



Flamborough Connects Needs Assessment

Prepared for
Flamborough Connects

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Context.....	3
Research questions.....	3
Methods	3
Findings.....	4
Demographics	4
Service usage and familiarity with services.....	5
Satisfaction with services.....	6
Key Takeaways and Next Steps	10
Appendix 1: Telephone Survey Form	12

Executive Summary

Flamborough Connects facilitates community services and provides information and referral services to individuals living in Flamborough. Flamborough Connects aims to understand their client demographics and gather continuous feedback on how to improve the relevancy and delivery of their services. With this aim, Flamborough Connects approached the McMaster Research Shop seeking support with a needs assessment for their clients using an online and telephone survey.

The research team developed the survey, which ran from November 9 – 30, 2023. The survey collected information on client demographics (age, gender, area they live), engagement with existing programs, suggestions for program improvements, and ideas for new programs. 63 participants completed the survey including 30 via phone and 33 online.

Most survey participants were women, aged 75 and over, and from Waterdown. While most participants indicated they had used Flamborough Connects' programs within the past year, in general, they provided mixed feedback on program relevance. Approximately a third of participants felt that many services were relevant to them, while just as many felt only a few services were relevant to them.

Participants felt that Flamborough Connects could improve their services by offering more transportation services including for medical appointments and by making them more accessible (e.g., for people with mobility challenges or who are deaf or hard of hearing). Participants also felt that Flamborough Connects needed to increase awareness of their programs. Many participants indicated that they do not use online communications; therefore, Flamborough Connects will need to consider keeping participants informed using print formats and/or postal mail.

Flamborough Connects can use these findings to inform improvements to their current and future programs and services.

Introduction

Context

Since 1977, Flamborough Connects (FC) has been providing information and referral services to community members, as well as facilitating their own community services. FC's leadership have been witnessing demographic change within the geographic boundary they serve, causing them to question the relevancy of their current services. As a starting point to better understanding the existing needs of their community, FC reached out to the McMaster Research Shop to assist with researching their client demographics and satisfaction with current service offerings. This report provides a summary of our findings from an online and telephone survey of FC's current client base.

Research questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the client demographics?
- How familiar are clients with Flamborough Connects' existing programs and services?
- How satisfied are clients with Flamborough Connects' existing programs and services?

The findings will be used by Flamborough Connects to inform the scope and delivery of their current and future programs and services.

Methods

The research team developed a client survey that ran from November 9 – 30, 2023. The survey collected information on client demographics (age, gender, area they live), familiarity and satisfaction with existing programs, and their feedback on improving program offerings. The research team administered the online and telephone surveys. The team used LimeSurvey to create the online survey and adapted the survey questions for the telephone surveys to ensure the questions were easy to understand for older adult participants (see Appendix 1 for data collection form). The community partner reviewed the survey draft and provided feedback. Once the initial review process was completed, the research team conducted one telephone pilot survey with a client. The community partner tested the online survey internally with their staff members. Based on the results of the pilot testing, we adapted our survey questions and structure for logic and clarity.

The community partner conducted outreach to clients from September – October 2023 to inform them about the survey and ask permission for the research team to contact them. The community partner provided a list of clients with whom to share the survey

and their preferred method for communication (i.e., phone or email). For the online survey, the research team used LimeSurvey to send email invitations and weekly reminder emails encouraging participants to complete the survey. For the telephone surveys, the research team made a maximum of three call attempts to each participant. On the third call attempt, team members left a message asking interested participants to call back. Where phone participants provided an email address, the team also sent follow-up emails inviting participants to complete the online version as a secondary option when unable to reach them by phone.

Phone survey data were entered into LimeSurvey for analysis along with the online survey responses. The survey consisted of categorical and open-ended questions. To analyse categorical questions, the research team calculated the count and proportion of respondents who selected each response option. For open-ended responses, the research team categorised each response according to key themes and reported the number of participants who mentioned each theme.

Findings

In total, we reached out to 128 participants. 63 participants completed the survey - 30 by phone and 33 online.

Demographics

The survey asked participants to provide responses to several demographic questions, including age, gender, and the area within Flamborough they live.

Most survey participants (58%) were in the 75+ age group (Table 1).

