

Ontario Association
of **YOUTH**
EMPLOYMENT
Centres

**OAYEC 2006 Annual
Member Survey Report**

November 2006

A compilation of 2006 membership survey results on service satisfaction and opinions on strategic direction.

OAYEC



Ontario Association
of YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT
Centres

2006 Annual Member Survey

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The report includes highlights from the 2006 member survey indicating opinions on OAYEC service satisfaction and 2006/07 strategic direction.

BACKGROUND

Subsequent to the 2005 Annual Member Survey which gathered valuable information from OAYEC members across Ontario, OAYEC has once again surveyed our membership in order to solicit feedback on service satisfaction and strategic direction. OAYEC relies on this feedback to help improve our service to the network, and to direct our strategic planning.

The theme of this year's member survey is strategic communications. OAYEC has placed particular focus on this function in 2006, evidenced by the creation of an OAYEC Strategic Communications Plan this past July. Several questions were asked on the member survey regarding members' opinions and activities related to strategic communications. The results will help inform OAYEC's strategy in the coming months.

GOALS

- To consult with members and gather feedback on satisfaction with OAYEC services and initiatives during 2005/06 as well as areas of strategic focus for the coming year.
- To address key issues in the area of Strategic Communications.
- To match or increase participation rate from the 2005 survey.

Note: This last goal was not met – the number of participants was 53.7% of the membership (36 respondents) whereas last year, 60% (42 respondents) participated in the survey.

PARTICIPATION

All of the respondents indicated that they played a managerial role in their agency.

Participants by region included the following:

- Southwest: 10/24 (42% of potential respondents)
- Central: 7/20 (35%)
- Northern: 10/12 (83%)
- Eastern: 9/11 (82%)

Participants by community type included the following:

- Urban community: 57%
 - Suburban community: 9%
 - Rural community: 34%
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TYPES OF CLIENTS SERVED

This year's survey respondents reported an increase in the number of certain types of clients. In particular, the number of students, older youth and adults increased.

Type of Client	2006	2005	% Change
At-risk youth	97%	98%	- 1%
Visible minority	42%	43%	- 1%
High school students	86%	81%	+ 5%
College students	47%	38%	+ 9%
University Students	36%	33%	+ 3%
Younger youth (>20 years)	86%	86%	0
Older Youth (<21 years)	89%	71%	+ 18%
Adults (<29 years)	61%	43%	+ 18%

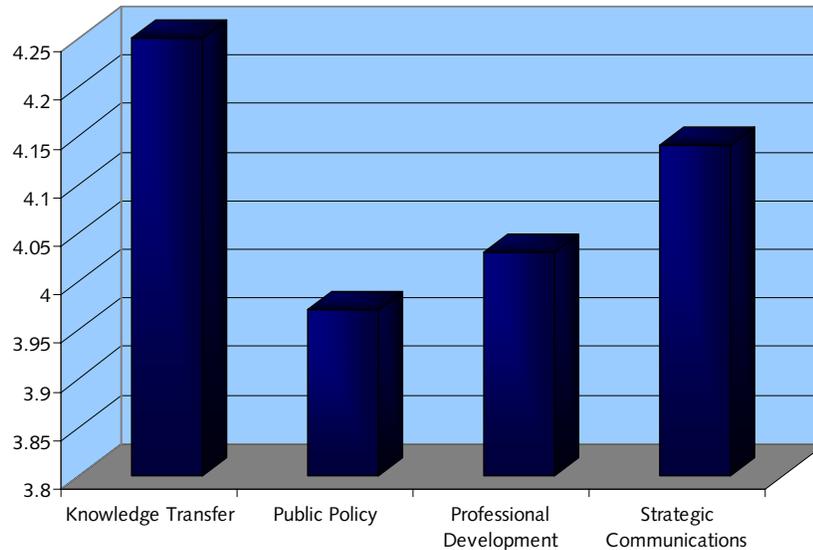
OAYEC CORE FUNCTIONS

OAYEC members were asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction with each of OAYEC's four core functions: Knowledge Transfer, Public Policy, Professional Development, and Strategic Communications. The core functions were developed as part of OAYEC's 2004-08 Strategic Plan: *Doing It On Purpose*.

