



ATIP Client Survey 2024-2025: What we heard

February 2025

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ATIP Client Survey 2024-2025: What we heard

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Background

In January 2025, the Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) division emailed a client survey to 46 requesters whose Access to Information (ATI) requests had been closed in the 2024 calendar year. The survey targeted two main avenues of inquiry: client service and future proactive publication opportunities. The survey, hosted on GCForms, was open from January 14 to February 10 and collected 11 responses, which is a participation rate of 24%.

Client Service

ATIP is one of the few areas of SSC that directly serves and interacts with the public. Providing quality client service is a key component of our business. The first part of the survey collected data on client satisfaction, user experience, communication and how requesters are building and scoping their requests. In closing, respondents were asked if they would use ATIP request submission support services if offered.

Results

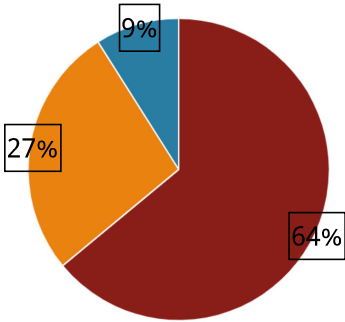
Client Satisfaction

Most (91%) respondents were successful in finding the information sought either completely (64%) or in part (27%). No one responded that there was a lot of irrelevant information, which suggests that the ATIP Office is doing an excellent job removing irrelevant and duplicate records. More than half (55%) expressed that they were satisfied with the processing of their request. Suggestions for improvement primarily highlighted communication issues, such as lack of acknowledgement letters, protracted

response times to correspondence and process transparency as areas for improvement. A few complained the process took too long, and one critiqued the record keeping of the department.

Did you find what you were looking for?

Percentage

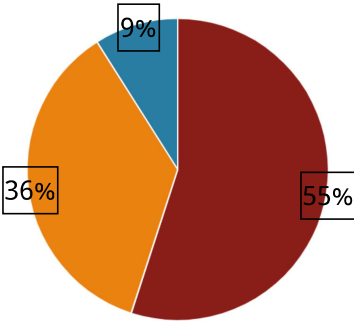


- Yes
- In part
- No

► Did you find what you were looking for? - Table

Were you satisfied with the processing of your request(s)?

Percentage



- Yes
- No
- Blank

► Were you satisfied with the processing of your request(s)? - Table

User-friendliness

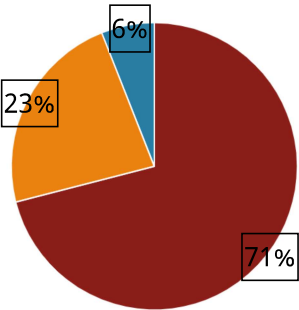
Submitting requests

At present, there are three ways that requesters can submit request to the ATIP Office: the ATIP Online portal, email, and regular mail. The ATIP Online portal is operated by Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and allows requesters to submit their requests and payment online, and this is the preferred method for receiving requests from ATIP’s perspective. Email is an inconvenient way for ATIP to receive a request, as payment must still be collected unless the application fee has been waived.

Over the course of the last year, 71% of our requests have been received via the ATIP Online portal, 23% via email and 6% by mail. Notably all the requests received by mail were misdirected requests that should have been sent to a different institution.

