



## A Highlight of the Citizens First 2020 Study

- Overview of the Report
- Key Insights
- Recommendations



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**JOINT COUNCILS' EXECUTIVE MONTHLY REPORT**

Developed by the Research Committee

August 2021

# 1. Introduction

In January 2021, the Joint Council's Research Committee published an Executive Report titled, [The Importance of Client Satisfaction Research](#). The report highlighted the preliminary findings (wave 2 results) of the [Citizens First 2020](#) national study.

The final results of Citizens First 2020 (CF 2020) have since been published in July 2021.<sup>1</sup> The Joint Councils has requested the Research Committee to conduct an analysis of the final report and identify key insights, as well as recommendations to address these findings. This Executive Report is a response to this request.



## Why is Client Satisfaction Research Important?

- Client satisfaction research is an important decision-making tool for the public sector. It is a reliable method to capture a snapshot of satisfaction levels and opinions around a wide range of programs and services.
- It allows the public sector to monitor and review trends over time to understand how client needs and perceptions are changing and how they impact their overall satisfaction. This enables service providers to improve services based on empirical evidence.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments across the country have introduced new service delivery options to meet the needs of clients. It is important to understand the effectiveness of these pandemic related response efforts.

## What is Covered in this Executive Report?

This report includes the following:

- Introduction
- Overview of the Citizens First 2020 Study
- Key Insights
- Recommendations

## 2. Overview of the Citizens First 2020 Study

The [Citizens First \(CF\)](#) series takes an in depth look at how citizens experience government services. For over 20 years, the study asked Canadians what they think about the delivery of public services, their expectations, and what they would like to see government (at all levels) prioritize.<sup>2</sup> The study is conducted through the collaboration between the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS), Ipsos Public Affairs, and sponsor jurisdictions representing all levels of government across Canada.

Citizens First 2020 is the latest iteration of the Citizens First research. This report explores “various dimensions of the evolving service environment, tracking perceptions of service quality and performance for a wide range of services offered by municipal, regional, provincial/ territorial and federal governments”.<sup>3</sup>

The study was conducted in four waves between the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and early 2021. As a result of this, the report offers unique insight into citizen attitudes towards government services and response efforts. It also illustrates how public response to government service delivery evolved during the duration of the study.<sup>4</sup>

The following offers a highlight of the topics covered in the CF 2020 report:

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### Citizens First 2020 Contents

1. Executive Summary
  2. Introduction
  3. Channel Usage and Preferences
  4. Service Reputation
  5. Service Quality Ratings
  6. Service Experience Measures
  7. Key Driver Analysis
  8. Service Expectations
  9. Connecting with Government
  10. Digital Identity and Privacy
  11. Artificial Intelligence
- Appendix
-

### 3. Key Insights

In response to the Joint Council’s request to highlight the key insights that emerged from the Citizen First 2020 study, in August 2021 the Research Committee conducted consultations with Citizens First subscribing jurisdictions and the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS).

During the consultations, the Research Committee asked what the jurisdictions and the ICCS felt were the most important and interesting findings of the Citizens First 2020 study.

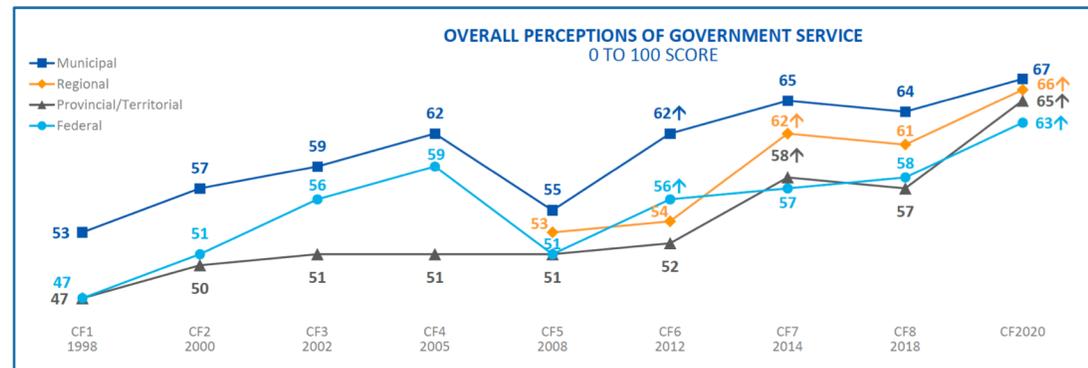
The following findings were highlighted based on the responses received<sup>5</sup>:

5. [Citizens First 2020: Actionable insights for public sector service providers](#)

1

#### Service Reputation

Ratings of government services at all levels are at an all time high —they are higher than they have ever been since these measures were first taken in 1998.

