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Canada Child Benefit Program: 2023-2024 Satisfaction Survey

Executive Summary

Prepared for the Canada Revenue Agency

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Canada 

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May 2024

This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey conducted by The Strategic Counsel on behalf of Canada Revenue Agency. The research study was conducted with 1,001 Canada child benefit (CCB) recipients between January 18th and January 29th, 2024.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre: **Programme de l'Allocation canadienne pour enfants : Sondage sur la satisfaction de 2023-2024**

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Executive Summary

A. Background and Objectives

1. Background

The Canada child benefit (CCB) is a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising a child under 18 years of age. The CCB can also include the child disability benefit and any related provincial or territorial programs.

Eligible recipients of the CCB must meet the following criteria:

- Living with the child, and the child must be under 18 years of age;
- Primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the child;
- A resident of Canada for tax purposes; and
- They, their spouse or common-law partner must be:
 - o A Canadian citizen
 - o A permanent resident
 - o A protected person
 - o A temporary resident who has lived in Canada for the previous 18 months, and who has a valid permit in the 19th month
 - o An Indigenous person who meets the definition of “Indian” under the *Indian Act*

Other factors such as household income, as well as the age and number of children can determine the amount that one receives.

2. Study Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to gauge client awareness and satisfaction with program initiatives and deliverables and to populate results against a ‘client satisfaction’ indicator in departmental performance reports. The results will also be used by various program areas within the Benefit Programs Directorate (BPD) to improve programs, services, and communications based on a better understanding of benefit and credit clients.

B. Methodology

A 10-minute online survey was administered to 1,001 direct CCB recipients, aged 18 and older.

To ensure the sample was representative of the Canadian population, an online probability-based panel was employed with quotas set by region. Given the lower incidence of CCB recipients within the adult population, no formal quotas were set by gender, age, size of household or household income.

Based on a population of 3.44 million CCB recipients in Canada, a confidence interval and confidence level of 95%, the margin of error is 3%. The fieldwork was conducted between January 18th and 29th, 2024.

C. Summary of Key Findings

While CCB recipients generally rate the CRA positively on various aspects of their experience related to the CCB, these levels of satisfaction do vary considerably (a difference of 30 points between the highest and lowest satisfaction scores).

Higher satisfaction scores are associated with the overall experience from application through to receipt of payments, as well as the timeliness of the first CCB payment, CRA’s efforts to safeguard recipients’ personal information, and the accuracy of responses received for those who contacted the CRA over the last year. Somewhat lower satisfaction scores were given regarding the accuracy of information provided in the last CCB notice which was used to calculate the benefit amount. And the lowest satisfaction rating is associated with the timeliness of issue resolution for those recipients who had been in touch with CRA regarding CCB services. On this aspect of service delivery just over one-quarter indicate being dissatisfied, well above levels of dissatisfaction registered in the other areas examined.

Satisfaction with CCB and Related Services

Satisfaction with CCB and Related Services	Net Satisfied (% Somewhat/Very Satisfied)	Net Dissatisfied (% Somewhat/Very Dissatisfied)
The time it took to get your first CCB payment (n=45)*	84	4
The safeguards that were in place to protect your personal and business information (n=71)**	76	7
Overall interactions with the CRA regarding the CCB (including the application, notices, receipt of payments) (n=1,001)	72	4
Accuracy of the response you received (n=71)**	72	14
The accuracy of the information on the last CCB notice which was used to calculate your benefit (n=1,001)	69	6
How quickly your issue was resolved (n=71)**	54	27

*Asked only of first-time recipients.

**Recipients who contacted CRA regarding CCB services within the past 12 months.

While just over **two-thirds (69%) are satisfied with the accuracy of information on their last CCB notice**, slightly more concur that the information is clear and comprehensible. Just under **three-quarters (72%) describe the information on CCB notices as being easy to understand**.

By comparison, far **fewer (52%) of those who contacted CRA within the last 12 months (just 7% of the total sample or n=71 respondents) say that accessing CCB services is easy**, based on their most recent interaction. In fact, almost one-third (31%) described this experience as difficult. It is notable that most who had contacted the CRA within the last 12 months had done so either by telephone (59%) or online (46%), while relatively few connected with the CRA by mail (8%). Most commonly, these recipients indicated that their main reason for reaching out to CRA was to update information on their file, such as their address or marital status, for example (46%).