2006 Annual Member Survey

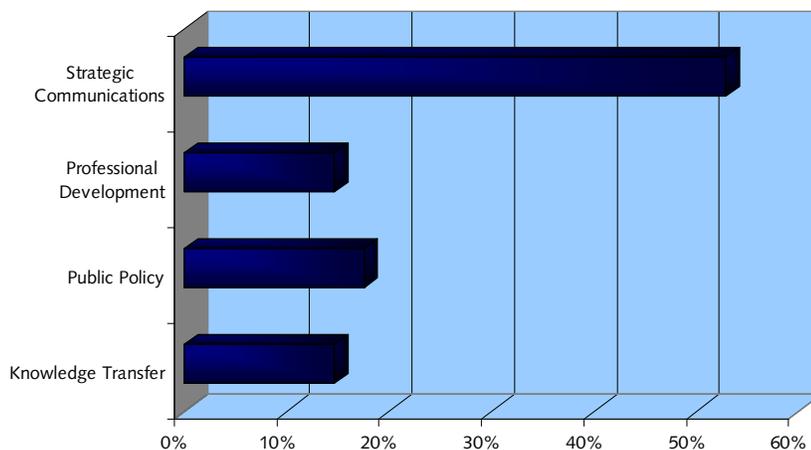
Core Functions: Overall satisfaction

The majority of members reported being satisfied with all four core functions (as indicated by a response of “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied”); however, the highest satisfaction rate was for knowledge transfer, as indicated in the chart below. (Scale of 1 to 5, 1= very dissatisfied, 5= very satisfied. Please note that the scale begins at 3.8, meaning average responses for all four core functions were above this rating level.)



Core Functions: Strategic Focus for 2006/07

Members were also asked to indicate which core function they believe requires greater emphasis over the coming year. Over half of respondents (18/34) indicated that Strategic Communications should be OAYEC’s focus in 2006/07, as indicated in the chart below.



Comments on Strategic Focus Choices

Strategic Communications (52.9%)

The majority of respondents indicated Strategic Communications as the core function they would like to see emphasized in the coming year. With the implementation of the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) quickly approaching, members recognized the need to maintain a strong focus on positioning with government, and open communication. Members commented on the need for the strength of our network to be promoted to decision-makers. They also suggested that the flow of information between government, OAYEC, and members should be a priority in order to ensure continued quality of service delivery.

“The role of what our network does definitely needs to be ‘out there’ and the message disseminated to decision makers in this changing environment.”

Public Policy (17.6%)

Members selecting Public Policy as a key area of strategic focus noted the importance of OAYEC’s representation of the membership to government, and again, keeping relevant information regarding policy development flowing to the network.

Knowledge Transfer (14.7%)

Members commented on the need for OAYEC to ensure that members are not only kept informed on issues and activities in the youth employment sector, but also that they have ongoing opportunities to connect with OAYEC staff and board members. Especially with the LMDA coming, members expressed a need to know more about the upcoming changes and OAYEC’s role in addressing them.

Professional Development (14.7%)

Members suggested that more training opportunities be available through OAYEC. One member also expressed dissatisfaction with the content of the Annual Conference workshops, noting that there is nothing new coming out of them.

OAYEC INITIATIVES

In addition to noting satisfaction with OAYEC's four core functions, members were asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction with particular initiatives within each core function.

