



Report: Reopening the Landlord and Tenant Board for In–Person Services

Prepared by: Landlord's Self-Help Centre

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Disclaimer: Landlord's Self-Help Centre (LSHC) is an independent non-profit specialty community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario and does not have any authority or decision-making power over the operations, policies, or procedures of the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). The findings in this report reflect the views of survey respondents and are provided for informational and advocacy purposes only.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes 287 responses in English, collected through a questionnaire titled *“Reopening the Landlord and Tenant Board for In-Person Services.”* The survey sought feedback from LSHC’s small-landlord community, consisting of subscribers and clients, about their experiences with the LTB’s virtual operations and their views on reinstating in-person hearings and customer service.

Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to gather input in English and French from small landlords about their perspectives on reopening the LTB for in-person services. The findings will help inform advocacy efforts and support service planning for small landlords by LSHC. LSHC is an independent, non-profit specialty community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario and does not have any authority or decision-making power over the operations, policies, or procedures of the LTB.

Context:

The LTB shifted to virtual operations with a digital-first approach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as part of broader public health measures. To date, the LTB has not reopened for in-person services. Instead, some ServiceOntario locations have been made responsible of accepting in-person applications. Since then, many small landlords who are clients of LSHC have expressed concerns about the effectiveness and accessibility of virtual hearings and customer service. While some stakeholders support the continuation of virtual services, others believe in-person services should be reinstated for more effective dispute resolution, clearer communication, and improved service delivery. Considering these ongoing discussions, LSHC conducted a survey to understand the opinions and experiences of small landlords regarding the LTB's virtual operations.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this survey was to gather comprehensive feedback from small landlords about their experiences with the LTB’s virtual services, and to assess their attitudes toward the potential reinstatement of in-person hearings and services. The survey aimed to identify key concerns, challenges, and preferences related to the current virtual setup, as well as to evaluate the demand for in-person service restoration. Additionally, the results will help LSHC guide future advocacy efforts aimed at improving the efficiency and accessibility of LTB services for small landlords.

Survey Overview:

The survey was made available to LSHC’s small landlord community, which includes both subscribers and clients. The questionnaire was bilingual, offered in English and French, and distributed through the SurveyMonkey platform to ensure ease of participation. Respondents were asked a combination of multiple-choice questions, checkboxes, comment boxes, and open-ended questions, covering topics such as the ease of use of the Tribunals Ontario Portal, the contact center, website resources, virtual hearings, satisfaction with customer service, challenges faced in virtual settings, and preferences for in-person services. The survey was open for a set period, and a total of 287 responses were received, all in English.

Methodology

The survey was administered in both English and French; however, all responses were received in English. As such, all data and quotations are presented in English.

The survey was distributed to landlords in English and French via online platform Survey Monkey through LSHC's website, in-person at our office, Facebook and Instagram accounts and email lists via MailChimp to subscribers. Responses were collected over a defined period and analyzed to identify common themes and patterns.

Sample Size

A total of 287 respondents completed the *Reopening the Landlord and Tenant Board for In-Person Services* survey.

Time Frame of Data Collection

Survey responses were collected between June 9 and September 2, 2025, based on the survey creation date and the survey closure date.

Data Collection Method

The survey was administered in person at our office and online via SurveyMonkey using a public Web Link collector, as designated in each response entry under "Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)".

Data Analysis Approach

The analysis consisted of:

- Quantitative analysis was done for all closed-ended questions (such as Yes/No questions, frequency questions, and multiple-choice items). These responses were grouped to identify trends, including support for reopening in-person hearings and how often people use LTB services.
- Qualitative analysis was done for open-ended questions. Responses were reviewed to identify common themes, concerns, and experiences (such as reasons for supporting or opposing in-person services and descriptions of service challenges). These recurring ideas were summarized to support the main findings.

Limitations

While the survey provides valuable insights into stakeholder experiences with the LTB and perspectives on reopening in-person services, several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. Non-Random, Self-Selected Sample

Respondents accessed the survey in person at our office or through a public SurveyMonkey Web Link, meaning participation was entirely voluntary and not randomized. As a result, the sample may disproportionately represent individuals who feel strongly about LTB services, particularly those who have experienced delays, technical issues, or dissatisfaction.

2. Limited Representativeness

Because the survey was created by LSHC for its small landlord community, many responses came from landlords and included comments about landlord-specific issues, such as challenges with tenants attending virtual hearings or presenting evidence (e.g., internet problems, difficulty logging in, or a preference for in-person hearings due to age or limited technology skills). The survey did not target other stakeholder groups (such as tenants, advocates, or property managers), so the results do not represent the broader population served by the LTB.

