

Maintenance Enforcement Program

2013 Client Survey Results

The Alberta Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) is committed to providing excellent service to its clients.

MEP's client base is made up of people who make or receive child, spousal or partner support payments:

- Payors of support - debtors - make payments
- Recipients of support - creditors - receive payments

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, MEP handled nearly 50,000 files, collecting more than \$247 million in payments for almost 60,000 children. Every month, more than 2,100 clients visited our offices and MEP staff received approximately 8,000 telephone calls and 16,800 pieces of correspondence. In addition, the program's website had almost 80,000 web hits and the automated phone system handled over 115,000 automated calls.

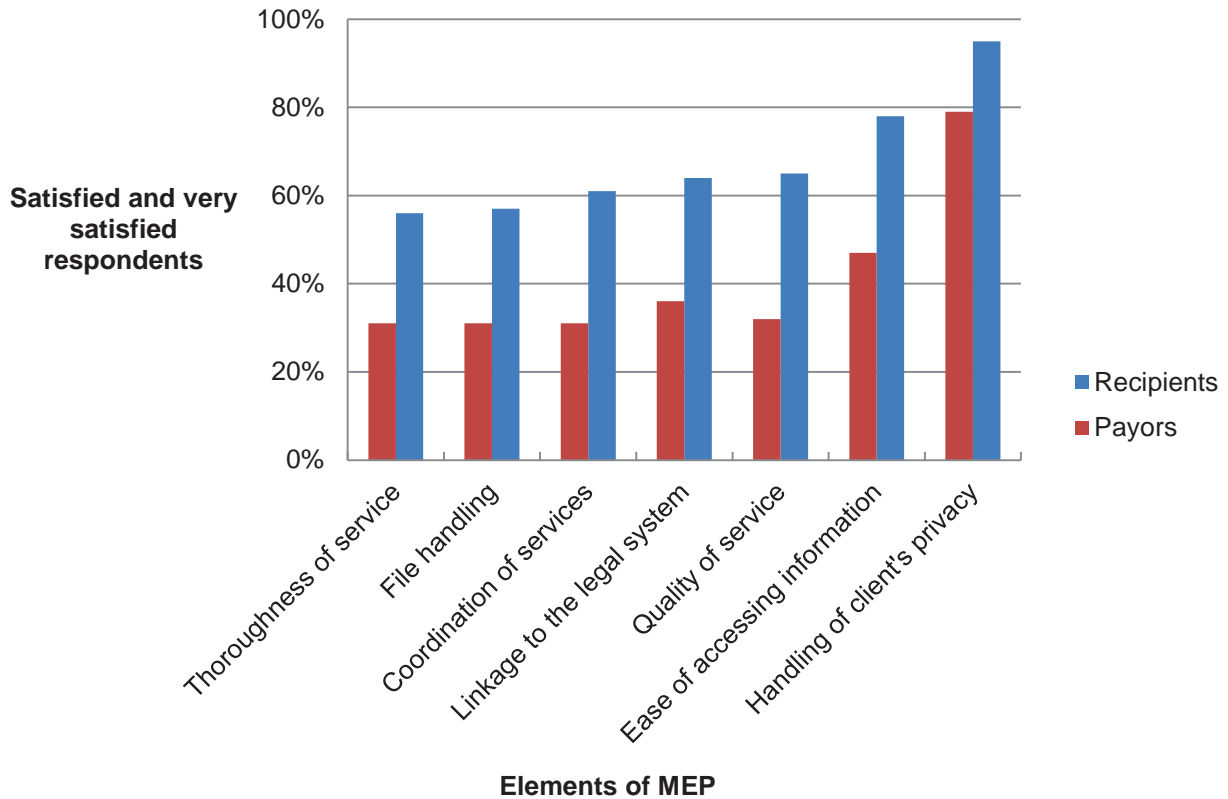
MEP surveys clients to help the program learn more about the experiences of our clients and to identify opportunities to improve our service.

MEP invited clients who had been with the program at least 6 months and where both parents lived in Alberta to respond to a client survey between October 7 and October 25, 2013. Clients were informed about the survey through a variety of media including a notice posted on MEP's website, an email sent directly to clients for whom an email address was available and a recorded message on MEP's phone system. In addition, a flyer was included in all outgoing correspondence for one week (approximately 8,000 pieces) and posters were placed in MEP offices.