Requests receipt method

Percentage

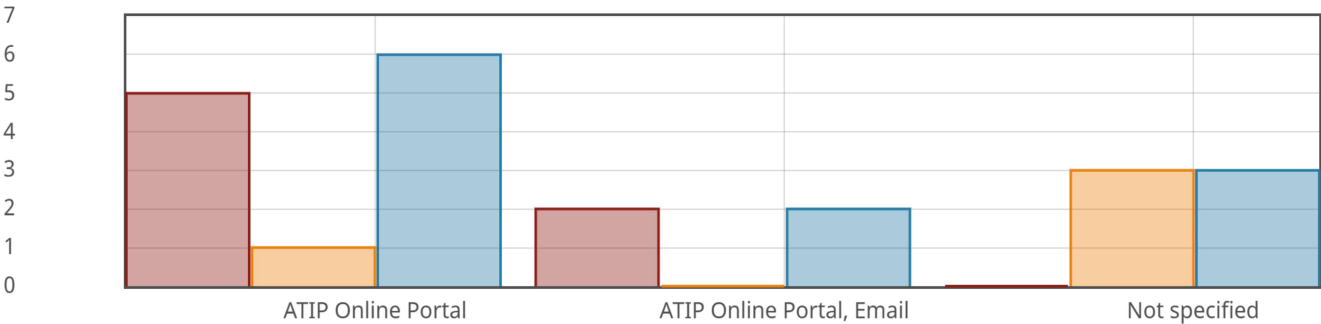


- ATIP Online
- E-mail
- Mail

► Requests receipt method - Table

In the survey, 63% of requesters responded that submitting ATI requests is not user-friendly. Notably all of those who submitted the request by email did not find the process user-friendly, but this feeling was shared by the majority of those who submitted via the ATIP Online portal.

Do you find the process of submitting information requests user-friendly?



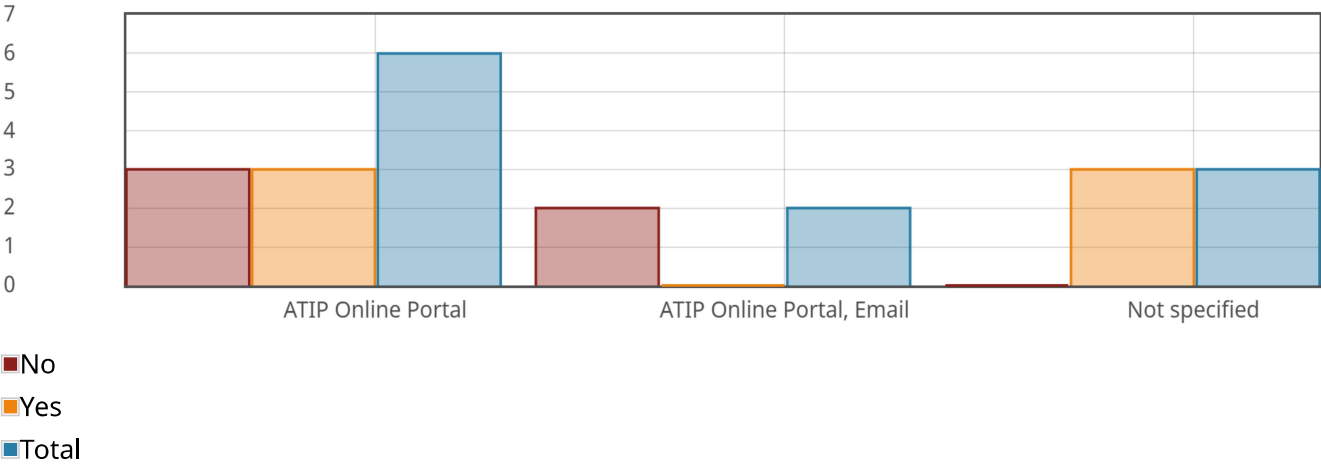
- No
- Yes
- Total

► Do you find the process of submitting information requests user-friendly? - Table

Tracking requests

On the other hand, slightly more than half (54%) of requesters stated that tracking their request was user-friendly. The data does not capture why the satisfaction level is higher on the tracking side; however, it may be attributable to direct interactions between the requesters and the analysts.

Do you find the process of tracking your submitted requests user-friendly?



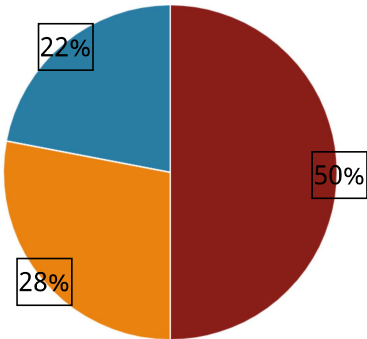
► Do you find the process of tracking your submitted requests user-friendly? - Table

Records receipt

Half of respondents prefer receiving records directly via email, whereas 28% like EPOST Connect, 22% like the ATIP Online portal and no one selected Paper. Current standard practice for our office is to respond via EPOST Connect, as it is more secure than email (rated up to protected B) and has a larger file size restriction than the ATIP Online portal (1 GB total per file).