Table 1: Age

Response	Count	Percent (%)
24 or under	0	0%
25 – 49	2	3%
50 – 64	6	10%
65 – 74	18	29%
75+	36	58%

54 participants (86%) identified as women, while 9 (14%) identified as men.

Of the respondents, most were either from Waterdown (46%) or Freelon (22%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Area of Flamborough

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Waterdown	29	46%
Freelton	14	22%
Rural Flamborough	4	6%
Carlisle	3	5%
Millgrove	2	3%
Greensville	2	3%
Beverly Hills	2	3%
Rockton	1	2%
Lynden	1	2%
Other	5	8%

Service usage and familiarity with services

The survey asked participants to select all the Flamborough Connects' programs they had heard of before (Table 3). 42 participants (67%) have heard of the Income Tax Program, 37 (59%) have heard of Wheel of Fitness, while 31 (49%) have heard of the Senior Education Sessions and Holiday Gift programs.

Table 3: Programs participants have heard of

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Income Tax Program	42	67%
Wheel of Fitness	37	59%
Senior Education Sessions	31	49%
Holiday Gift Program	31	49%
Community Events Calendar	30	48%
Snow Angels	28	44%
Flamborough Volunteers	28	44%
Flamborough Drives	26	41%
Flamborough Shops	22	35%
Friendly Calling	22	35%
Information and Referral	18	29%
Youth Empowerment Program	9	14%
None of the above	5	8%

46 participants (74%) have used Flamborough Connects' services or programs in the past year, while one participant (2%) was unsure.

Table 4 shows which programs participants have attended in the past. Wheel of Fitness was the most used program, with 21 participants (45%) indicating that they have used it before. The Income Tax Program and Senior Education Sessions followed, which 14 participants (30%) and 13 participants (28%) have attended, respectively.

Table 4: Programs participants have used before

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Wheel of Fitness	21	45%
Income Tax Program	14	30%
Senior Education Sessions	13	28%
Community Events Calendar	9	19%
Holiday Gift Program	8	17%
Information and Referral	8	17%
Flamborough Drives	7	15%
Flamborough Volunteers	4	9%
Flamborough Shops	3	6%
Snow Angels	2	4%
None of the above	1	2%

15 participants (24%) have not used Flamborough Connects' services or programs in the past year. When asked why, participants indicated most often that they did not need them (9 participants, 64%) while others (4 participants, 29%) stated they were not aware of the programs available to them (Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons participants have not used programs in the past year

Response	Count	Percent (%)
I did not need them	9	64%
I was not aware of them	4	29%
I had no transportation to get to them	2	14%
They were too far away from me	2	14%
They did not fit my schedule	1	7%
They were too expensive	1	7%
Other (e.g., difficulty registering, health issues)	2	14%

Satisfaction with services

An equal number of participants indicated that Flamborough Connects has “many services” or “only a few” relevant services to them (22 participants, 35% each) (Table 6). 15 participants (24%) were unaware of all the services available and could not evaluate whether they were relevant to them.

Table 6: Relevance of Flamborough Connects Programs

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Flamborough Connects has many services relevant to me	22	35%
Flamborough Connects has only a few services relevant to me	22	35%
Flamborough Connects does not have any services relevant to me	4	6%
Unaware of all the services available	15	24%

Participants provided feedback on ways to improve Flamborough Connects' services (Table 7). 16 participants indicated that Flamborough Connects should increase their efforts to raise awareness of their programs, 9 indicated they should increase transportation to medical appointments or other services, and 4 indicated they should choose accessible locations for people with mobility challenges.

Table 7: Suggestions for improving Flamborough Connects Services

Theme	Count	Example Response(s)
Increase awareness and provide advance notice about programs	16	"More emails reminding us seniors if there is any other ways that we can get help if needed", "Raise Flamborough Connects' profile throughout Flamborough– many people don't know about them"
Increase transportation to medical appointments or other programs and services	9	"Taking people to medical appointments in Burlington / Hamilton which they stopped in spring 2023"
Choose accessible locations for people with mobility challenges	4	"More accessible locations- Participant is currently in retirement home and is experiencing health issues that are resulting in reduced mobility"
Adapt programs for people who are deaf or hard of hearing	1	"be more aware that some of the seniors are hard of hearing and have the appropriate hearing aids in place-- have leaders recap questions from the audience so hearing disabled can participate in the question and answers"
Increase frequency of programs	1	"Love the chair yoga program and would love it 2 [times per week] in my area."