Clients could complete the survey online or request a paper copy. A total of 2,699 clients responded to the survey. 1,778 (72 per cent) of respondents were recipients, 646 (26 per cent) were payors, and 39 (2 per cent) were both recipients and payors. All responses were anonymous.

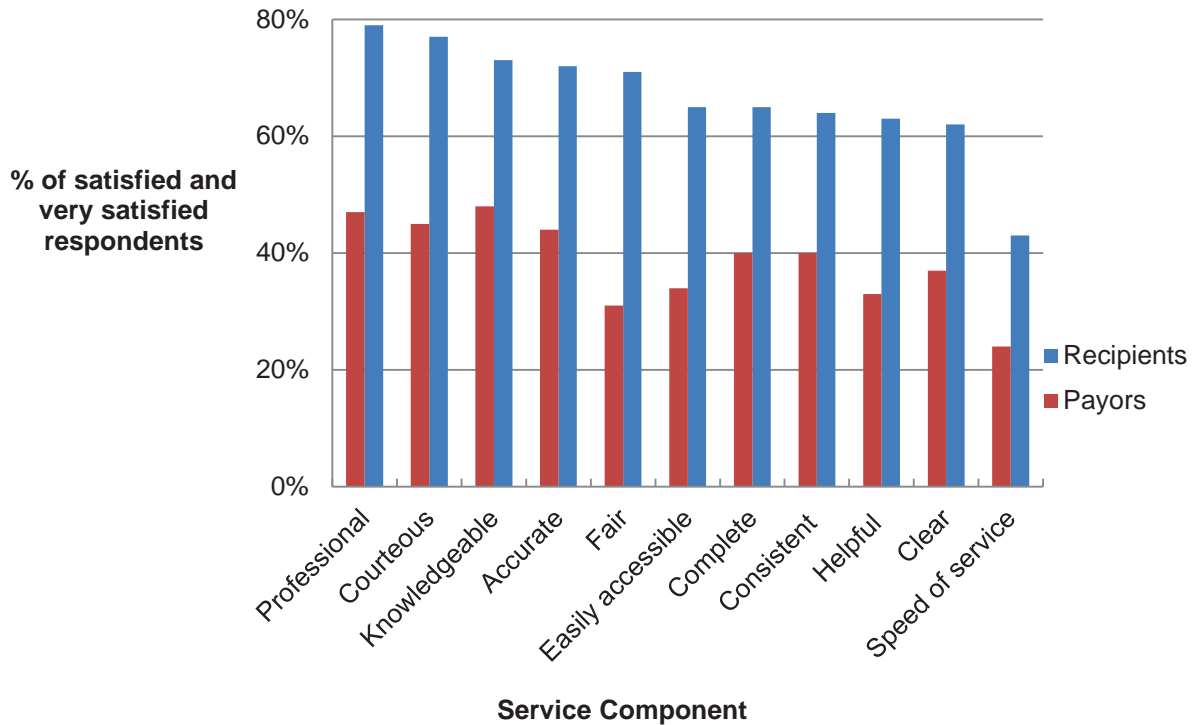
The following is a summary of the survey findings.

Figure 1: Client satisfaction with MEP



In general, recipients of support were more satisfied with MEP than were payors of support. When asked about different elements of MEP, most respondents were satisfied with MEP's handling of privacy; however, recipients of support were far more satisfied than payors with the ease of accessing information and the quality of service provided by the program.

