

2010 Client Satisfaction Survey Municipal Administrators

The 2010 Client Satisfaction Survey for Municipal Administrators was directed specifically at municipal administrators in Nova Scotia, either a Chief Administrative Officer, Clerk/Treasurer, or Director Finance. The respondents were asked to complete a survey based on their interaction with the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC), how they perceived their level of service, their opinion on various current and potential services, and any suggestions they may be able to offer. Of the 55 municipalities to potentially complete the Municipal Administrators Survey, 24 municipalities responded, providing a 44% response rate.

Demographics

Of the respondents who completed the survey, 65% were from Towns; 30% were from Rural Municipalities; and 5% were from Regional Municipalities. Those who completed the survey indicated that they participate in MFC debenture issues frequently, with 82% respondents having borrowed from MFC within the last two years and 87% of the respondents borrowing on a regular basis. Those who completed the survey appear to be familiar with MFC and typically borrow through MFC. This is beneficial to the survey results because these are administrators who are familiar with MFC, and can help provide an informed opinion on suggestions and improvements.

Section I: Communication and Satisfaction

The first section of the survey was developed to determine if municipal administrators were satisfied with their level of communication and contact with MFC. The most common answer indicated that they contact MFC 3-5 times a year (42%), typically contacting MFC about information on debenture pricing (16 respondents - 67%) and information on the debenture process (14 respondents - 58%). Given the amount of contact that these respondents had with MFC, the respondents indicated a positive response of 92%, indicating that they were either Very Satisfied (54%) or Satisfied (38%) with the products and services provided by MFC.

Section II: Debenture Process

The second section of the survey asked the respondents for their opinion of MFC's debenture process and staff's knowledge of the debenture process. The majority of respondents (80%) indicated that the current debenture schedule of twice a year (Spring and Fall) met their needs. A positive response was also received with 87% of respondents indicating that they either Strongly Agreed or Agreed that MFC was flexible enough to meet their needs.

When surveyed about MFC's turnaround time from the pricing of the debenture to the time the municipality received its funds, the responses were positive. Of the 24 respondents, 70% indicated that they either Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the turnaround time was reasonable, while 22% were Neutral and 9% of the respondents Disagreed that the turnaround time was reasonable.

The responses regarding Municipal Administrator's interaction with MFC staff surrounding their queries and questions surrounding the debenture issues were very positive. No respondents Disagreed or

Strongly Disagreed when asked if MFC were knowledgeable and responses regarding the debenture process were received in a timely manner. The respondents were asked if MFC staff was knowledgeable regarding the debenture process, and 43% Strongly Agreed, and 52% Agreed, providing a 95% positive response. The respondents were also asked if their questions about the debenture process were answered in a timely manner, 35% Strongly Agreed and 61% Agreed, providing a 86% positive response.

Section III: MFC Products and Services

The third section of the survey was designed to determine the respondents’ opinion of the services that are offered by MFC and other services that have been considered to be offered by MFC. These answers can help us determine any appetite for maintaining or taking on different products and services. The following is a list of products and services that were provided, with the levels of response:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Short-Term Financing of Capital Projects	22%	39%	35%	4%	0%
Pooled Investments	9%	22%	65%	4%	0%
Pooled Leasing	9%	13%	65%	13%	0%
Training of Municipal Finance	22%	39%	35%	4%	0%
Long-Term Capital Financial Planning	22%	52%	17%	9%	0%
Sponsorship of Municipal Administrators Conferences	17%	48%	35%	0%	0%
More Flexible Debenture Process	13%	57%	35%	0%	0%
Training on Financial Management and Capacity Building Committee’s Best Practices	17%	43%	39%	0%	0%
Training of the Debt Affordability Model	17%	48%	30%	0%	0%

Based on these results, most respondents agreed MFC should offering training, especially in the field of Municipal Finance. The respondents also agreed in having more short-term financing options and a more flexible debenture process. The respondents positively responded to MFC offering long-term capital financial planning as well. Most respondents indicated that they were Neutral in MFC offering pooled investments and pooled leasing.

Section IV: Other Financial Programs

This section was designed to determine how well MFC promotes is programs and services, aside from the Fall and Spring Debenture. The respondents were asked about our Short-Term Borrowing Program, the Federation of Canadian Municipality’s Green Fund Program, the Government Finance Officers Association Sponsorship Program, the Financial Management Capacity Building Committee, and the Debt Affordability Model. Most respondents indicated that they were aware of these programs, but did not use them. Of the responses that indicated that they were not aware of the program, they did indicate that they think they have some benefit.

The second part of this section was to determine how the respondents heard about the programs and services that were known to them. Most respondents have become aware of MFC's programs and services through a notification on the Association of Municipal Administrator's (AMA) list serve and through one-on-one visits with MFC staff. The presentations made at Regional AMA meetings and MFC presentations at AMA Conferences and Workshops were ranked as the next highest method of hearing about the program or service, with posts on the MFC's website being the least selected option for how the respondent heard about the program or service. From these responses, the most effective method to communicate with municipal administrators is through the AMA list serve and through one-on-one visits, with posting information on the MFC website being the least effective.

Section V: Services Offered by MFC

The fifth section of the survey was designed to determine the respondent's opinion on any future products and services that MFC may undertake. The respondents were asked if MFC should be more innovative in the capital financing options it offers, and while no respondents indicated that they Disagreed with the statement, 52% of the respondents answered that they were Neutral. The remaining respondents indicated that they Agreed and Strongly Agreed with 43% and 9% respectively. Although none of the respondents were overly opposed to more innovative capital financing options, there was not an overwhelming response to pursue this endeavor further.

The second question asked the respondents if they considered MFC to be a valuable organization that provides long-term capital financing for municipalities. Overwhelming, 70% of the respondents indicated that they Strongly Agree, and 30% Agreed that MFC is valuable. The respondents made it clear that MFC does provide a role for municipalities in Nova Scotia for long-term capital financing.

Conclusion

The respondents who completed this survey provided MFC with useful information. It is clear that the municipal administrators who completed the survey are pleased with the services they are receiving from MFC and its staff members. There is room for MFC to improve in terms of advertising its programs and services, especially with communicating the benefits of the programs and services to municipal administrators so they can be utilized more frequently. Furthermore, municipal administrators appear to be pleased with the twice a year debenture issue pricing, and relatively pleased with the flexibility that MFC has to offer. With 44% of municipal administrator's completing the survey, this provides MFC with an accurate indication of how Nova Scotia municipalities view MFC.