3. Variation in Response Completeness

Several respondents skipped questions, as shown throughout the full response file (e.g., “Respondent skipped this question”). This reduces the completeness of some data points and limits how reliably certain items can be compared.

4. Self-Reported, Unverified Information

All responses are subjective accounts of experiences with TOP, ServiceOntario, the Contact Centre, or virtual hearings. Examples include claims of technical failures, long wait times, or tenant misuse of the system. These statements cannot be independently verified within the dataset and may reflect individual circumstances rather than systemic issues.

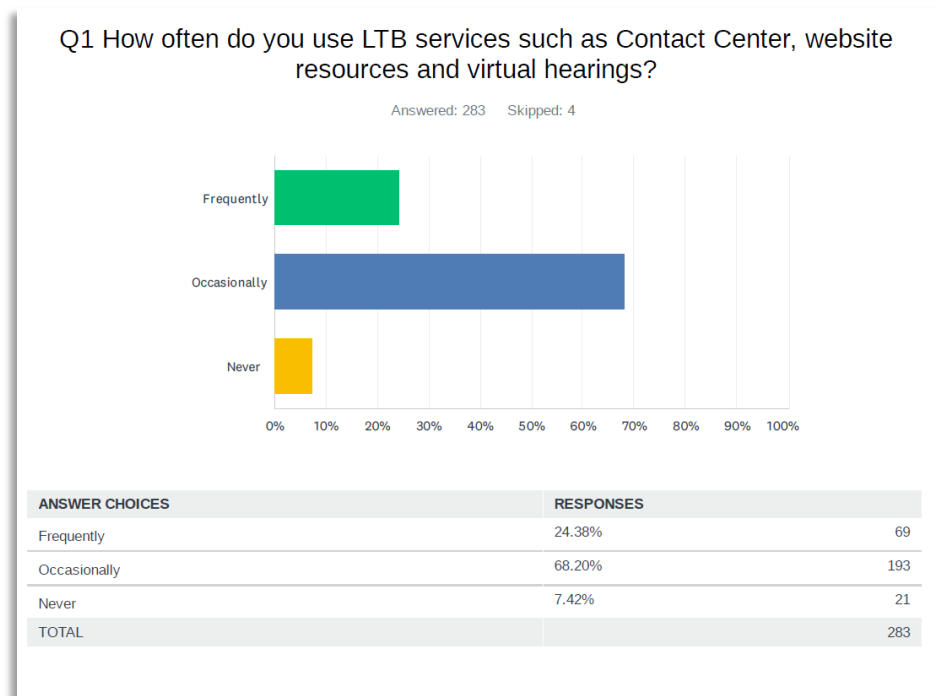
5. Potential Response Bias Related to Technology

Many respondents specifically mention technology barriers: poor internet access, difficulty using the Tribunals Ontario Portal (TOP), unfamiliarity with virtual tools, or being “too old to be on computer”. Individuals with stronger negative experiences with online systems may have been more motivated to participate, increasing the likelihood of negative bias toward digital service delivery.

6. Lack of Demographic Information

The survey does not include demographic questions (e.g., region, age, role type—landlord vs. landlord’s representative). This limits the ability to interpret whether perspectives vary across groups or to assess whether certain communities are over- or under-represented.

Survey Findings



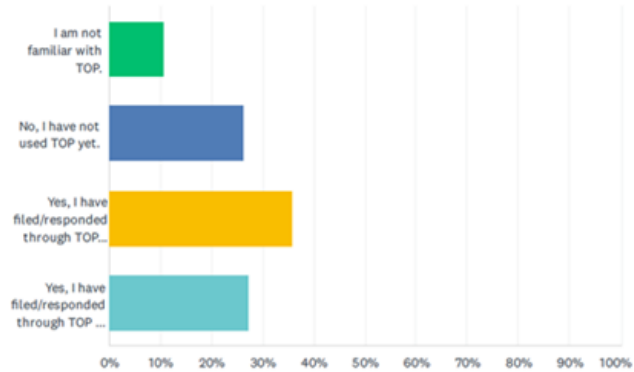
Summary of Key Statistics (Q1)

A total of 283 respondents answered this question, with 4 respondents skipping it.