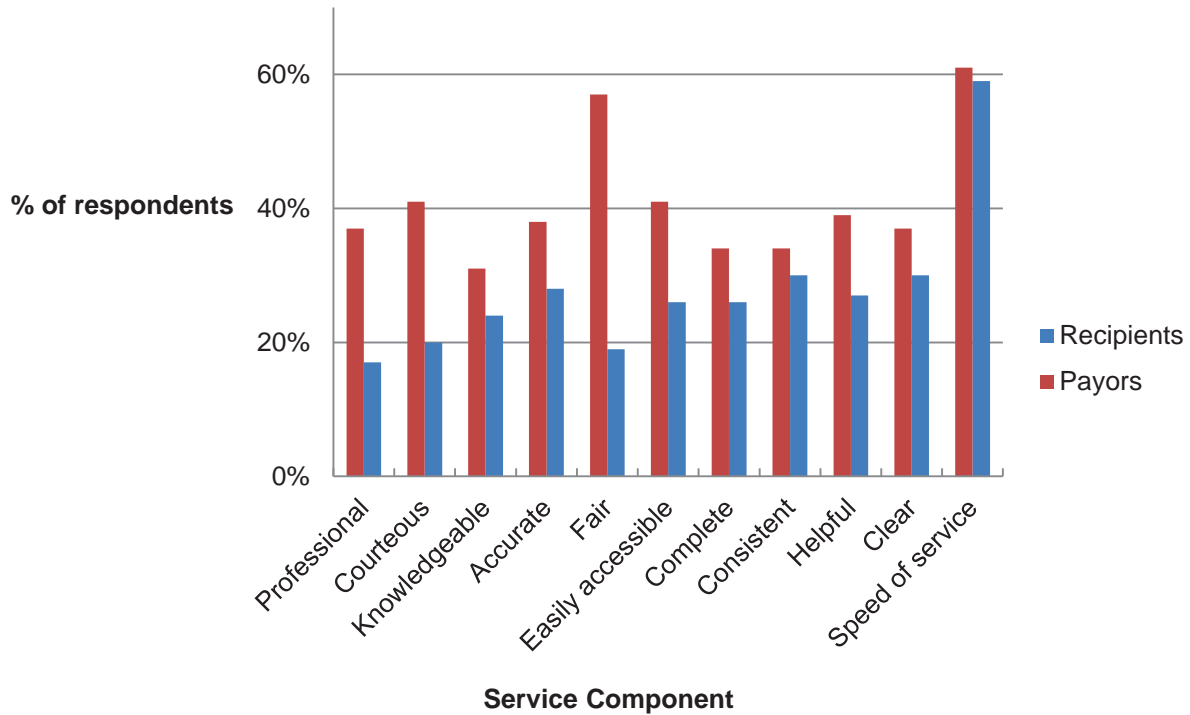
Figure 2: MEP's customer services



Most recipients of support were satisfied with MEP's customer service. More than 70 per cent of recipients were either very satisfied or satisfied with the professionalism, courtesy, knowledge, accuracy and fairness of service from MEP.

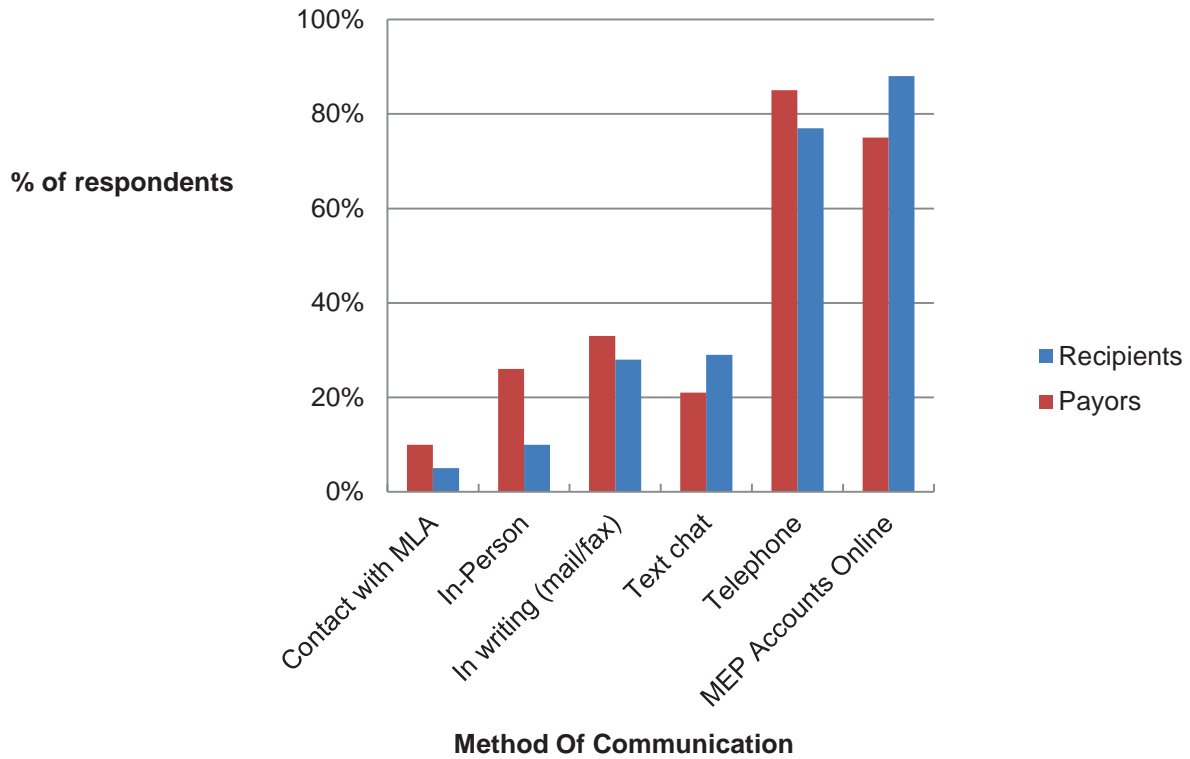
Payors of support were far less satisfied with all areas of MEP's customer service. Both recipients and payors of support were dissatisfied with the speed of MEP's service, which registered the lowest satisfaction overall. The greatest difference in satisfaction between payors and recipients related to the perceived fairness of MEP's customer service.