Knowledge Transfer

Levels of satisfaction with OAYEC's Knowledge Transfer initiatives were fairly high. The following percentages of respondents indicated they were "very satisfied" with Knowledge Transfer initiatives:

- OAYEC Online Workspaces (53%)
- OAYEC Website (74%)
- Knowledge Transfer Updates/e-Bulletins (67%)

Public Policy

Most members indicated they were "very satisfied" with OAYEC's Public Policy service as follows:

- LMDA Positioning (53%)
- HRSDC Call for Proposals Positioning (53%)
- Learning to 18 Positioning (42%)
- Policy Updates/e-Bulletins (47%)

In addition to levels of satisfaction with public policy services, we also asked members to indicate which of these initiatives are communicated to their senior staff and/or board members. This information will be important to inform OAYEC's ongoing communications efforts. Responses indicated that more than half of members communicate information to their senior staff and/or board members at the following rates:

- LMDA Positioning (77%)
- HRSDC Call for Proposals (63%)
- Policy Updates/e-Bulletins (57%)
- Learning to 18 Positioning (43%)

Seventeen percent of members indicated that none of the listed initiatives are communicated to higher levels of management in their organizations.

Professional Development

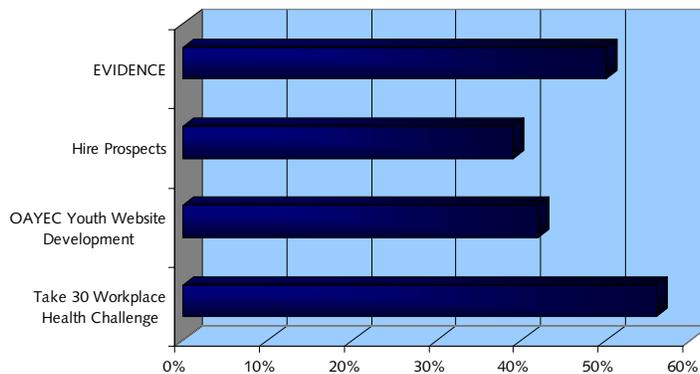
When asked about the OAYEC Conference and AGM, more than half of respondents (58%) indicated that they are "very satisfied" with this professional development opportunity.

Strategic Communications

Members were asked to indicate their satisfaction with OAYEC's Strategic Communications initiatives and advocacy with a variety of stakeholders. The highest levels of satisfaction (reflected as a percentage of "very satisfied" responses) were indicated for OAYEC's communications with funders (50%), provincial senior bureaucrats (44%), and provincial politicians (43%).

Projects

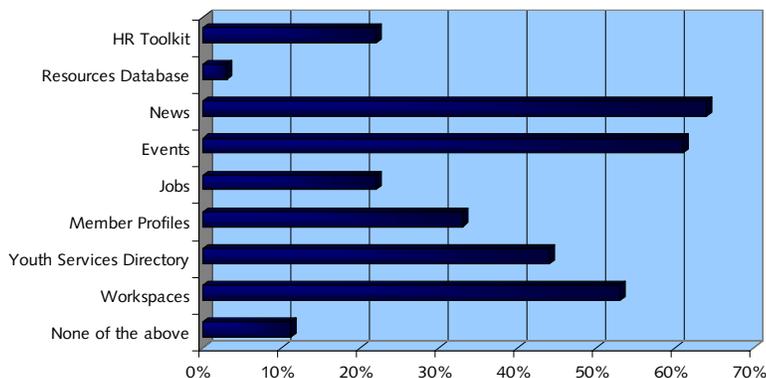
OAYEC projects are developed in order to provide innovative opportunities within the youth employment sector. Four particular projects were active in the organization this year, and we asked members to indicate their familiarity with each of them. The following chart indicates the percentage of members who indicated a “good understanding” of OAYEC projects.



Web and Online Resources

With the launch of OAYEC’s new website this year, members were asked to comment on the site, as well as their use of OAYEC’s various online resources. Thirty-five out of 36 respondents had visited OAYEC’s new website, and their feedback was very positive. Members remarked that the site is user-friendly, informative, easy to navigate, and visually pleasing. One member also appreciated the bilingual information provided in the youth section of the site.