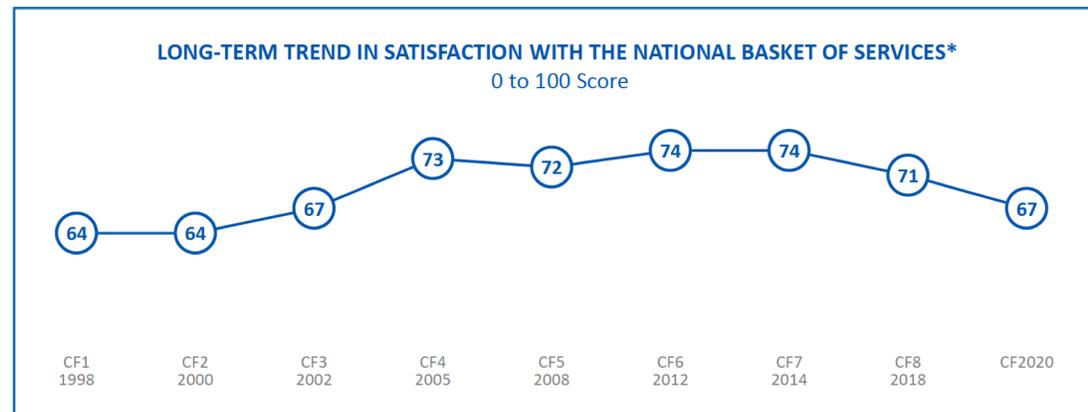


**Survey Question:** Overall, how would you rate the services you get from each level of government?

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#### National Basket of Services Scores

The score for satisfaction with the National Basket of Services is currently 67 out of 100, which is a decline of 4 points from 2018 (71). The result for 2020 is the lowest since 2002.



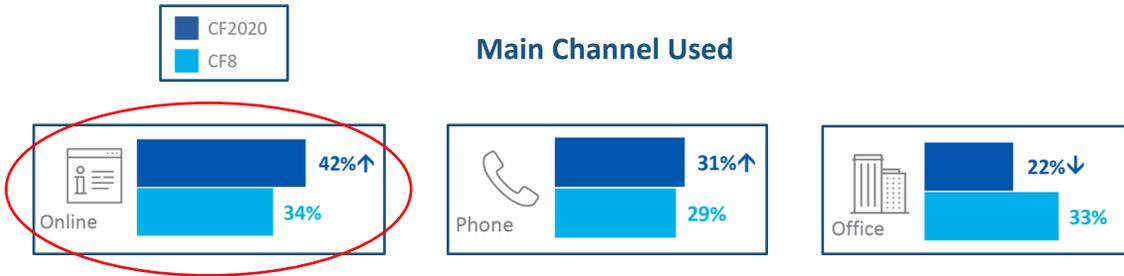
**Survey Question:** Please rate the quality of each of these services. If you did not use this service in the past 12 months, select 'Does Not Apply'.

# 4. Key Insights (Continued)

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## Trends in Channel Usage

COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on main channel usage. Online channels now dominate main channel usage.

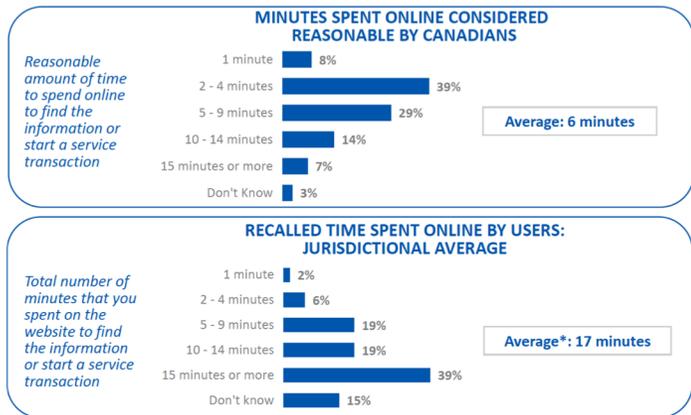


**Survey Questions:** - What was your first method of contact for this service?  
 - What other methods of contact did you use, if any?  
 - If you used more than one method, which was your main one? (Select one only)