- Occasionally was the most common response, selected by 193 respondents (68.20%). This indicates that the majority of participants interact with LTB services on an as-needed basis rather than regularly.
- Frequently was selected by 69 respondents (24.38%), showing that about one-quarter of respondents are regular users of LTB services.
- Never was selected by 21 respondents (7.42%), suggesting that a small minority of participants do not use LTB services at all.

Q2 Have you used the Tribunals Ontario Portal (TOP – <https://tribunalsontario.ca/lrb/tribunals-ontario-portal/>) to submit any applications or respond to tenant applications? If yes, what problems, if any, did you encounter?

Answered: 282 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I am not familiar with TOP.	10.64% 30
No, I have not used TOP yet.	26.24% 74
Yes, I have filed/responded through TOP without any issues.	35.82% 101
Yes, I have filed/responded through TOP and experienced issues (please specify below).	27.30% 77
TOTAL	282

Summary of Key Statistics (Q2)

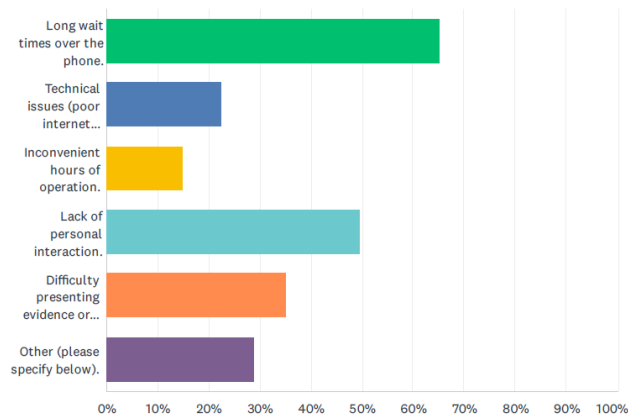
A total of 282 respondents answered this question, while 5 skipped it.

- 35.82% (101 respondents) Have used TOP without any issues.
This represents the largest group, indicating that slightly over one-third of participants were able to use the portal successfully.
- 27.30% (77 respondents) Have used TOP but experienced issues.
This is a significant portion, showing that nearly one-third of TOP users encountered problems such as technical difficulties, login issues, or filing errors.
- 26.24% (74 respondents) Have not used TOP yet.
This indicates that a considerable share of participants has not interacted with the portal at all.
- 10.64% (30 respondents) Are not familiar with TOP.
A smaller segment, but still notable, showing that some users are unaware of the portal's existence.

Overall, 63% of respondents have used TOP, and of those, approximately 43% experienced issues. This suggests that while TOP is widely used, there is still a substantial number of users who encounter challenges, highlighting areas for potential improvement in accessibility, usability, or technical performance.

Q3 Have you encountered any of the following challenges when accessing the LTB's phone services, website resources, TOP or virtual hearings? (Select all that apply).

Answered: 248 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Long wait times over the phone.	65.32%	162
Technical issues (poor internet connection, Zoom access, no audio or video).	22.58%	56
Inconvenient hours of operation.	14.92%	37
Lack of personal interaction.	49.60%	123
Difficulty presenting evidence or documents virtually.	35.08%	87
Other (please specify below).	29.03%	72
Total Respondents: 248		

Summary of Key Statistics (Q3)

A total of 248 respondents answered this question, while 39 skipped it. Since respondents could select multiple options, percentages reflect the proportion of total respondents choosing each challenge.

Most Reported Challenges:

- Long wait times over the phone — 65.32% (162 respondents)
This is the most frequently reported issue, indicating widespread difficulty reaching the LTB via phone.
- Lack of personal interaction — 49.60% (123 respondents)
Nearly half of respondents feel the absence of face-to-face communication is a significant barrier.
- Difficulty presenting evidence or documents virtually — 35.08% (87 respondents)
Over one-third experience challenges uploading or showing documents in virtual hearings.

Other Reported Challenges:

- Technical issues (poor internet, Zoom problems, etc.) — 22.58% (56 respondents)
These issues highlight barriers related to technology access and reliability.

- Other (specified by respondents) — 29.03% (72 respondents)
This category includes additional challenges described in open-ended comments.
- Inconvenient hours of operation — 14.92% (37 respondents)
The least reported issue, but still a concern for some users.

Key Insight

The data shows that the biggest pain points for respondents are:

1. Getting through to the LTB by phone,
2. Reduced personal interaction in virtual settings, and
3. Difficulties with evidence/document submission during virtual processes.

These themes reflect a strong preference for improved accessibility, responsiveness, and in-person support options.