Survey participants were asked to rate their interest in several programs (Table 8). Participants were not overwhelmingly interested in any of the given options; however, 31 participants (50%) indicated they were "likely" or "very likely" to attend a program on navigating the healthcare system while 23 participants (38%) of participants said they were "likely" or "very likely" to attend a volunteer appreciation celebration. "Starting Your

Own Business” was the least favoured option. 58 participants (95%) were “very unlikely” or “unlikely” to attend such a program, possibly due to the age demographic of the surveyed individuals.

Table 8: Participants’ interest in attending suggested new programs

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Seniors Caregiver Support Group	24 (40%)	22 (37%)	13 (22%)	1 (2%)
Starting Your Own Business	46 (75%)	12 (20%)	2 (3%)	1 (2%)
Volunteer Appreciation Celebration	18 (30%)	20 (33%)	22 (36%)	1 (2%)
Navigating the Health Care System	15 (24%)	16 (26%)	23 (37%)	8 (13%)

19 participants provided suggestions for new programs that Flamborough Connects could implement. 4 participants mentioned that Flamborough Connects should provide programs on financial literacy and 4 participants mentioned they should plan recreation and social activities (Table 9).

Table 9: Participant ideas for new programs

Theme	Count	Example Response(s)
Financial Literacy and avoiding scams	4	"Maybe for others learning how to read bank statements (financial literacy)"
Recreation/social activities	4	"Group crafts"
Information and support with using technology	3	"Programs to learn more about computers/cell phones/technology in general for seniors"
Group Outings	3	"Social Outings such as group lunches or seeing a show together to help people connect with other people"
Nutrition classes	3	"Nutrition and weight loss program for seniors", "Cooking classes"
Exercise	3	"gentle exercise for those with difficulties", "Chair Yoga"
Walking Groups	2	"a walking group that would meet at the park(s) or trails for exercise and socializing"
Home Visiting	2	"Courtesy calls and visits at home to seniors who are experiencing difficulties due to poor health or are not familiar with technology."
Information on driving for seniors	2	"Information on driving/road safety for seniors"
Home Maintenance	2	" trustworthy assistance in conducting repairs in home (repairs/ lawn cutting/ snow removal)"
Course on photography	1	"courses on photography"

Information on accessing dental care	1	" I would like to know about accessible dental care for seniors who's do not qualify for the present govt. run program."
Bereavement support group	1	"Support group for parents grieving the loss of children"
Information on cannabis for seniors	1	"Information on cannabis for seniors program"

44 participants (71%) were not interested in attending virtual programs while 18 participants (29%) were interested in attending virtual programs.

The survey asked participants to select all the sources of information they currently use (Table 10). The top three sources of information that participants used were word of mouth (36 participants, 57%), email newsletters (33 participants, 52%), and the Flamborough Review (24 participants, 38%).

Table 10: Sources of information participants use *currently*

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Word of mouth	36	57%
Email newsletters	33	52%
Flamborough Review	24	38%
Posters in the community	17	27%
Website	15	24%
Community group/Church/Recreation Centre	14	22%
Social media	10	16%
Other (phone calls)	1	6%
I don't find information	2	3%

The survey also asked participants for their preferred sources of information (Table 11). 40 participants (67%) prefer receiving information through email newsletters, while 26 (43%) prefer postal mail and 18 (30%) prefer posters in the community. Social media and phone calls ranked low on the list.

Table 11: Sources of information participants *prefer* to use

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Email Newsletters	40	67%
Postal Mail	26	43%
Poster in the community	18	30%
Website	17	28%
Community Group/Church/Recreation Centre	15	25%
Phone calls	14	23%

Social media	7	12%
Other (e.g., library)	1	2%

Table 12 shows participants' ratings of how easy or difficult it is to access information about Flamborough Connects. 49 participants (80%) of individuals stated that it was "very easy" or "easy" for them to obtain information about Flamborough Connects' services.

