the past 6 months, 36% were very satisfied and 58% were satisfied with the response times for questions. About 41% were very satisfied with SFA staff's knowledge of the program and nearly 37% were very satisfied with the way staff explained answers. Very few were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with SFA staff service.

SFA has stated customer service objectives with respect to wait times for appointments and response times for e-mails and telephone calls. Of those who had an appointment with SFA staff in the past 6 months, 64% were seen within 15 minutes of their scheduled time most of the time. Of the students who sent e-mails to SFA staff in the past 6 months, 77% received responses within 2 business days most of the time. Finally, of those who left telephone messages, slightly more than 63% had phone calls returned within 2 business days most of the time.

In order to gauge the utility of SFA resources, respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the student handbook, the newsletter and the website. While 44% found the website to be very useful, only 26% found the student handbook to be very useful. Nearly 35% felt the newsletter was somewhat useful, however 44% had never used the newsletter. Similarly, 32% had never used the student handbook.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of students (78%) indicated that e-mail was the best method to communicate with them.

The final question on the survey allowed respondents to comment about their experiences with the services provided by SFA. There were numerous comments with the vast majority expressing gratitude for the SFA program and complimenting the quality of service from SFA staff.

There were also some respondents who were not pleased with the level of customer service as they had issues with late cheques, SFA staff not responding in a timely manner or difficulties reaching staff. Clarification was sought with respect to actual deposit times for cheque dates, particularly when the date falls on a weekend.

Many respondents suggested improvements be made to the website to make it more user-friendly with up-to-date information. Further, the on-line application forms could have a user guide and a checklist to ensure all steps are completed for the application process.

A number of respondents commented on the length of the SFA application form and suggested a simplified form with fewer details for students re-applying for SFA.

The full results of the survey may be found in Appendix A: Statistical Tables.

Methodology

The survey was designed to be a sample survey with the Internet as the initial mode of delivery, followed by a telephone call. The Internet application was developed by the NWT Bureau of Statistics including the underlying database and the administrative tools.

A sample of 450 students was randomly selected from all students who had received SFA in the previous 6 months. After the initial e-mail invitation was sent out, two more reminders e-mails were sent; the remaining respondents completed the survey via telephone interview. In total, there were 362 respondents yielding a response rate of 80%.

The data were exported to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and weighted to the SFA population by age, sex and ethnicity. Due to the use of weighting procedures and the removal of the 'not stated' categories, totals for tables do not necessarily sum.

Any sample survey has both sampling errors and non-sampling errors. While the extent of the non-sampling errors is difficult to measure, it is hoped that the design of the questionnaire and operational procedures work to minimize these errors. Sampling errors may be measured using standard statistical procedures. After examining the coefficients of variation for selected results, proportions of less than 10% should be used with caution. Where possible, values have been grouped to decrease the number of cells with these small proportions.

Appendix A:
Statistical Tables

Table 1
Method of Applying for Student Financial Assistance
No. of Students

	No. of Students	%
Total Students	1,301	100.0
On-line	216	16.6
Paper	1,078	82.9
Not stated	7	0.5

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Table 2
Clarity and Ease of Application Process
No. of Students

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Strongly Agree</u>		<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</u>	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
It was easy to apply for Student Financial Assistance	1,301	100.0	445	34.2	770	59.2	86	6.6
It was clear what information was needed to apply	1,301	100.0	446	34.3	765	58.8	90	6.9
The application was processed in a timely manner	1,301	100.0	421	32.4	730	56.1	149	11.5
Student Financial Assistance application deadlines are clear	1,301	100.0	616	47.3	604	46.4	79	6.1

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Please Note: Totals include 'not stated' answers to questions, therefore, the sum of the components may not exactly equal the totals.

Table 3
Contact with SFA Staff in the past 6 Months
No. of Students

	No. of Students	%
Total Students	1,301	100.0
Less than 6 Times	863	66.3
6 - 12 Times	183	14.0
More than 12 times	40	3.0
Did not contact SFA in past 6 months	216	16.6

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Table 4**Satisfaction with SFA Staff**

No. of Students who had contact with SFA Staff in past 6 months

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Very Satisfied</u>		<u>Satisfied</u>		<u>Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied</u>	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Time to respond to questions	1,086	100.0	385	35.5	626	57.6	75	6.9
SFA staff's knowledge of the program	1,086	100.0	445	41.0	553	50.9	83	7.6
The way staff explained answers	1,086	100.0	397	36.6	569	52.4	119	11.0

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Please Note: Totals include 'not stated' answers to questions, therefore, the sum of the components may not exactly equal the totals.

Table 5
SFA Customer Service Objectives
No. of Students who had Appointments, Sent E-mails or Left Telephone Messages

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Most of the Time</u>		<u>Some of the Time</u>		<u>Not Very Often</u>	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Seen for Appointments with 15 minutes of scheduled time	188	100.0	121	64.4	34	18.1	33	17.6
Receive responses to email messages within 2 business days	778	100.0	601	77.2	123	15.8	54	6.9
Receive responses to telephone messages within 2 business days	506	100.0	321	63.4	94	18.6	91	18.0

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Table 6
Usefulness of SFA Resources
No. of Students

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Very Useful</u>		<u>Somewhat Useful</u>		<u>Not Useful</u>		<u>Never Used</u>	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
<i>Usefulness of SFA...</i>										
Student handbook	1,301	100.0	332	25.5	507	38.9	39	3.0	419	32.2
Newsletter	1,301	100.0	165	12.7	455	34.9	105	8.1	572	44.0
Website	1,301	100.0	567	43.6	471	36.2	72	5.6	186	14.3

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Please Note: Totals include 'not stated' answers to questions, therefore, the sum of the components may not exactly equal the totals.

Table 7
Best Methods of Communication
No. of Students

	No. of Students	%
Total	1,301	100.0
E-mail	1,024	78.7
Phone	234	18.0
Other	43	3.3

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Table 8
Overall Levels of Satisfaction
No. of Students

	No. of Students	%
Total	1,301	100.0
Very Satisfied	535	41.2
Satisfied	695	53.4
Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	66	4.5

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Table 9
Satisfaction Levels by Characteristics of Students
No. of Students

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Very Satisfied</u>		<u>Satisfied</u>	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Total	1,301	100.0	535	41.1	695	53.4
Male	431	100.0	194	45.0	210	48.7
Female	870	100.0	342	39.3	485	55.7
Less than 20 Years	266	100.0	128	48.1	124	46.6
20 - 24 Years	590	100.0	246	41.7	321	54.4
25 - 29 Years	220	100.0	90	40.9	118	53.6
30 years or older	225	100.0	71	31.6	133	59.1
Aboriginal	594	100.0	216	36.4	335	56.4
Non-Aboriginal	706	100.0	320	45.3	360	51.0
In the NWT	443	100.0	154	34.8	263	59.4
Outside the NWT	853	100.0	377	44.2	432	50.6
Less than 1 Year	596	100.0	243	40.8	309	51.8
1 - 2 Years	299	100.0	135	45.2	161	53.8
3 - 4 Years	279	100.0	114	40.9	151	54.1
More than 4 years	125	100.0	43	34.4	74	59.2

Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics

Please Note:

1. The numbers for 'Very Dissatisfied' and 'Dissatisfied' were too small to be produced in this table, however they are included in the totals.
2. Totals also include 'not stated' answers to questions.