Figure 3: Priorities for improvement



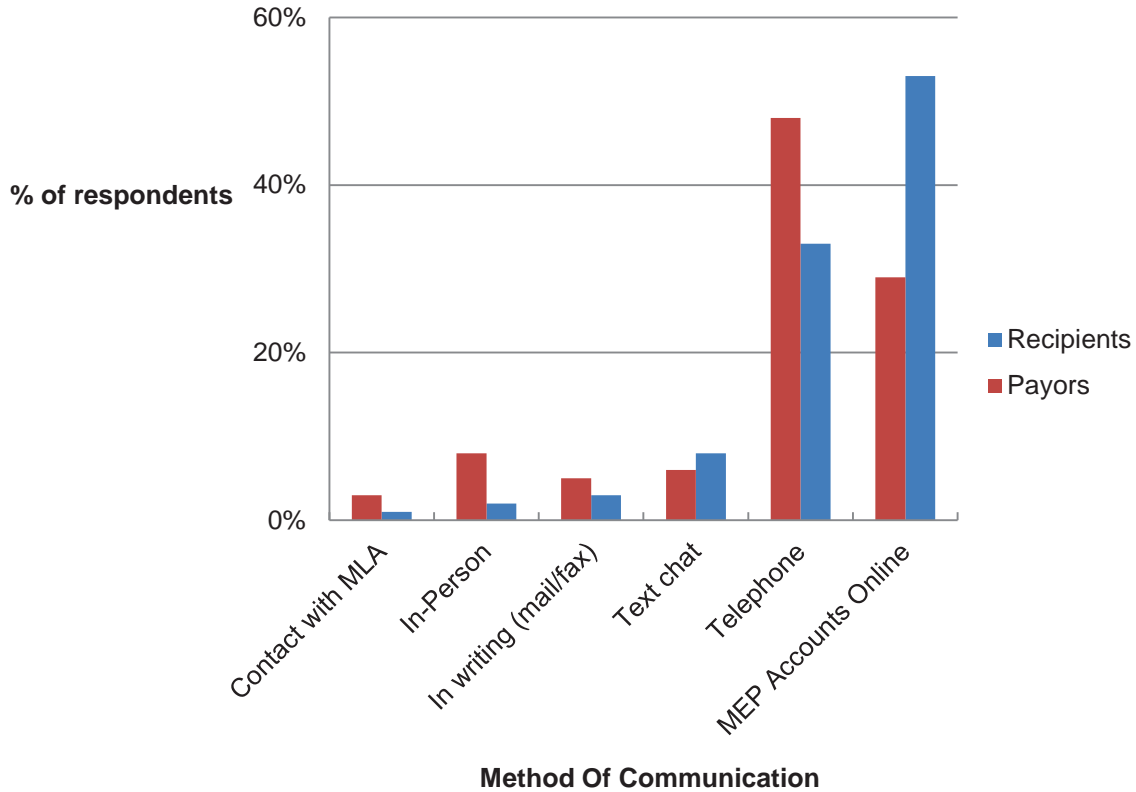
Recipients and payors of support agree MEP should prioritize improving speed of service. The perceived fairness of MEP's service was significantly different between payors and recipients of support with 57 per cent of payors indicating MEP should prioritize improving the fairness of service provided to clients as compared to 19 per cent of recipients.