In terms of online resources, members reported the highest usage of the news and events pages (64% and 61% respectively), as well as the workspaces (53%). Other resources are used to varying degrees. The percentages of respondents who have accessed particular online resources are indicated in the chart below.



CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN 2005/06

Challenges

OAYEC faced several challenges in the past year. Members were asked to express their opinions with regards to the most pressing challenge. The upcoming LMDA emerged as an overarching theme among the responses, with the majority of respondents commenting on the need for OAYEC to focus on communications, positioning, and maintaining and increasing visibility in the sector.

Responses were categorized according to core functions as follows:

Public Policy (44% of opinions expressed)

Naturally, with the LMDA of key concern to most members, Public Policy emerged as a main focus for challenges in the past year. One respondent indicated our major challenge as *“Staying abreast of all the LMDA information flowing in from various sources, sorting out fact from fiction and communicating the proper information to members across the province.”*

Respondents indicated that positioning and advocacy for the network in this context has been a challenge, especially for members who run Job Connect programs. One respondent also indicated another challenge in the form of finding our strategic advantage in the midst of many umbrella groups.

Strategic Communications (28% of opinions expressed)

Several members indicated that maintaining Strategic Communications has been a main challenge in recent months. Increasing visibility and getting more media attention were noted as challenges, as well as maintaining a strong profile with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Again, the context of the LMDA was recognized as necessitating stronger communications.

Knowledge Transfer (17% of opinions expressed)

Members commented that sharing information with the network in a timely manner was a challenge for OAYEC over the past year. One member indicated the need for regular updates in order to keep members abreast of developments, particularly related to the LMDA. While most respondents mentioned the need for more information, some recognized that sorting through the information and distributing it appropriately is the key.

Other (11% of opinions expressed)

One further comment related to OAYEC's challenges was related to the increasing time constraints of members which make it difficult for them to become involved in OAYEC initiatives. Another member suggested that OAYEC's coordination and leadership have been a challenge over the past year.

Successes

Members were also asked to indicate their opinions on OAYEC's greatest success over the past year. Responses were again categorized according to the four core functions, with over half of respondents indicating Public Policy initiatives as key successes.

Public Policy (54.5% of opinions expressed)

Several members indicated OAYEC's involvement in high profile committees and advisory groups as key successes of the past year. On the federal level, OAYEC's place on the Voluntary Sector Advisory Committee on Employment (VSACE) in particular was noted as an important piece in our public policy work. Comments were also made regarding general communications with Service Canada, including positioning on the HRSDC Call for Proposals. Provincially, members were impressed with LMDA positioning and the work OAYEC has done with the Job Connect Coalition.

Professional Development (13.6% of opinions expressed)

Members commented that the Annual Conference again provided a great opportunity for professional development and networking, and that they rely on OAYEC's conference for the majority of their staff development.

Strategic Communications (9% of opinions expressed)

In the area of strategic communications, members expressed satisfaction with the increased visibility of OAYEC, particularly in Service Canada issues. The Strategic Communications Plan was also noted as a success.

Knowledge Transfer (4.5% of opinions expressed)

Respondents recognized the value of OAYEC's sharing of information and open communication over the past year.

Other (18.1% of opinions expressed)

Other responses to the question regarding OAYEC's successes were related to OAYEC projects. The EVIDENCE evaluation and consulting service as well as the Take 30 Health Challenge were indicated as successes for OAYEC this past year.

FOCUS ON STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

In July of 2006, OAYEC developed a new Strategic Communications Plan to address the goal of becoming the “Go To” organization for youth employment issues. As part of the first stage of the Plan’s implementation, we solicited feedback from members on elements of strategic communications, including awards programs, employer and political engagement.

Awards

OAYEC is considering developing a province-wide youth employment-related awards program as part of our new strategic communications strategy. Through this, we hope to involve elected officials, decision-makers, and employers in the recognition and promotion of youth employment issues. Recognizing the need to complement, rather than compete with existing programs in the network, we asked members to share their awards program details.

