

Invitations to participate in First Work’s 2013 Members Survey were extended to First Work’s member organizations in November 2013. Responses were ultimately received from 24 member organizations, a response rate of 39% of First Work members. This document summarizes respondent feedback.

RESPONDENT OVERVIEW

- Participant organizations were most likely to indicate being in the South West Region (7), followed by the Central Region (6), Northern Region (4) and Eastern Region (2). Five did not respond to this question.
- Participant organizations were most likely to be located in a rural (9) or urban community (9). Only one respondent indicated suburban and five left the question blank.
- Most respondents were familiar with Evidence, Futures, Green Skills Network and National Dialogues.

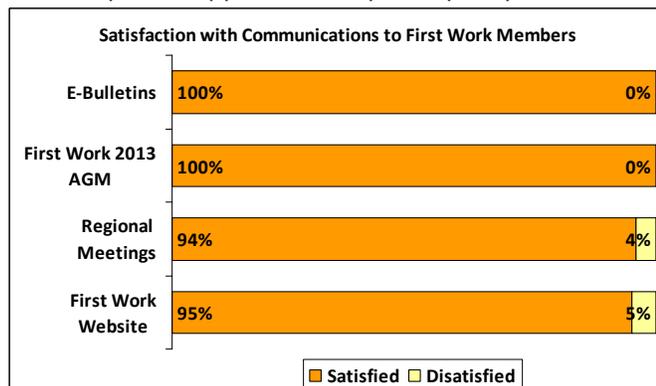
	Familiar with	Worked with / Attended
	92%	22%
	100%	79%
	96%	42%
	83%	38%

- Averaging across the responses, roughly the same number of adults (1,911) received employment services as youth (1,942). Roughly 25% of youth served were at-risk/special needs and 25% were visible minorities.

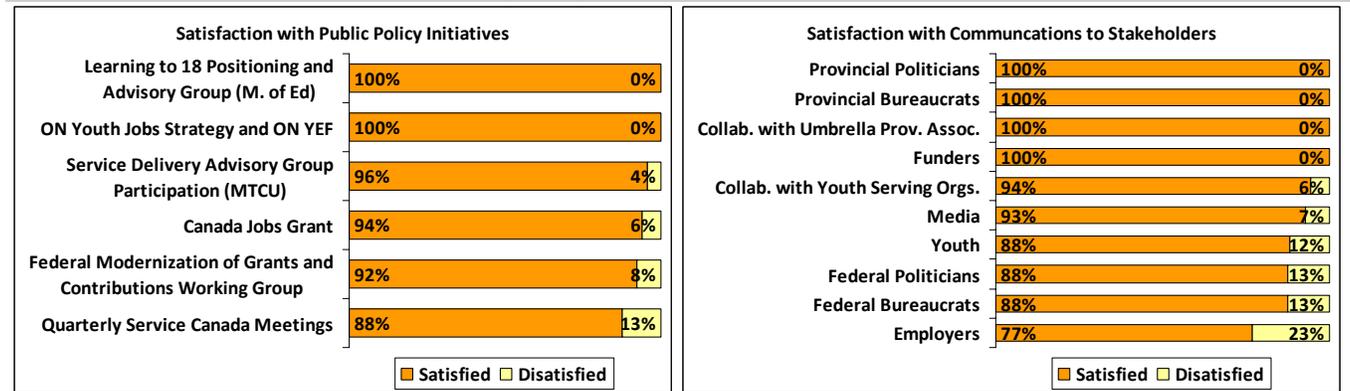
Client Group	Annual Average	Range
At-risk' or special needs youth	485	24 - 2,140
Visible minority groups	486	5 - 4,000
High school students	1,592	10 - 9,000
Public college or private career college students	295	10 - 1,750
University students	298	5 - 1,750
Younger youth (20 years and under)	839	5 - 9,000
Older youth (21 years and over)	1,103	21 - 9,000
Adults (29 years and over)	1,911	5 - 14,000

SATISFACTION WITH FIRST WORK ACTIVITIES

- Respondents consistently expressed satisfaction with First Work’s communications to Members, professional development opportunities, public policy initiatives and communications to stakeholders.