How do you prefer to receive your records?

Percentage



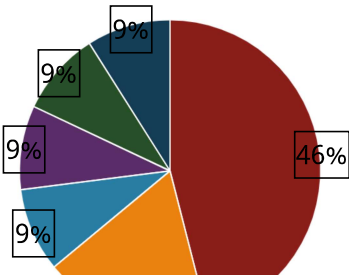
- Email
- EPOST Connect
- ATIP Online Portal

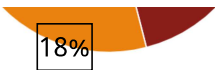
► How do you prefer to receive your records? - Table

Notably, some requesters are comfortable with more than one method of transmission, but there remains an overwhelming preference for direct email.

How do you prefer to receive your records?

Percentage





- Email
- ATIP Online Portal, EPOST Connect, Email
- Epost Connect
- Email, EPOST Connect
- ATIP Online Portal
- Email, EPOST Connect, ATIP Online Portal

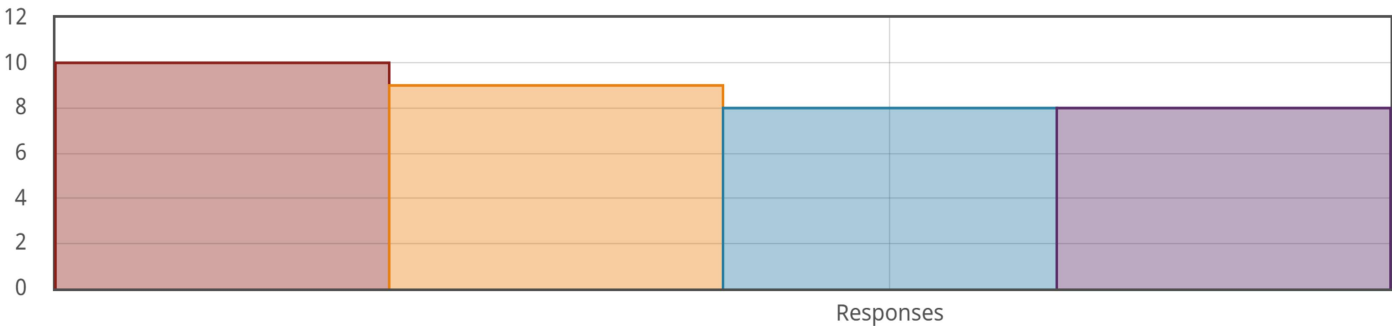
► How do you prefer to receive your records? - Table

Communication

Acknowledgment letters

100% of surveyed requesters value acknowledgement letters for the following reasons.

What do you find useful about them?



- Confirms receipt
- Legislated due date
- Analyst contact information
- Provides file number

► What do you find useful about them? - Table

Acknowledgement letters are not currently sent on a consistent basis. One of the responses to “How could we serve you better?” mentioned the lack of acknowledgement letters as a gap in our client service.

SSC ATIP is aware that some other departments have phased out these letters as part of LEAN processes, but given the survey results, we will prioritise client service and stabilise them in our process as the overall time savings is small.

Other contact

Only 36% of requesters would appreciate analysts routinely contacting them to confirm their understanding of the request; however, the remaining 64% would like to be contacted if the analyst has a suggestion to improve the request.

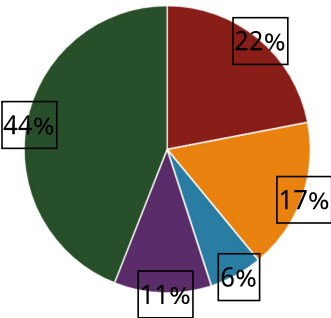
Timeliness of response to correspondence was mentioned as an area of improvement by several respondents, therefore establishing service standards in this area may improve client satisfaction.