Of the 36 survey respondents, only 8 indicated that they run youth-employment related awards programs, all on an annual basis. Of these respondents, most give awards to employers (89%) and youth (56%), while some give awards to other organizations (22%), and agency staff and Board members (11%).

The goals of the awards programs were reported to be:

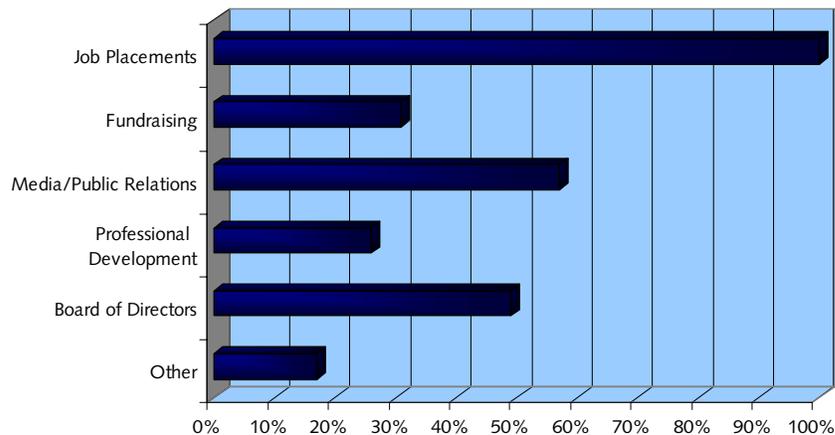
- To promote community awareness and recognition of youth employment success stories,
- To recognize employers committed to working with youth, especially at-risk youth,
- To recognize non-profit organizations providing volunteer placements, and
- To increase employer participation.

OAYEC also asked about key stakeholders that are invited to attend and/or participate in awards ceremonies, and whether these invitees consistently accept these invitations. The results were indicated as follows:

	Invited	Consistently Attend
Local media	78%	56%
Employers	89%	89%
Municipal politicians	56%	33%
Provincial politicians	56%	22%
Federal politicians	22%	11%
Staff & Board	22%	22%
Other	11%	11%

Engaging Employers

In order to gauge employer engagement, we asked members to indicate the activities in which they involve employers in the work of their agencies. Understandably, finding placements for clients was the main engagement activity, with participation in media and public relations campaigns second, and having employers as members of Boards of Directors the third most common engagement strategy.



Engaging Politicians

OAYEC asked members to report on whether or not they engage politicians, both federal and provincial, in the work of their organizations, and if so, how they do so. Twenty-six out of 36 respondents (72%) indicated that yes, they do indeed engage both federal and provincial politicians in their work. Of these respondents, the engagement strategies, in order from most common to least common, are as follows:

	Provincial	Federal
Inviting politicians to agency activities and/or program launches	89%	96%
Sending letters to raise awareness and/or advocate for agency	68%	74%
Requesting meetings to discuss agency issues	54%	56%
Media/public relations campaigns or events	46%	41%
Providing agency newsletters	21%	26%

Members were asked to indicate their opinion on the most effective engagement strategies through an open-ended question. The majority of opinions expressed (36%) related to providing politicians with regular updates on agency activities.

Members also expressed interest in face-to-face meetings (28% of opinions expressed) as a key way to engage politicians and inform them of agency activities and issues. Others felt that inviting politicians to participate in agency events and activities (20%), especially those involving media coverage (12%), is the most effective engagement strategy. One member suggested that agencies attend community and government forums to reach politicians, and one member stated that they do not want politicians involved in their agency.

Network-wide Strategic Communications Strategies

Members were asked to comment on how they see OAYEC being involved in engagement throughout the network. OAYEC's intent was to gauge member interest in collaborative engagement strategies and generate ideas on how best to implement them.