Q4 Do you think the LTB services (Contact Center, website resources, TOP and virtual hearings) have been effective in resolving your matter and providing customer service? Why or why not?

Answered: 220 Skipped: 67

Summary of Key Statistics (Q4)

A total of **220 respondents** answered this question, while **67** skipped it.

Several consistent themes emerged:

1. Significant Dissatisfaction Due to Delays

A large portion of respondents reported that LTB services are not effective because of severe delays, particularly in scheduling hearings.

Examples include:

- “The long delay in getting a hearing meant that the termination date had passed... then they dismissed my N12...”
- “It take too long in resolving a tenant who lives free for two years because the late responds.”
- “Virtual hearings take too long.”

2. Difficulty Getting Clear, Timely Information

Several respondents noted challenges in receiving timely or accurate answers from LTB staff.

- “I have found it difficult at times to get clear and timely answers to questions...”

3. Technology and Accessibility Concerns

Some participants highlighted that while they personally manage technology well, the system poses accessibility issues for others.

- “I’m tech savvy, but for others it might be a barrier.”
- “No I had to hire a paralegal to navigate the system - additional costs”

4. Mixed or Uncertain Opinions

A few responses indicated uncertainty or ambivalence:

- “Unsure.”

5. Minority of Positive Feedback

A small number of respondents felt LTB services were somewhat effective, but often with caveats:

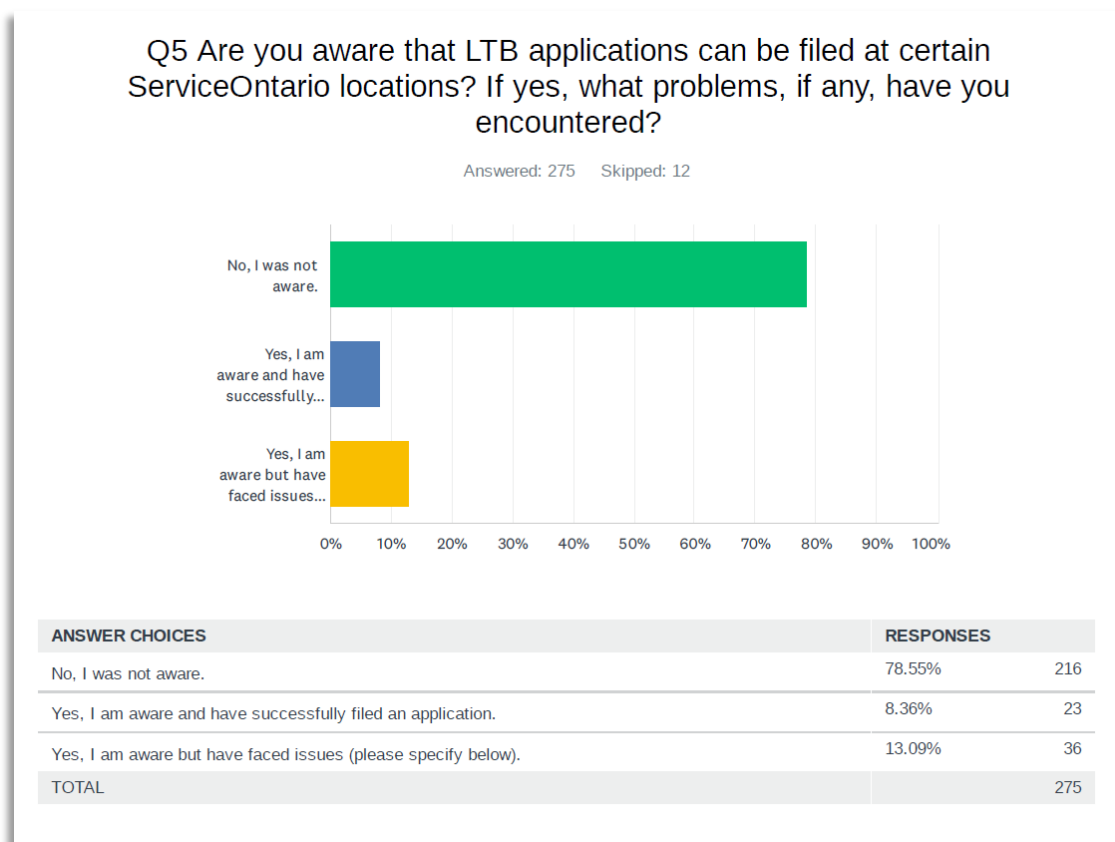
- “Yes, they are effective, but do not completely replace in person ones.”

