



Canada Revenue  
Agency

Agence du revenu  
du Canada

# Canada Child Benefit Program: Satisfaction Survey

## Executive Summary

### Prepared for Canada Revenue Agency

Supplier Name: The Strategic Counsel  
Contract Number: 46558-193850/001/CY  
Contract Value: \$41,810.00 (including HST)  
Award Date: 2018-09-17  
Delivery Date: 2019-02-06

Registration Number: POR 049-18

For more information on this report, please contact Canada Revenue Agency at:  
[media.relations@cra-arc.gc.ca](mailto:media.relations@cra-arc.gc.ca)

**Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.**

Canada 

# Canada Child Benefit Program: Satisfaction Survey

## Executive Summary

**Prepared for:** Canada Revenue Agency

**Supplier Name:** The Strategic Counsel

February 2019

This public opinion research report presents the results of a telephone survey conducted by The Strategic Counsel on behalf of Canada Revenue Agency. The research study was conducted with 800 Canada child benefit first time applicants between October and November 2018.

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

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from the Canada Revenue Agency. For more information on this report, please contact the Canada Revenue Agency at: [media.relations@cra-arc.gc.ca](mailto:media.relations@cra-arc.gc.ca).

**Catalogue Number:**

Rv4-131/2019E-PDF

**International Standard Book Number (ISBN):**

978-0-660-30301-7

**Related Publication (Registration Number: POR 049-18)**

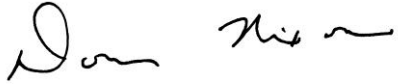
**Catalogue Number:** Rv4-131/2019F-PDF (Executive Summary, French)

**International Standard Book Number (ISBN):** 978-0-660-30302-4

**Statement of Political Neutrality**

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of *The Strategic Counsel* that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Nixon", written over a horizontal line.

Donna Nixon, Partner

## Executive Summary

---

The Strategic Counsel is pleased to present this report to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) measuring the experience of first-time applicants for the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).

### A. Background and Research Objectives

The 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 may also include the child disability benefit and any related provincial or territorial programs.

The initial survey of first-time CCB applicants was conducted in 2000. Additional surveys of GST/HST clients, and regular recipients of the CCB were added in 2005 and 2006 respectively. All of these surveys were used to gauge client awareness and satisfaction with the programs as well as to populate results against a 'client satisfaction' indicator included in the CRA performance reporting.

The purpose of the proposed study of first-time applicants is to support CRA's continuous service improvement initiatives, providing an opportunity for program recipients to offer feedback in terms of:

- Their overall client satisfaction; and
- Specific aspects of program delivery and service, as defined by the program area.

Results from the survey will also be used to assist CRA in better understanding benefit and credit applicants, and to improve program, services and communications.

### B. Methodology

In previous years, the CRA surveys have been undertaken using both online and telephone methodologies. In line with general trends in the market research industry, declining response rates for client surveys have become an issue.

Given the availability of telephone numbers for first-time applicants and the ability to take a more targeted approach, it was decided that a telephone methodology remained the most appropriate and efficient way of obtaining feedback from clients.

CRA provided The Strategic Counsel with a list of 10,000 first-time applicants. Lists included the contact's name, telephone number, location (i.e., province) and the method by which they applied for the CCB. It should be noted that the list (and the final sample of those surveyed) contains a small percentage (4%) of those who are currently not in receipt of CCB payments (i.e., their application had not been approved at the time the survey was conducted). As such, the final sample includes first-time applicants and recipients of the CCB.

From the list, The Strategic Counsel completed surveys with a total of 800 clients across Canada. Soft quotas were set to ensure the final sample reflected a reasonable proportion across regions and by method of application, closely aligned with the proportion in which they appear in the list provided by the CRA. Otherwise, no additional quotas were set for gender, age or education of clients. This approach meant that no additional weighting of the data was required.

Further details on the methodology can be found in a later section of this report. The response rate calculation, and the English and French surveys are included in the Appendix.

## C. Key Findings

### 1. Client Experience Applying for and Receiving the CCB

Based on information provided by the CRA for clients surveyed, the vast majority (68%) applied for the CCB at the time of registering their newborn's birth. This is known internally as the Automated Benefits Application (ABA). One-third as many (24%) completed a paper application and relatively few (8%) filled out an application online via CRA's My Account secure portal (BOA).

Correlating this data with the information provided by respondents based on their recollection of how they applied shows a discrepancy between the actual method and what they recall. Further analysis indicates that a higher proportion of clients in Quebec misstated the method by which they applied (42%). The discrepancy appears to stem from some degree of confusion between the Automated Benefits Application process (ABA), at the time of registering a newborn's birth, but confused this with the My Account Secure portal (BOA).

While this discrepancy has no bearing on the applicant's eligibility for the CCB, it does suggest that the options for applying for the CCB, and the labels or terminology used to describe these options, may be confusing or unclear to prospective applicants.