Table 12: Participant ratings of access to information

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Very Easy	14	23%
Easy	36	58%
Difficult	9	15%
Very Difficult	3	5%

Participants were asked to evaluate how effectively Flamborough Connects communicates using several platforms (Table 13). Participants rated communication via email newsletters positively, with 38 participants (61%) indicating that Flamborough Connects uses email newsletters "well" or "very well". In general, most clients are not relying on social media or Flamborough Connects' website, as indicated by the number of participants who selected "not applicable".

Table 13: Participant ratings of Flamborough Connects' communication

	Very Poorly	Poorly	Well	Very Well	Not Applicable
Email Newsletters	0	1 (2%)	18 (29%)	20 (32%)	23 (37%)
Website	0	0	16 (28%)	8 (14%)	33 (58%)
Social Media	0	4 (7%)	7 (13%)	5 (9%)	40 (71%)

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

This research highlights the demographics and needs of Flamborough Connects' current client base. Participants in the survey were primarily women, aged 75 and over. Close to half of participants were from Waterdown.

Most participants indicated they had used Flamborough Connects' programs in the past year; however, feedback on the program offerings was mixed. Approximately a third of participants felt that many services were relevant to them, while another third felt only some of the organization's services were relevant to them. They felt that Flamborough Connects could improve their services by offering more transportation services, such as reintroducing transportation to medical appointments. Flamborough Connects should also pay attention to program accessibility given that participants noted disabilities that required accommodation (e.g., mobility challenges, deaf or hard of hearing).

Participants generally felt that Flamborough Connects needs to bring more awareness of their program offerings to clients. Participants did not feel they were informed on what services are available to them. Given that many participants indicated they did not use online communications, special consideration should be given to providing information in print formats, including postal mail. This issue is especially pertinent given that the Flamborough Review is no longer in circulation and was an important source of information for clients. Participants would like to be kept informed about program offerings on a consistent basis using a variety of communication methods.

Some limitations to this research exist. Flamborough Connects contacted individuals from their client list and narrowed down the list to those who gave consent for the research team to contact them about the survey. The sample was therefore limited to clients who responded to the community partner's attempts to contact them and those who the research team was able to reach during the survey period. While the survey had 63 respondents, the individuals who participated are most likely those who already engage regularly with Flamborough Connects and for whom telephone and email communications are accessible. The findings cannot be extrapolated to individuals outside of Flamborough Connects' existing client base and therefore does not provide any indication of how the organization may engage new clients. Notably, no one age 24 or under participated in the survey; therefore, there is no feedback pertaining to Flamborough Connects' youth engagement program. Further research could focus on this demographic to better understand how Flamborough Connects can support them.

Appendix 1: Telephone Survey Form

Survey Code: _____

Flamborough Connects – Client Telephone Survey Form

If they don't answer the phone:

1. Record attempt in the tracking sheet.
2. Try calling again on a different day/ time of day.

On your third attempt without receiving an answer, please leave a message:

Hello. I am a Research Associate for the McMaster Research Shop and I am calling to speak to ____ [Client Name] _____. We are conducting a client survey for Flamborough Connects and they said you would be willing to participate.

- **[If email address available]** Since we were unable to reach you for the survey, we will send an email with a link to you shortly. If you prefer a phone survey, please call us back at 905-525-9140 x 26804.
- **[If phone number only]** If you are still interested in participating, please call back at 905-525-9140 x 26804.

If they answer the phone:

Hello. May I speak to ____ [Client Name] _____?

I'm conducting a client satisfaction survey on behalf of Flamborough Connects.

Flamborough Connects gave us your contact information and indicated you would be willing to participate in our anonymous survey. Is this something you're still willing to participate in?

The survey should take about 15 - 20 minutes to complete. Do you have some time now to do the survey?

- **If Yes** – proceed to survey questions
- **If No** – ask if there is a better time to call back

Survey Questions

As mentioned, this survey is anonymous. It is also entirely voluntary – if there are any questions you don't want to answer, you can tell me to skip it.