Overall Conclusion

The majority of substantive responses to Question 4 show dissatisfaction with LTB services, centered primarily on:

- Excessive delays in hearings and case resolution
- Lack of clear or timely communication
- Barriers created by virtual processes, especially for users uncomfortable with technology

Only a small portion of participants felt services were effective, and even those responses noted the need for better in-person options.



Summary of Key Statistics (Q5)

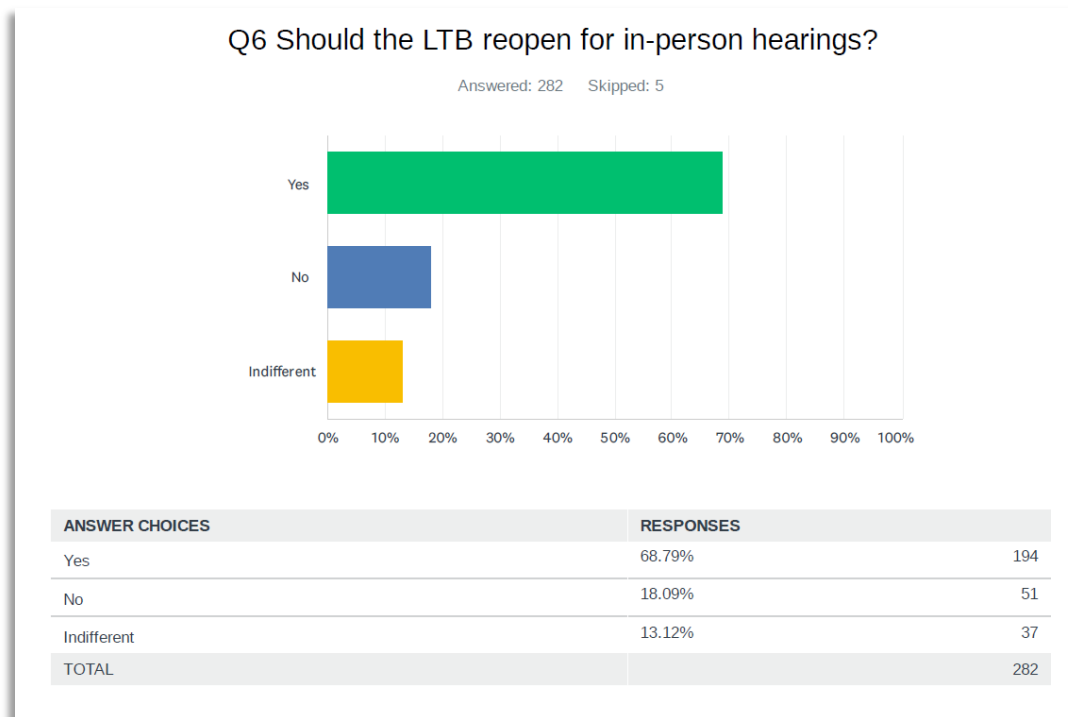
A total of 275 respondents answered this question, while 12 skipped it.

Awareness of ServiceOntario Filing Options

- 78.55% (216 respondents) No, I was not aware.
A large majority of respondents do not know that LTB applications can be filed at ServiceOntario locations.
- 8.36% (23 respondents) Yes, I am aware and have successfully filed an application.
This indicates that only a small fraction has used ServiceOntario successfully for LTB filings.
- 13.09% (36 respondents) Yes, I am aware but have faced issues.
This group includes respondents who reported barriers such as:
 - Staff at ServiceOntario not trained in LTB filings
 - Only certain staff able to process filings
 - Long waits due to limited staffing
 - Errors or inability to provide assistance (from PDF comments)

Key Insight

Awareness and successful use of ServiceOntario for LTB filings is very low. Nearly 4 out of 5 respondents had no idea this service option existed. Among those who were aware, over 60% experienced problems, suggesting significant gaps in training, consistency, and accessibility at ServiceOntario locations.