Figure 4: How clients communicate with MEP



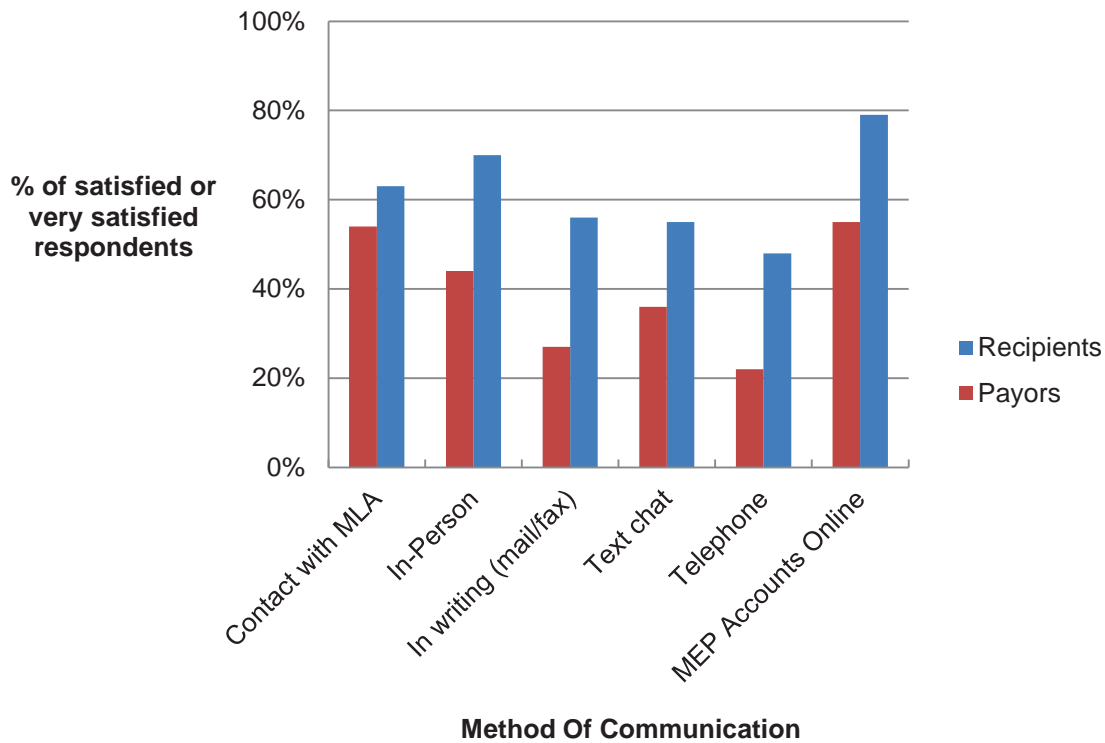
The majority of clients contacted MEP using MEP Accounts Online, MEP’s automated account information system, or by telephone. Other communication methods were used much less often.