1. What is your age?

- ☐ 24 or under
- ☐ 25 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 64
- ☐ 65 - 74
- ☐ 75+

2. What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-Binary
- ☐ Genderqueer
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Other (please specify):
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. In which area of Flamborough do you live?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterdown | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheffield |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carlisle | <input type="checkbox"/> Lynden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freelon | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Millgrove | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Flamborough |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beverly Hills | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rockton | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |

4. I am going to read a list of Flamborough Connects' services or programs. Please say "Yes" if you have **heard** of the program before and "No" if you have not. [Read each option and pause for participant to respond].

[If they have heard of any programs] Which programs have you **used** before?

Heard of	Used before
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Events Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Events Calendar
<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Drives	<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Drives
<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Shops	<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Shops
<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Calling	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Calling
<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Gift Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Gift Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Information & Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Information & Referral
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Education Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Education Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Angels	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Angels
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheel of Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheel of Fitness
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Empowerment Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Empowerment Program
Any others you've heard of that we haven't mentioned?	Any others you've used that we haven't mentioned?
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):
[If they say no to all of the above]	[If they say no to all of the above]
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above

5. Have you used any Flamborough Connects services or programs **in the past year?**

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

6. [If they select no to Q5] Why not? Is it because ...

- ☐ They did not fit your schedule
☐ You were not aware of them
☐ You did not need them,
☐ They were too expensive,
☐ You had no transportation to get to them,
☐ They were too far away from you, or ...
☐ Other (please specify):

7. Do you feel that Flamborough Connects has:

- ☐ Many services relevant to you
- ☐ Only a few services relevant to you
- ☐ No services relevant to you
- ☐ You are unaware of all the services available to you

8. What, if anything, would improve Flamborough Connects' services for you (e.g., increase frequency of programs, offer programs in more accessible locations, offer programs at different times etc.)?

Response	
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[Read written response back to participant to confirm accuracy]

9. How likely are you to attend the following potential Flamborough Connects programs/services if they are offered in the future?

- **Seniors Caregiver Support Circle:** a weekly informal group for seniors who are taking care of a family member or friend
- **Starting Your Own Business:** online entrepreneurship training for seniors over several months
- **Volunteer Appreciation Celebration:** an evening event celebrating volunteers in April
- **Navigating the Health Care System:** a once-weekly Education Session over 3 weeks

Please rate the options ...

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
Seniors Caregiver Support Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Starting Your Own Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer Appreciation Celebration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigating the Health Care System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Do you have any other ideas for programs you think Flamborough Connects should consider?

Response	
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[Read written response back to participant to confirm accuracy]

11. Are you interested in attending virtual programs (e.g., online via Zoom)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. I'm going to ask you about how you **currently** find information about Flamborough Connects' programs and services. Please answer "Yes" or "No."

Do you **currently** find out about programs and services through ...

[Read each option one at a time and pause]

- ☐ Community group/Church/Recreation Centre
- ☐ Email newsletters
- ☐ Flamborough Review
- ☐ Poster in the community
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Word of mouth

Anywhere else?

☐ Other (please specify): _____

[If none of the above]

☐ I don't find information

13. I'm going to ask you how you **prefer** to be informed about community programs and services. Please answer "Yes" or "No."

Do you **prefer** finding out about programs and services through ...

[Read each option one at a time and pause]

- ☐ Community group/Church/Recreation Centre
- ☐ Email newsletters
- ☐ Phone calls
- ☐ Postal mail
- ☐ Poster in the community
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website

Anywhere else?

☐ Other (please specify): _____

14. [If they selected email newsletters, website, or social media in question 12] Please rate how well you think Flamborough Connects communicates information about their programs/services/upcoming events using:

	Very Poorly	Poorly	Well	Very Well	Not Applicable
Email Newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. [If they selected "Very poorly" or "Poorly" in question 14] How, if at all, could Flamborough Connects' improve their communication using...?

Email Newsletters	
Website	
Social Media	

[Read written response(s) back to participant to confirm accuracy]

16. In general, how easy or difficult is it for you to get information about Flamborough Connects' programs/services? Is it:

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

17. [If previous response was "Difficult" or "Very difficult"] How, if at all, could Flamborough Connects make it easier for you to get information about their programs/services?

Response	
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[Read written response back to participant to confirm accuracy]

18. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for improving Flamborough Connects' programs and services?

Response	
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[Read written response back to participant to confirm accuracy]

Thank you for participating in our survey.