Notably, although very few of those surveyed applied through the My Account portal, many (64%) are aware of this option. Even among those who submitted a paper application, almost two-thirds (64%) are aware of the option to apply online through the portal.

Interestingly, although respondents who submitted a paper application recall the application processing time being longer as compared to those who applied through ABA or BOA (44% of the latter received a response in 7 weeks or less, compared to 63% of those who applied by ABA or BOA), all respondents, regardless of how they applied, are generally satisfied. Across the entire client groups surveyed:

- 88% were satisfied with all aspects of the application process (51% 'very satisfied' and 38% 'somewhat satisfied'); and
- 84% were satisfied with the application response time (53% 'very satisfied' and 32% 'somewhat satisfied').

It is the case, however, that satisfaction levels do decline with longer processing times, but the correlation between satisfaction and processing time is more clearly evident among those who applied via ABA or BOA methods. Among this group, satisfaction drops off markedly at the 8 or 9 week mark (67%, versus 95% for those who received a response within 4-5 weeks). By contrast, satisfaction levels among those who submitted a paper application are less affected by response times and remain quite high even for those who recall receiving a response 11 weeks after applying (80%, versus 97% for those who received a response within 4-5 weeks).

A partial explanation of the relative lack of variability in satisfaction according to response time can be found in respondents' answers to a question about what is most important to them in terms of CCB service. Respondents focus primarily on on-time delivery of payments (37%) and payment accuracy (23%). They place far less importance on application processing time (15%).

### 2. Client Experience Updating and Managing CCB Information

Most of those surveyed are currently receiving CCB payments (94%), but relatively few among them (24%) have updated their personal CCB information (slightly higher among those who applied by BOA or paper). Among the group who have updated their information, the most common ways of doing so were by calling the 1-800 Benefits enquiries line or through the My Account option (38%). Satisfaction levels with all of the means of updating information were high, with lower satisfaction ratings associated with those who updated information by writing a

letter to their tax centre (78%) and somewhat higher satisfaction levels for all other options (My Account (84%), 1-800 Benefits enquiries line (85%), MyCRA App (95%) and MyBenefits CRA App (100%)).

Most clients indicated that their preferred means for updating would be online via My Account, although for those who submitted a paper application, a significant proportion would prefer to call the CRA. For this group, the opportunity to interact with a CRA representative holds some value.

Clients expressed high levels of awareness of the ability to update their personal information and view their benefit/credit details through the My Account portal (83% and 76%, respectively). Awareness of the MyBenefits CRA mobile app was considerably lower (43%). This accounts for the fact that very few clients (3%) indicated that they would likely use this method to update their personal information. Clearly there is a significant opportunity to raise awareness of the various means for updating and managing clients' CCB profiles, including the MyCRA and MyBenefits Apps.

Many clients hear about the CCB through friends or family (48%) or at the hospital after their child's birth (26%). Very few are hearing about it from the government, including directly from the CRA.

### 3. Use of Canada.ca

Over half of clients have used Canada.ca to search for information about the CCB online. Not surprisingly, this is more common among those who applied via the My Account portal (74%). Clients give Canada.ca high marks in terms of ease of use:

- Easy to understand the CCB information (80%); and
- Easy to find the CCB information (76%).

### 4. Awareness of Other Facts about the CCB

Most clients are aware that filing their tax returns every year is required in order to continue to receive the CCB (84%), although there is some opportunity to boost understanding of this requirement in certain provinces: British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta where almost one-in-five were unaware of this.

Far fewer clients are aware that by applying for the CCB, the CRA automatically determines their eligibility for related provincial and territorial child benefits and credits (56%). There is a real opportunity to get this message out more broadly in virtually all regions of the country.

## D. Conclusions

Based on the views and experiences of clients a number of opportunities surface for the CRA. They tend to fall within two areas:

### **Awareness-Raising**

- CRA may wish to review how it describes the various options for applying for the CCB. In particular there could be a greater distinction made between the ABA and BOA options to clarify this for clients.
- Driving more clients towards the BOA option (the My Account portal) may lead to greater efficiencies, including:
  - improving the currency of client information/profiles, as those who applied via BOA are both more inclined to update their profiles and to do so through the My Account portal, and

- application response times.
- Actively promoting the various methods for applying for the CCB, and ensuring sponsorship is clearly linked back to the Government of Canada or the CRA, may have beneficial effects as many clients are generally satisfied with the application process.
- Additionally, there are opportunities to encourage CCB recipients to keep their profiles up-to-date and to:
  - Ensure they know they can view their benefit/credit details through the My Account portal; and
  - Make them aware that they can download the MyBenefits CRA mobile app which will make it easier for them to get a quick view of their benefit/credit details.
- Finally, the message that CRA automatically determines eligibility for related provincial and territorial benefits should be more actively communicated.

**Improving Application Response Times**

- Although it is not a top priority for clients, improving response times for those who submit a paper application could improve overall satisfaction.

Contract Number:	46558-193850/001/CY
Contract Value:	\$41,810.00