SATISFACTION WITH FIRST WORK ACTIVITIES (CONT.)



MEMBER FEEDBACK ON FIRST WORK'S PERFORMANCE IN 2012-2013

Your Agency's Experience with First Work initiatives

- First Work Conference (x4)
- All activities well done - Futures being the highlight.
- First Work has been very supportive of our agency and the network. These are important times in terms of advocacy issues ranging from the Canada Jobs Grant, the LMA negotiations to YEF implementation.
- Opportunity for Northern Partners to continue to have meetings for information exchange
- Promote/advance employment needs of youth
- We participated in the Green Shines proposals.
- Working with Lavinia [of Evidence] is always good. She is well organized and follows up to make sure we're doing what we need to be.

What Prevented Participation this Year

- Time (x4)
- Money (x3)
- No barriers identified (x3)
- Distance / travel time (x2)

First Work's Biggest Challenge in 2012-2013

- As with all of us it is sustainability and relevance
- Being heard by MTCU on youth employment needs
- Canada Job Grant
- Communication
- Effective advocacy on LMA (x2) and Skills Link
- Engaging membership in busy and changing times.
- Funding Changes throughout networks
- Negotiating and making progress towards improving services with both the Feds and Provincial Govs.
- Supporting agencies on Service CA's funding model
- The same as the success! [Cooperation - umbrella groups, politicians, funders]

First Work's Greatest Success in 2012-2013

- Futures Conference (x6)
- Advocacy - Centres and Youth
- Cooperation - umbrella groups, politicians, funders
- NYED continuation and sharing of information
- Profile at a provincial level

OTHER UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

- Respondents listed 24 different organizations, of which only three were listed more than once: ONESTEP (x9), OCASI (x3) and ONTARIO NON-PROFIT NETWORK (x2)
- A question on how First Work can work with these groups to better serve members yielded four responses:
 - "Develop lines of communications"
 - "First Work ED should come on a real tour of the north."
 - "I ASK THAT ALL THE TIME. SOME JUST DON'T PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS"
 - "Social Planning Councils across Ontario support counselling and job development supports to assist our youth. Hardest hit population with unemployment, they would I am sure have data."

OVERALL REACTIONS TO THE FUND

- With the introduction of the Ontario Youth Employment Fund in fall of 2013, it was important to gauge member reaction and experience to the fund.
- 95% of the members who responded to this survey indicated accessing the Ontario YEF.
- 91% of respondents indicated the Fund was effective in helping youth get jobs.

How is your organization successful in using Fund?

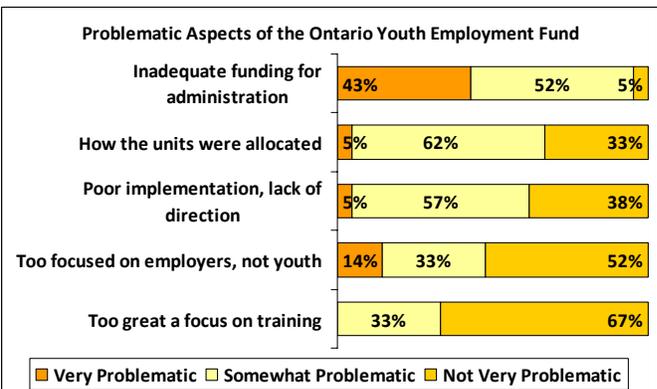
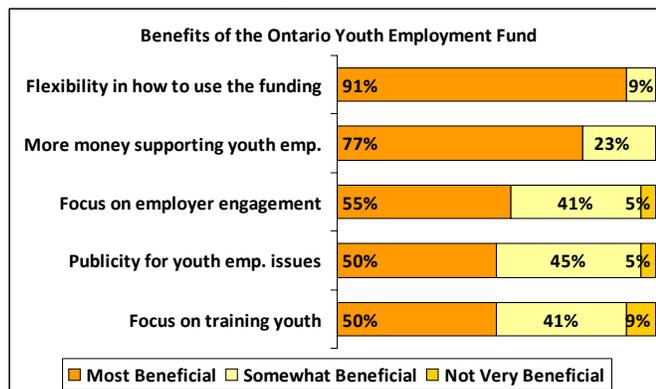
- Too early to tell (x3)
- “Yes” (x3) / “Yes but very stressful and challenging”
- Collaborated with employers to place clients
- Engaging both youth and employers. Thanks to First Work, quick off the mark.
- Focus on medium to larger businesses. Using SJS employer contacts to market YEF and hire YEF youth.
- Just another tool to get Youth through the door and enough time to prove value
- Met target of eligible participants but still looking for employers to meet client needs, found half of them
- Placements, dollars for supports, none yet for training.
- Somewhat successful - program eligibility had to be clarified. Difficulty forecasting spending allocations (placements) within a 6 month time frame.
- Placements with employers offering long-term employment to youth at conclusion of agreement.
- Youth already coming through the service, employers working to address youth barriers