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## Expectations and Time Spent Online

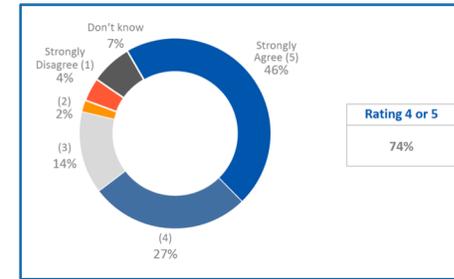
On average, Canadians consider about 6 minutes to be a reasonable amount of time to spend online to find information or start a service transaction. The average recalled time taken is nearly three times longer than what is expected.



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## Digital Identity

Most citizens (74%) agree that it should be a priority for government agencies to develop safe and effective means of digital identity for citizens accessing online services.

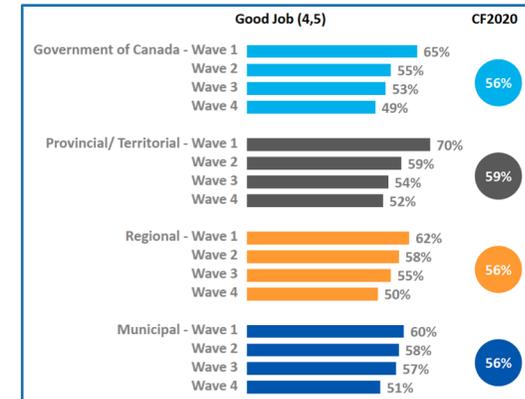


**Survey Question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that Digital identity should be a priority for government agencies to develop safe and effective means of digital identity for citizens accessing online services?

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## Perception of Government COVID-19 Response

Citizen ratings of COVID-19 management are positive, however, declined substantially throughout 2020 for all levels of government.



## 5. Recommendations to Address Citizens First 2020 Findings

The findings of the Citizens First 2020 report provides an opportunity for government organizations across Canada to gain a deeper understanding of how clients view government services. The results of the study can be leveraged to improve service delivery efforts to ensure client needs are met during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

During the consultation process, subscribing jurisdictions highlighted key questions related to the key findings from the Citizens First 2020 study. The Research committee has also identified specific recommendations to be considered by Joint Council members to further investigate these findings.

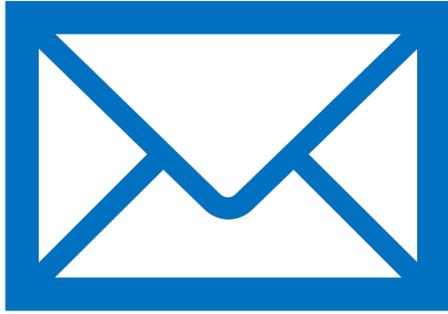
The following illustrates the questions and recommendations that emerged during the consultation process:

Citizens First 2020 Key Insights	Questions Raised by Subscribing Jurisdictions	Recommendations for Joint Councils Consideration
1. <b>Service Reputation</b>	Service reputation was at an all-time high. However, the data shows a decline as the pandemic progressed. Is there an opportunity to further explore why client perception of government services declined?	Task the Research Committee to conduct an analysis of available research to further investigate this trend by identifying service reputation as a topic to be featured on a Joint Council's Executive Monthly Report.
2. <b>National Basket of Services Scores</b>	Jurisdictions are interested in why the national basket of services was at an all-time low. Specifically, what drove this decline.	Invite the ICCS and Ipsos-Ried to a Joint Council's meeting to further discuss and share insights on the data that illustrates this decline.
3. <b>Trends in Channel Usage</b>	Jurisdictions are interested in what drove the shift towards the online channel preference. Are clients choosing online channels due to preference or necessity (as a result of the pandemic)?	Identify trends in online channel use as a topic to be featured on a Joint Council's Executive Monthly Report. The Research Committee will explore available research to analyze this trend.
4. <b>Expectations &amp; Time Spent: Online</b>	According to the report, expectations for service delivery times are not being met by governments online or by phone. To better understand how to narrow the gap, jurisdictions are interested in better understanding the data that illustrates this trend.	The Joint Councils' should host a session on this issue to identify strategies to narrow the gap on client expectations for service delivery times.
5. <b>Digital Identity</b>	A number of jurisdictions highlighted an interest to learn more regarding findings around digital identity.	The Joint Council's Digital Identity Program should leverage the findings in the report to support the ongoing work to develop the Pan-Canadian Digital Identity Plan.
6. <b>Perception of Government COVID-19 Response</b>	Jurisdictions are interested in what drove the decline (from wave 1 to 4) in client perception of government COVID-19 response efforts.	Review client perception of government COVID-19 response efforts in a year to identify if there is a long-term effect on client satisfaction levels.