Scoping the request

Requesters make use of multiple sources to construct and scope their requests. The SSC Organizational (Org) chart and website are popular sources, and several requesters made use of the expertise of the ATIP Office. 44% used a source other than the ones suggested by the ATIP office and listed personal/professional knowledge or ideas and Open Data as the additional sources.

What have you used to determine the scope of your request(s)?

Percentage



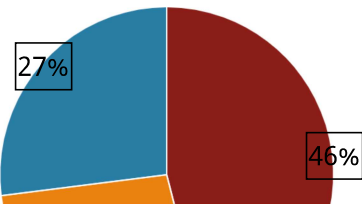
- SSC Organizational Chart
- SSC Website
- Info Source
- ATIP Analyst
- Other

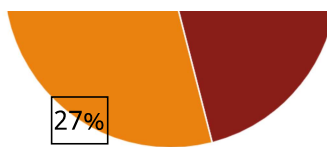
► What have you used to determine the scope of your request(s)? - Table

Requesters were then asked if they would use a request submission support service, described as: assistance wording the request, targeting specific records, or identifying relevant information in the public domain. Approximately ¾ of respondents responded positively to the idea, which suggests the creation of this service could improve requester experience. This could potentially be triggered by a contact form and handled by select senior analysts who know the department and its holdings well. Having scoping discussions before the request is received will save time and effort during the legislated timeframe, and hopefully produce more targeted requests that improve client satisfaction and reduce record retrieval effort, page counts and review time for SSC.

If we offered ATIP request submission support, would you use those services?

Percentage





■ Maybe

■ Yes

■ No

► **If we offered ATIP request submission support, would you use those services? - Table**

Major takeaways

- Overall, our clients are happy with service and find what they seek, but critique timeliness.
- User-friendliness of ATIP Online portal is insufficient and should be raised with TBS.
- Email is the preferred method for receiving records. We should consider if a change of practice for ATI is appropriate.
- Acknowledgment letters should be standard practice.
- Keeping SSC website and Org charts up to date will support scoping efforts.
- A request submission support service is worth piloting.

Proactive publication

Citizens are seeking transparency from their governments. While ATI requests support transparency, it is on a very granular basis. ATI requests answer records requests from individuals as opposed to actively communicating information about department and its decisions to a wider audience. The ATIP Office and other parts of the department contribute proactively published material on Open Government. Improving SSC's publicly available information has three potential benefits: increased transparency, potentially fewer repeated ATI requests and more targeted requests based on better information.

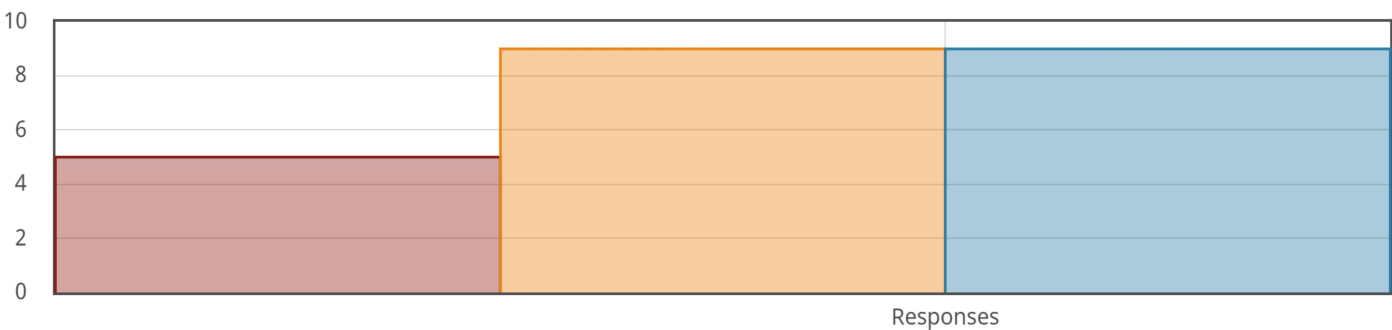
Results

The second part of the survey was focused on future opportunities for useful proactive publication. This was addressed in two categories: static items that can be published and maintained and ongoing proactive publications on a particular topic.