What is your organization doing that is innovative or different to make the most of the Fund?

- Engaging employers to tell us what training they need
- Established Youth Employment Matrix on incentives employer is eligible for. Financial assessment for youth to determine eligibility to receive supports
- Hired an Administrative/Outreach staff to help with added claims/invoicing and employer outreach.
- More flexibility in programming to youth... Employers understand youth come with employment barriers. Fund utilized for those most in need.
- More support for TTC passes, more money for specialized equipment, clothing and tools.
- Partnering with OW training programs to support placements after specific training session completed.
- Passport documentation, start up clothing and equipment (e.g., clothing for refrigerated warehouse)
- Targeting youth in ads, overtures to local School Board
- Trying to attract employers with more skilled, career focussed opportunities

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES WITH THE ONTARIO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUND

- “Flexibility in how to use the funding” and “More money to support youth employment” were unanimously endorsed by respondents as benefits of the Ontario YEF.
- “Inadequate funding for administration” was the only problem agreed to by over two-thirds of respondents.
- “Other” benefits and problems offered are also listed below.



Other Benefits of the Ontario YEF

- Can apply to talented job seeking youth with post secondary education
- Flexibility to administer is beneficial vs. ES Training Incentives...[but] flexibility of ES would be sufficient.
- More placement dollars, longer training; additional on-the-job-training, extra supports when required
- More support dollars without LICO requirements
- Too early to tell, just a month into the program

Other Problems of the Ontario YEF

- A year's target has been compressed into 6 mos.
- No funding to support the retention of youth in jobs, [or] life skills development for youth prior to work
- Not known yet
- Permissible training is too general and should allow for more vocational training to be included.
- Tie tighter to outcomes and vulnerable populations
- Unclear directions on unit calculations, fiscal cut-offs

EMPLOYER AND YOUTH REACTIONS TO THE ONTARIO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUND

- While no respondents specified either youth or employers as having negative reactions to the fund, 86% of respondents said employers had very positive reactions and 14% said "positive". Responses about youth were evenly split between "very positive" and "positive". Written comments in this regard are:

Employer Reactions to the Fund

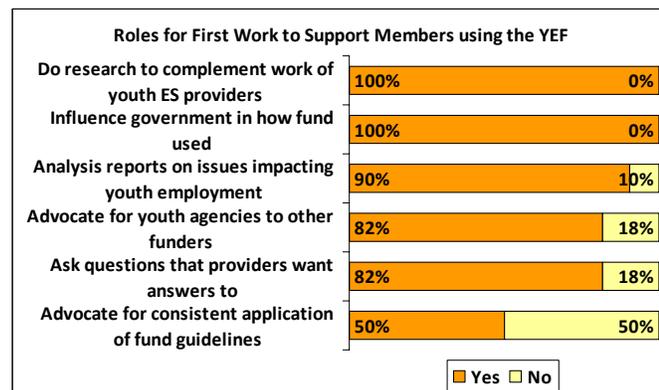
- Lots of interest, everyone wants to participate (x6)
- Always willing to help and are committed
- Due to Provincial marketing, employers calling before program was launched or dollars available
- Employers chosen that would buy into programme
- Employers happy to have longer on-the-job-training, consideration of skills training needed for youth
- Employers like subsidies, we cannot confirm they lead to ongoing employment
- Lot of interest - very seasonal economy - and winter is a quiet but employers are interested for 2014
- Many new employers and diverse opportunities. Pay and skills to be learned have increased. Assisting under-employed post-secondary grads a good addition.
- Not promoting YEF distinctly...YEF and other funding is integrated...promoting YEF will cause confusion for employers due to similarities to Training Incentives.