CRA’s **online and telephone services are rated reasonably well** by the small proportion of CCB recipients who had used these services over the last year. About six-in-ten (61%) of those who went online to contact the CRA rate each of four aspects of CRA’s online services as good or very good: ease of understanding, completeness/thoroughness, accessibility, and helpfulness. By comparison, positive ratings of two specific

aspects of CRA’s telephone services are similar or slightly higher – 74% of those who contacted the CRA are somewhat or very satisfied with the professionalism of the agent, and 69% are satisfied with the way the agent resolved their issue.

Recipients were asked a series of questions to gauge their awareness of various aspects of and requirements related to the CCB, as well as options for managing and accessing their CCB online. Results show **a high degree of variability in levels of awareness, from just 3% who recall receiving a questionnaire about their child’s custody arrangement to 95% who are aware of the requirement to complete and file a tax return in order to be able to receive CCB payments.**

As the chart below illustrates, awareness levels of some aspects of CRA’s online services related to CCB are fairly modest (i.e., the MyBenefits web-based app, the ability to pay CCB balances owing online through CRA or at a bank, and the fact that the CCB is adjusted yearly to keep pace with the cost of living).

Awareness and Recall of Various Features and Requirements Related to the CCB

Awareness and Recall of Various Features and Requirements Related to the CCB	Awareness/Recall (% Yes)*
The requirement to file a tax return to continue receiving CCB payments	95
You can update your personal information for benefit and credit purposes online through My Account	79
You can use the MyBenefits CRA web-based app to get a quick view of your benefit and credit payment details, and your eligibility information	62
You can pay any CCB balances owed using the CRA online My Payment service or online banking	57
The CCB amount is raised each July to keep up with the cost of living	50
Recall having received a questionnaire from the CRA in the past 12 months asking for proof of child’s custody arrangement	3**

*These questions were asked of the full sample of respondents (n=1,001)

**Of the small number (n=31) who received the questionnaire, about as many said it was easy to complete (42%) as said it was difficult (39%). The volume of information requested was a concern for those who did not feel it was very easy to fill out.

Notably, many respondents indicate that they first heard about the CCB through staff at the hospital or birthing centre (23%) and/or word-of-mouth (18%) via a friend or family member. In future, **while the hospital remains a key channel for a significant portion of respondents (38%), there is a strong preference to shift online for any subsequent applications** – fully 42% say they would use the secure portal My Account.

Finally, recipients overwhelmingly believe the CCB makes a difference in their lives. With respect to the overall impact of the CCB, most (74%) say it has had at least a moderate impact on their monthly budget, including 54% who indicate it has had a high to significant impact. This is particularly the case for racialized groups, persons with a disability, single parents, and lower income households (with annual incomes under \$60,000).

D. Conclusions

Overall, the results with respect to recipients' awareness and understanding of CCB and their experiences interacting with CRA regarding the CCB are reasonably good, although there are evident opportunities to improve in certain areas. Specifically, a push on communications regarding the online platform, both for applying for the benefit and for managing CCB benefits and credits on an ongoing basis is warranted to boost general awareness. There is also an opportunity to enhance recipients' awareness of yearly cost of living increases to the CCB. Doing so would likely reinforce the perceived impact of the CCB and, indirectly, could have an ameliorative effect on general satisfaction with the program and experience.

In developing communications related to the CCB, differences across regions, by language and other socio-economic factors with respect to aspects of the experience should be taken into account. For example, CCB recipients who speak French and/or who reside in Quebec are less positive in their ratings of the CRA in areas such as ease of understanding of information on CCB notices. Quebec-based recipients also exhibit lower levels of awareness of some aspects of the CRA's online service offering related to the CCB although they are among those who express a greater preference for applying online.

E. Note to Reader

No weighting procedures were applied to the final data. Unless otherwise noted, results shown in this report are expressed as percentages and may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or multiple responses to a given question. Throughout the report, unless otherwise noted, significance is indicated at the 95% confidence level based on the Z-test.

In some cases throughout the report, the findings reported are based on responses from a small number of recipients. In these cases, caution should be used when interpreting the results and should be considered directional in nature. In some cases, due to the absence of any statistically significant differences or as a result of small sample sizes, no additional regional or demographic reporting has been included.

F. Contract Value

The contract value was \$101,468.35 including any applicable taxes.

MORE INFORMATION

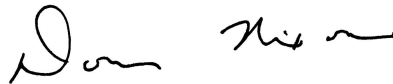
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Signed:



Donna Nixon, Partner