Figure 5: Clients' preferred methods of contact with MEP



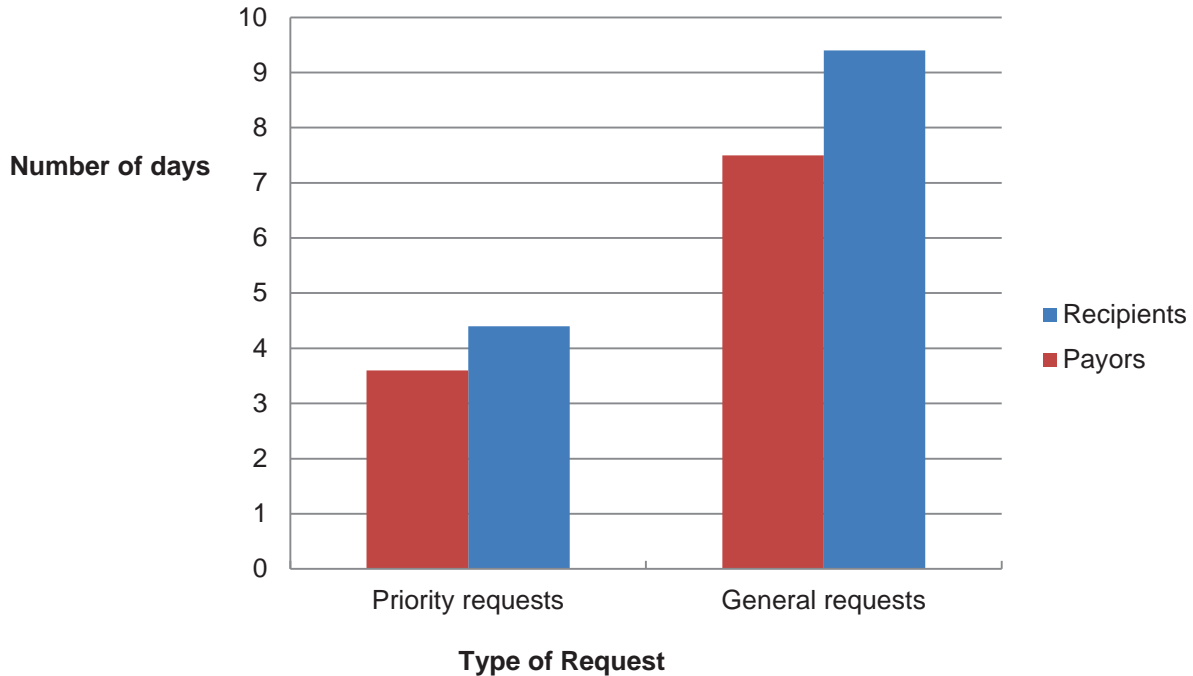
Respondents agreed that that they preferred to contact MEP either by telephone or through MEP Accounts online. Of recipients of support, 53 per cent preferred to use MEP Accounts online compared to 33 per cent who preferred to use the telephone. However, most payors of support preferred to use the telephone (48 per cent) rather than MEP Accounts Online (29 per cent).

Figure 6: Clients' satisfaction with MEP's communication methods



As shown in figure four, MEP Accounts Online was one of the most common methods used by clients to communicate with MEP. Most clients were also satisfied with it. However, a number of clients, especially payors of support, were dissatisfied with MEP's telephone service. Recipients of support were more satisfied with other communication methods, such as in-person visits and text chats, than were payors of support.