Youth Reactions to the Fund

- Are happy for job, don't care employer gets funding
- Lack of awareness on their behalf
- Longer term opportunities.
- More youth, almost too many at once.
- Only those not so "at risk" seem focused
- They don't care, they want a job
- We've chosen the youth participants to ensure they would stay in the job for the 4 months or longer.
- We've had a tremendous response and are very busy. Almost too busy making it difficult to support the more vulnerable youth find placements
- Youth are faced with challenges in today's economy, assistance appreciated and provides hope; Thankful for the additional time, link to employer right away and extra supports if required on the job.
- Youth are tapping into the Short-term training but not at max allocations.

ROLE OF FIRST WORK TO SUPPORT MEMBERS

- First Work wanted to know how to best support members to access and utilize the YEF. Responses are below.



Other Ways for First Work to Support Members

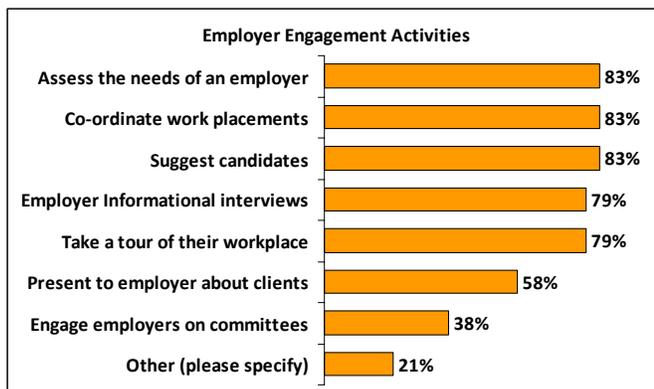
- Being a hub for information sharing & best practice among the member agencies
- Conduct work that will complement or further the work of all ES providers including emphasis on youth
- Continue to keep youth employment issues in media
- Labour Market Information, Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Education and Employment. Found at www.statcan.gc.ca/APS or email sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca).

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

- The average number of employers engaged by respondents was 1,038, ranging from 24 to 15,090.
- 47% of respondents indicated there were sectors their organizations predominantly worked with. The most common were Service (x7) and Retail (x3). The remainder were only mentioned by a single respondent.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTIVITIES

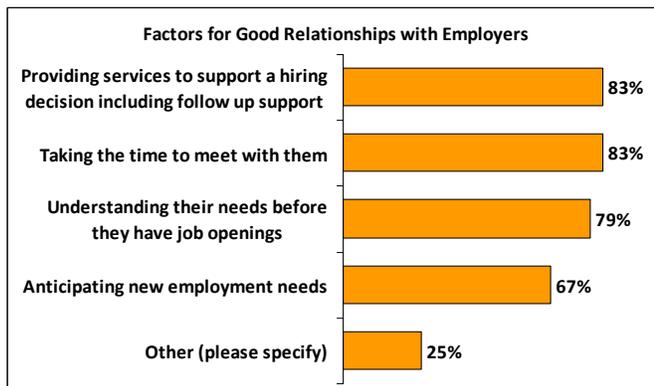
- Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had engaged with employers in the previous year.



Other Ways to engage with employers

- Host job fairs (x2)
- Employer participated in professional development training offered through the SP - Bridges Out of Poverty
- Provided employers with professional development training opportunities.
- Workplace Safety Visit, Monitoring, Workplace Safety Clearance Checks

- Of the activities in the chart, six respondents (32%) said they did all the activities with 100% of employers, seven (37%) said they did all these with between 2/3rds and 100%, six (32%) said less than 2/3rds.
- Respondents were asked what factors going into having a good relationship with an employer, which resulted in the following feedback