### Alignment with Joint Council's Priorities

The key insights gathered by the Research Committee align with the current priorities outlined in the Joint Council's Strategic Plan (2021 – 2022). These priorities include<sup>6</sup>:

- 1 **Digital identity:** Accelerating the work to deliver trusted digital identity for Canadians.
- 2 **Client Centric Services:** Designing services that reflects the specific needs of citizens, rather than the needs of government.
- 3 **Research and Strategic Intelligence:** Addressing current and forthcoming challenges by leveraging research findings to design and implement service improvement strategies.



## For Further Reading

- [Customer Experience Legislation Clears Senate Committee](#)
- [Protecting citizen-facing staff from phishing starts with a people-first approach](#)
- [Strengthening public trust through data](#)
- [Removing barriers to online participation](#)
- [Two Keys to Delivering Exceptional Citizen Experiences](#)

## Other noteworthy articles:

[Agencies' online forms lack required interactive features](#)

[Push vs pull](#)

[Government investing in 5G innovation](#)

[The Benefits of a Single Digital Identity for Government Services](#)

## Research Repository

Access the Citizen First [Research Repository](#).

**Recent entries on the research repository:**

[Modernizing Government – Global Trends: KPMG Report - Joint Councils' Executive Report July 2021](#)

The report highlights the following areas: Overview of the Report, A Customer Centric Public Sector, A Trusted and Agile Public Sector, A Public Sector Centered on Technology and Data, Eight Critical Capabilities of a “Connected Enterprise”.



## Trends in the Daily Newsletter



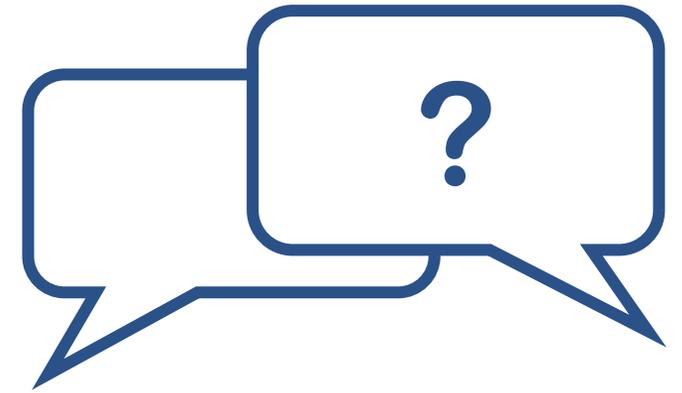
According to an article in [StateTech](#), a single digital identity is more than simply having one username and password to access all digital government services. The more significant benefit of an approach like this is that a single digital identity can link together and understand the government services a citizen uses and provide a more streamlined experience. It enables fewer IT resources spent helping citizens reset passwords for different government services, a more streamlined approach to service delivery and a better overall customer experience.



According to [ITWorldCanada](#), hybrid work environments have the power to leverage immersive, intelligent video and audio to include all workers in a flexible, hybrid future. “Enabling people-centred hybrid work practices and technology, and optimizing space utilization, is essential to increase the physical and psychological well-being of employees and to boost productivity and innovation” Jim Love, Chief Information Office and Chief Content Officer of IT World Canada.



The [Ontario government](#) has appointed public data expert, Andy Best, to support the development of a provincial Data Authority that will be responsible for building modern data infrastructure to support economic and social growth, while keeping that information private and secure. The first of its kind in Canada, when fully established, the Data Authority will equip people, organizations and communities with the information they need to thrive as the province accelerates its economic recovery.



## We would love to hear from you!

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