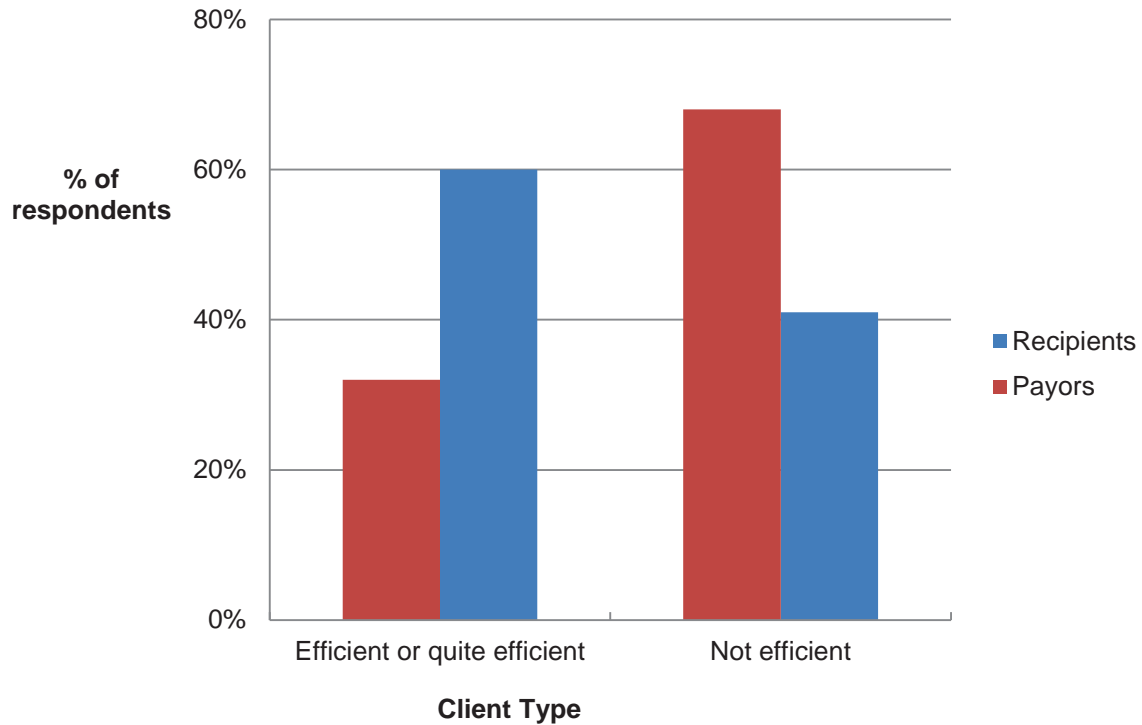
Figure 7: Clients' feedback on acceptable response times



Clients were asked what they thought would be an acceptable response time for MEP to respond to client requests. Recipients suggested 9.4 days for general requests and 4.4 days for priority requests. Payors recommended slightly shorter times of 7.5 days and 3.6 days respectively. Both these suggestions are considerably shorter than MEPs current targets of 30 calendar days for most general requests and 14 days for most priority requests.

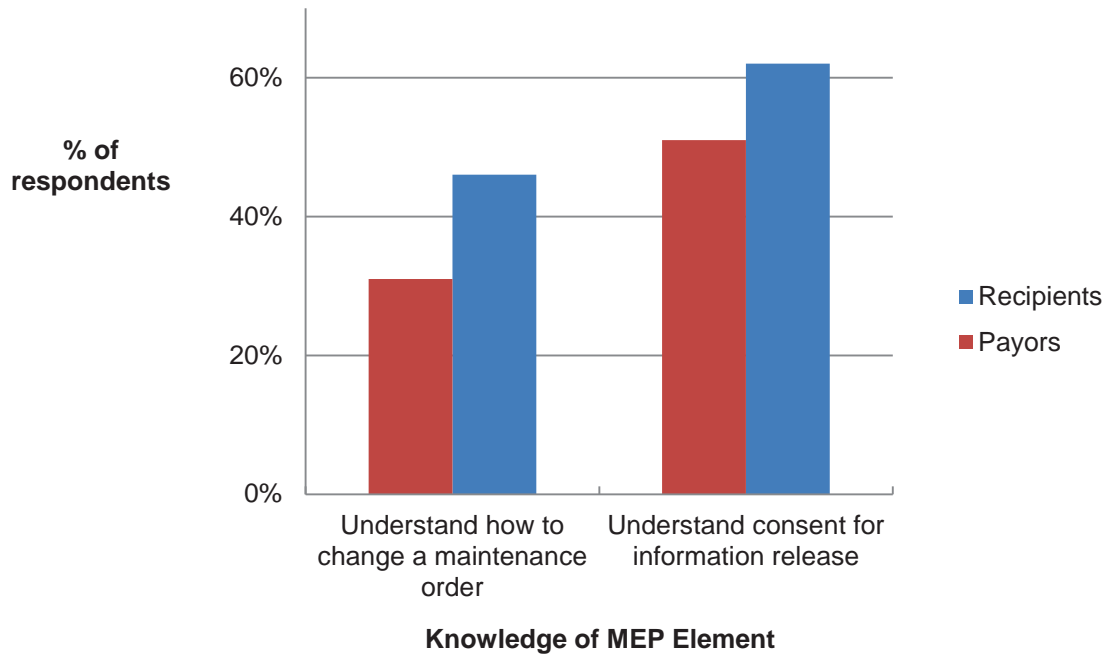
However, when clients were asked whether MEP staff should take the time needed to ensure all of the client's issues had been addressed during a phone call, or if MEP staff should focus on speed of service and minimizing wait times, 85 per cent of recipients and 79 per cent of payors said MEP should take the time to resolve all the client's issues.