Out of 22 responses, 19 members indicated that OAYEC can indeed assist with engagement efforts, while 3 suggested that their local relationships are best kept local.

Of the members who saw OAYEC being a part of their engagement efforts, many suggested ways of doing this. Members commented on the value of provincial statistics and stories that might help capture the attention of politicians. "Giving politicians a provincial profile," promoting the network, and identifying key areas of interest to politicians are strategies that OAYEC could implement to support and/or supplement local initiatives.

Other opportunities involving coordination on a provincial level to bring visibility to the network were mentioned. Letter-writing campaigns were suggested, as were more initiatives such as the Job Connect Coalition's MPP blitz – i.e. the coordination of multiple face-to-face meetings with politicians across the province.

Other suggestions included the creation of more visibility with the media, and sharing information with the network on engagement best practices.

CONCLUSION

The OAYEC 2006 Annual Member Survey garnered a significant amount of useful information that will be taken into consideration when planning and implementing OAYEC activities over the coming year. Particularly, the information and opinions regarding strategic communications will be integrated into the execution of the Strategic Communications Plan.

OAYEC wishes to thank all of our members for your ongoing input and support, especially those who completed the 2006 Annual Member Survey. We value your opinions and appreciate your efforts in contributing to a sustainable youth employment delivery network in Ontario.

APPENDIX 1

2006 Member Survey Questionnaire

AGENCY INFORMATION

1. Which region is your agency located in? (Please choose one of the following)

- Central region
- Northern region
- South West region
- Eastern region

2. What is the general location of your agency? (Please choose one of the following)

- Urban community
- Suburban community
- Rural community

3. Which of the following most accurately describes the type of client you work with most frequently? (Please select all that apply)

- 'at-risk' or special needs youth
- visible minority groups
- high school students
- college students
- university students
- younger youth (20 years and under)
- older youth (21 years and over)
- adults (29 years and over)

4. Which of the following best describes the position you currently hold?

- Managerial
- Supervisory
- Front Line Worker
- Support Staff
- Voluntary Position
- Other (please specify)

OAYEC'S CORE FUNCTIONS

5. Considering all of OAYEC's Knowledge Transfer initiatives and services over the past year, please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following.

(Scale: Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied, N/A)

- OAYEC Online Workspaces
 - OAYEC Website
 - Knowledge Transfer Updates/ e-Bulletins
-

6. Considering OAYEC's Professional Development services over the past year, please rate your level of satisfaction with the following.

(Scale: *Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied, N/A*)

- OAYEC Conference and AGM

7. Considering all of OAYEC's Strategic Communications initiatives and advocacy over the past year, please rate your level of satisfaction on OAYEC's communications with each of the following stakeholders.

(Scale: *Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied, N/A*)

- Federal Politicians
- Federal Senior Bureaucrats
- Provincial Politicians
- Provincial Senior Bureaucrats
- Other Umbrella Provincial Associations
- Funders
- Media
- Other Youth Serving Organizations
- Youth
- Employers

8. Considering all of OAYEC's Public Policy initiatives over the past year, please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following.

(Scale: *Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied, N/A*)

- Policy Updates/ e-Bulletins
- Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) Positioning
- HRSDC Call for Proposals Positioning
- Learning to 18 Positioning

9. Considering all of OAYEC's Public Policy initiatives over the past year, which of the following are communicated to your senior staff and/or board members? (Please select all that apply.)

- Policy Updates/ e-Bulletins
- Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) Positioning
- HRSDC Call for Proposals Positioning
- Learning to 18 Positioning
- None of the above

10. Considering each of OAYEC's four core functions, please rate your level of overall satisfaction in each of the following areas.

(Scale: *Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Satisfied*)

- Knowledge Transfer
- Public Policy
- Professional Development
- Strategic Communications

11. In your opinion, which core function requires greater emphasis and/or development over the coming year?

- Knowledge Transfer
- Public Policy
- Professional Development
- Strategic Communications

11a. Please take a moment to comment on your choice.