Other ways to have positive employer relationships

- Being able to respond in a timely fashion
- Develop relationship and support all their needs
- Know the employer from committees, meetings, etc.
- Offer services from various programs: SJS, ES, YEF, OEAS, YESS, ODSP, etc...
- Provide facilities for interviews, suggest interview questions and assist employers with interviews
- Timely Service, recognizing their contributions, i.e., news letter, AGM - presentation

Ways respondents recognize employers include:

- Certificates / Letters of acknowledgement (x7)
- Awards / presentations at AGM or other Events (x5)
- Gifts / swag (x4)
- Appreciation lunches / breakfasts (x3)
- News articles (x2)
- Free use of space to host job fairs
- Monthly Newsletter

- We haven't done enough of this, I'd love to know what others are doing
- Offered PD training opportunities at no cost.
- Promotional items
- Some met with Premier during visit to our Centre
- Large Strictly Business Event at Royal York each year and honour employers

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- To support learning across the network, challenges and successful strategies for dealing with those challenges were asked for and are presented below.

Challenges Engaging with Employers

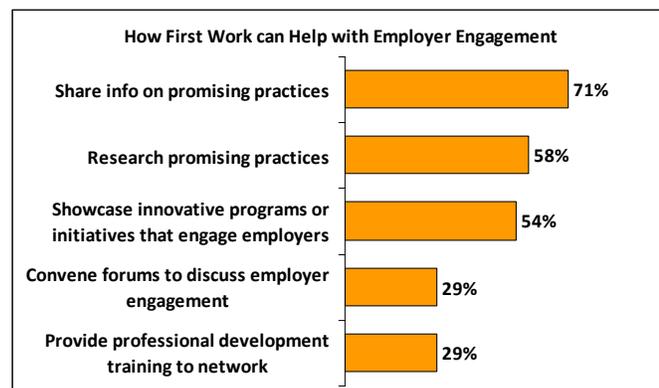
- Accessibility and distance of far away locations (x3)
- Finding the right employee at the right time (x3)
- Lack of employer awareness of the role of SPs (x3)
- No positions available, many unemployed (x3)
- Time to form relationships with new employers (x3)
- Paper work / administration was too onerous (x3)
- Limited subsidy dollars (x2)
- Competition in the field/other service providers; particularly TESS (social services)
- Consistency amongst other service providers in funds allocation or program delivery
- Hiring without looking at more than one resume
- Larger employers not interested in being invested in the wage incentives or job matching through EO SPs. They don't want the interference in their business.
- No positions available/in lay offs
- No provincial level marketing or ad campaign to add to the legitimacy of the programs and services available to employers.
- Overcoming negative stereotypes
- Partnering with us in recruitment
- Ratios in the Trades
- Temp agencies
- That we don't have access to high skill candidates
- Unwilling to train for extended amount of time
- We are just government

Employer Engagement Success Stories

- Don't have time to do this but anecdotally we're pleased that some unpaid interns were able to access the YEF funds to now become paid employees.
- Employer one survey. to assess current and future trends and work with them to develop a strategy to ensure a skilled workforce in the future
- Local employers are typically quite receptive to working with us -- it may start with accessing our free job list/web posts and expand from there.
- Site visits and relationship building with employers
- Staff are trained in the EOPII model on consultative sales for working with employers - has made a huge difference in placing the most barriered clients. Staff work at getting to know the employer need and carving out a job for a client based on their strengths
- We get to know employers by working with them as members of chambers of commerce, BIA, personnel mgr. association. Also provide area safety programs employers need.
- We have offered to complete the paper detail and go over to review with employer
- Young man with gr. 10, unmotivated, placed in a Tool & Die shop. Found his niche, hasn't missed a day and is going to school to get his trade papers.

ROLE OF FIRST WORK TO SUPPORT MEMBERS

- As with the YEF, there interest at First Work to know how they may support members to engage with employers. The responses to a question on this are provided below.



Ways First Work can Support Employer Engagement

- Advocate for provincial advertising campaign regarding employer programs and services available through EO SPs.
- Assoc. might meet with business associations to promote local connections
- Opportunity for employers to share business practices at the conference (Panel), what they want to see from employees, recognize with Prize, recognizing contribution to Employment Services.