Our requesters would like to know more about how SSC works and what it does. Upwards of 80% of respondents would appreciate a public organizational structure that shows branches and their responsibilities.

Similarly, a list of major projects and a description would be useful. This is a discussion that should be undertaken with the Communications team to improve how SSC serves the public.

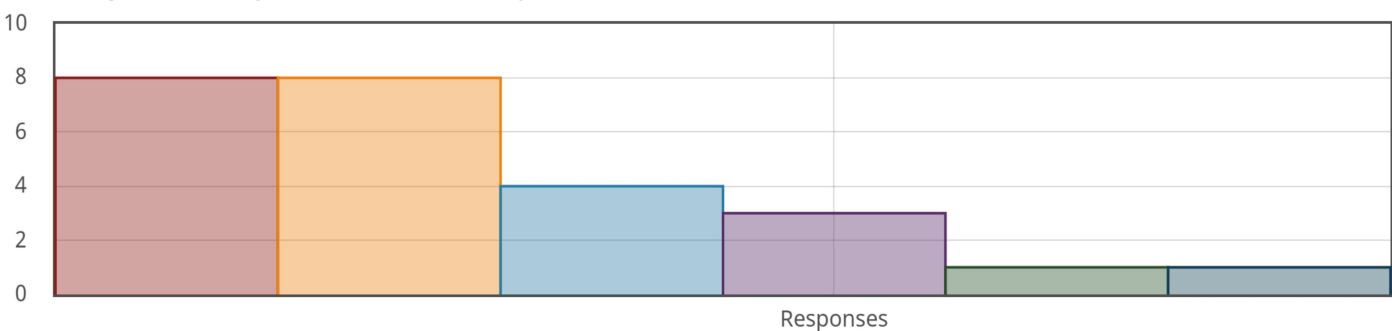
Which of the following would interest you if made proactively available?



- Explanation of Contracting Processes used at SSC
- Major Project Descriptions
- Organizational Structure that shows branches and responsibilities

► Which of the following would interest you if made proactively available? - Table

What topics are of greatest interest to you?



- Contracts
- Briefing Notes
- List of contractors
- Other
- Temporary Help Services total \$/year
- List of casuals

► What topics are of greatest interest to you? - Table

Other suggestions for proactive disclosure include: Public documents, Standard Operating Procedures, Regulations, charts, sample ATI requests.

Major takeaways

- Requesters would appreciate SSC making its organizational structure, responsibilities, and major project descriptions publicly available. About half would be interested in material about procurement processes in use at SSC.
- Top items for proactive disclosure are briefing notes and contracts, followed by a list of contractors.

Next steps

Within SSC

ATIP Office

The ATIP office will pursue changes in practice to address the communications related takeaways. Specifically, by ensuring acknowledgement letters are sent, by setting standard response times for correspondence with requesters, and making the ATIP process clearer on our external website. A request submission support service will be piloted next fiscal.

Further public consultation may be undertaken with the respondents who self-identified as being interested in assisting with client service and proactive publication.

Chief Financial Officer and Procurement Branch (CFOPB)

This survey is a component of a larger proactive publication collaborative project with the CFOPB team. The results from the proactive publication items relating to procurement and contracts will help focus and prioritize those efforts. This includes: lists of contractors, temporary help services, redacted copies of the contracts and descriptions of the procurement processes in use.

Communications

ATIP will need to work with Communications to help the public access correct organizational charts with roles and responsibilities made clear. This material is currently available on the MySSC intranet, but only in a limited fashion on the external website. Establishing a place to publish information on major projects and determining who is responsible for updating it and on what interval would also need to be addressed. However, overall, improving these public information holdings is a major way SSC could improve its transparency.

Within government

TBS

SSC ATIP will share the user experience results regarding the ATIP Online portal with TBS and encourage them to seek further public input to improve usability.

Date modified: 2025-09-22