OAYEC's PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

12. Thinking about the information you've gathered directly or indirectly from OAYEC in 2005/6, please rate your level of knowledge on the following current OAYEC initiatives.

(Scale: Unaware, Aware, Basic Understanding, Good Understanding, Thorough Understanding)

- EVIDENCE Project
- Hire Prospects Project
- OAYEC Youth Website Development
- Take 30 Workplace Health Challenge

13. Have you visited OAYEC's new website (launched in April 2006)?

- Yes
- No

13a. If yes, please take a moment to share your opinions on the new site.

14. Is your agency participating in the Take 30 Workplace Health Challenge?

- Yes
- No

14a. If yes, please tell us how the program has affected you or your workplace.

14b. If yes, has your participation in the Take 30 Workplace Health Challenge made you more likely to participate in OAYEC's Annual Conference?

- Yes
- No

15. Which of the following OAYEC online resources did you access in the last year? (Please select all that apply.)

- HR Toolkit
- Resources Database
- News
- Events
- Jobs
- Member Profiles
- Youth Services Directory
- Workspaces
- None of the above

16. Please describe, in your opinion, what was OAYEC's greatest success was in 2005/6.

17. In your opinion, what was OAYEC's biggest challenge in 2005/6?

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: AWARDS

OAYEC is considering developing a province-wide youth employment-related awards program. Through this, we hope to involve elected officials, decision-makers, and employers in the recognition of youth employment issues. To help us ensure that this strategy compliments, rather than competes with, existing programs in the network, please answer the following questions.

18. Does your agency run a youth employment-related awards program?

- Yes
- No

If you answered YES to this question, please answer the following questions #19-24.

If you answered NO to this question, please skip to question #25.

19. Who are the recipients of your awards? (Please check all that apply)

- Youth
- Agency staff/ Board members
- Employers
- Other organizations
- Other (please specify)

20. How often do you distribute the awards?

- Annually
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- Other (please specify)

21. What are the goals of your awards program?

22. What are the criteria for receiving an award?

23. What key stakeholders are *invited* to attend/ participate in the awards ceremonies? (Please select all that apply.)

- Local media
- Employers
- Municipal politicians
- Provincial politicians
- Federal politicians
- Other (please specify)

24. Which of these key stakeholders consistently *attends/participates* in the awards ceremonies? (Please select all that apply.)

- Local media
- Employers
- Municipal politicians
- Provincial politicians
- Federal politicians
- Other (please specify)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: ENGAGEMENT

25. In what activities does your agency engage employers? (Please select all that apply)

- Finding job placements for your clients
- Fundraising through sponsorship or philanthropy
- Participation on boards or advisory committees
- Participation in employer surveys
- Participation in media/public relations campaigns or events
- Professional development of agency staff
- As members of your board of directors
- Other (please specify)

25a. Based on the previous question, please rank the top three (or less) engagement activities in order from most common to least common.

26. Does your agency engage *provincial* politicians in your work?

- Yes
- No

26a. If yes, how? (Please select all that apply.)

- Sending letters advocating for your agency
- Sending letters to raise awareness of your agency
- Providing your agency's newsletters
- Inviting politicians to your agency's activities and/or program launches
- Media/public relations campaigns or events
- Requesting meetings to discuss your agency's issues
- Other (please specify)

27. Does your agency engage *federal* politicians in your work?

- Yes
- No

27a. If yes, how? (Please select all that apply.)

- Sending letters advocating for your agency
- Sending letters to raise awareness of your agency
- Providing your agency's newsletters

- Inviting politicians to your agency's activities and/or program launches
- Media/public relations campaigns or events
- Requesting meetings to discuss your agency's issues
- Other (please specify)

28. In your opinion, what is the most effective way to engage politicians in the work of your agency?

29. Do you think OAYEC could help with your engagement efforts? If so, how?