Figure 8: MEP's efficiency



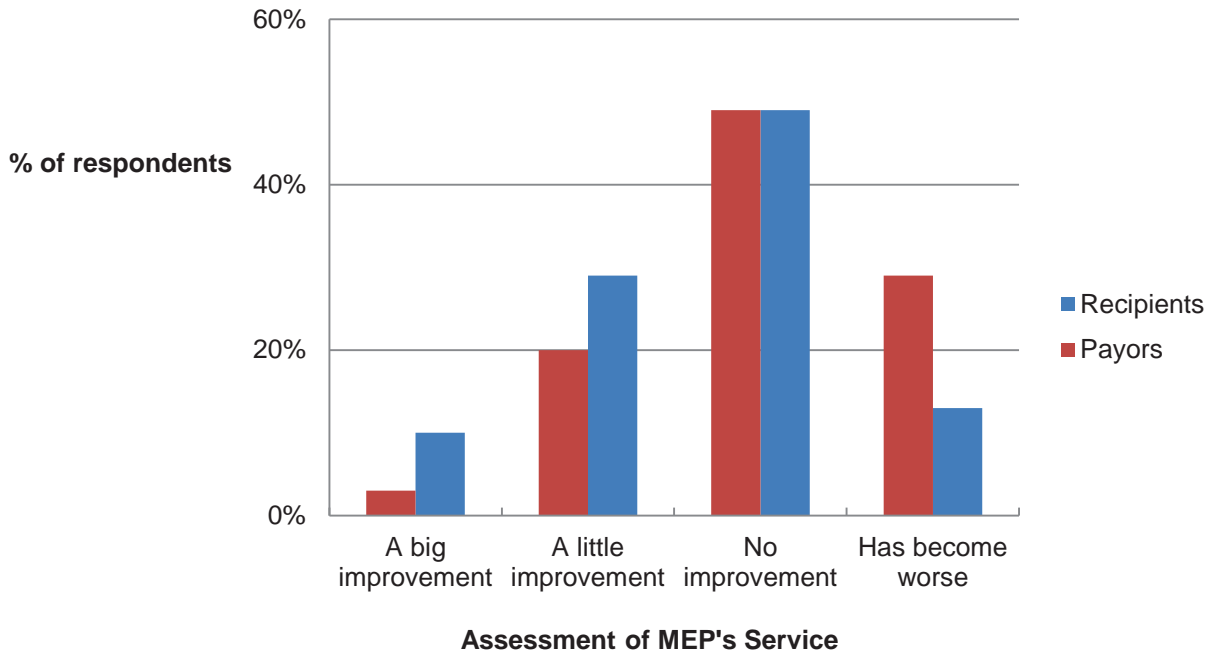
Opinions of MEP's efficiency are strongly divided between payors and recipients of support. While a majority of recipients feel that MEP is efficient in its work, a majority of payors feel that MEP is not efficient.

Figure 9: Clients' understanding of different elements of maintenance enforcement



Clients had varying levels of understanding of how their maintenance orders are administered. For example, while 61 per cent of recipients and 51 per cent of payors knew that they were required to provide consent before any other party can access information on their file, less than 50 per cent of recipients, and only 31 per cent of payors, understood how to get their maintenance order changed.

Figure 10: Has service improved over the last two years?



Respondents who had been MEP clients for at least two years were asked whether they had seen improvements to MEP over the past two years. Thirty-eight per cent of recipients indicated that service had improved over the last two years compared to 13 per cent who felt that it was worse. Amongst payors, however, 29 per cent felt that service had become worse and 23 per cent felt there had been improvements.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program is committed to continuous improvement. Surveys provide important information to help MEP better understand the needs of our clients and identify opportunities to improve our service delivery. MEP plans to conduct a client survey every two years to remain accountable to our client's priorities.