Summary of Key Statistics (Q6)

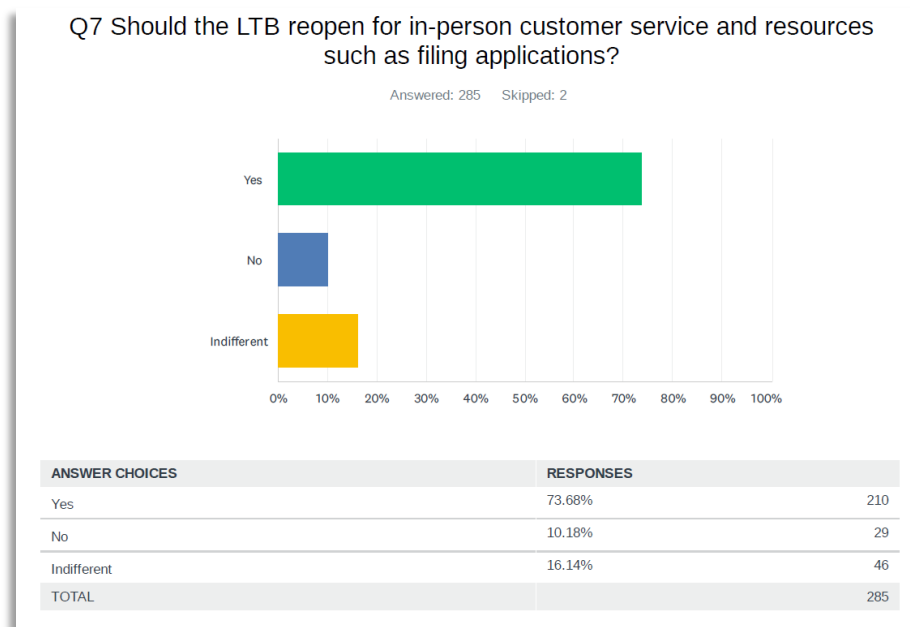
A total of 282 respondents answered this question, while 5 skipped it.

Overall Support for Reopening In-Person Hearings

- Yes – 68.79% (194 respondents)
A strong majority support reopening in-person hearings. This shows a clear preference for face-to-face proceedings among survey participants.
- No – 18.09% (51 respondents)
Fewer than one in five respondents prefer continuing without in-person hearings, indicating a smaller but significant group who favour virtual or existing alternatives.
- Indifferent – 13.12% (37 respondents)
A minority expressed no strong preference either way.

Key Insight

Nearly 7 in 10 respondents want the LTB to resume in-person hearings. This is the highest level of agreement seen across several survey questions and reflects ongoing concerns about fairness, accessibility, credibility assessment, and technical challenges in virtual hearings (evident from Q3 and open-text comments).



Summary of Key Statistics (Q7)

A total of 285 respondents answered this question, with 2 skipping it.

Support for Reopening In-Person Customer Service

- Yes – 73.68% (210 respondents)
This represents a strong majority, indicating that nearly three-quarters of respondents want in-person customer service options restored.
This is even higher support than for in-person hearings (Q6).

- No – 10.18% (29 respondents)
A small minority prefer not to reopen in-person customer service, likely favouring online or virtual processes.
- Indifferent – 16.14% (46 respondents)
Roughly one in six respondents have no preference either way.

Key Insight

Respondents show very strong support for bringing back in-person customer service and application filing, even more so than for in-person hearings. This suggests that many users value face-to-face assistance—particularly for navigating filings, asking questions, or resolving issues with LTB documentation and processes.

Q8 What are your main reasons for supporting (or opposing) the LTB's reopening for in-person services?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 48

Summary of Key Statistics (Q8)

A total of 239 respondents answered this question, with 48 skipping it.

Respondents provided written comments that expressed consistent and strongly recurring themes.

1. Delays and Backlogs Are the Number One Concern (Supporting In-Person Reopening)

Many respondents emphasized extreme delays as a primary reason for wanting in-person services back. They believe in-person operations would accelerate hearings and reduce prolonged financial and property losses.

- One respondent described losing over \$100,000 in damages and unpaid rent due to hearing delays, stating that “Had a hearing taken place sooner, we would have been able to evict faster...”
- Another simply stated: “The hearings take too long.”

2. Need for Better Accessibility and Support — Especially for Those Struggling With Technology

Several respondents supported reopening because the online system is difficult for many users.

- “I am not very comfortable having to rely on technical skills...”
- “One needs to hire a paralegal to navigate such a complex electronic system.”

3. Desire for More Effective, Personal, Face-to-Face Interaction

Some respondents highlighted that in-person service enables clearer communication and better resolution.

- “Easier access and questions answered during face-to-face interactions.”
- “Nothing supports the integrity of an individual's presentation of an issue or concern like personal interaction. Eye contact remains a very important measure on honesty. Body language and tone of voice are lost through online interactions.”

4. Minority See Virtual Services as Efficient (Opposing In-Person Reopening)

A small group expressed that virtual processes work well and simply need improvement, not replacement.

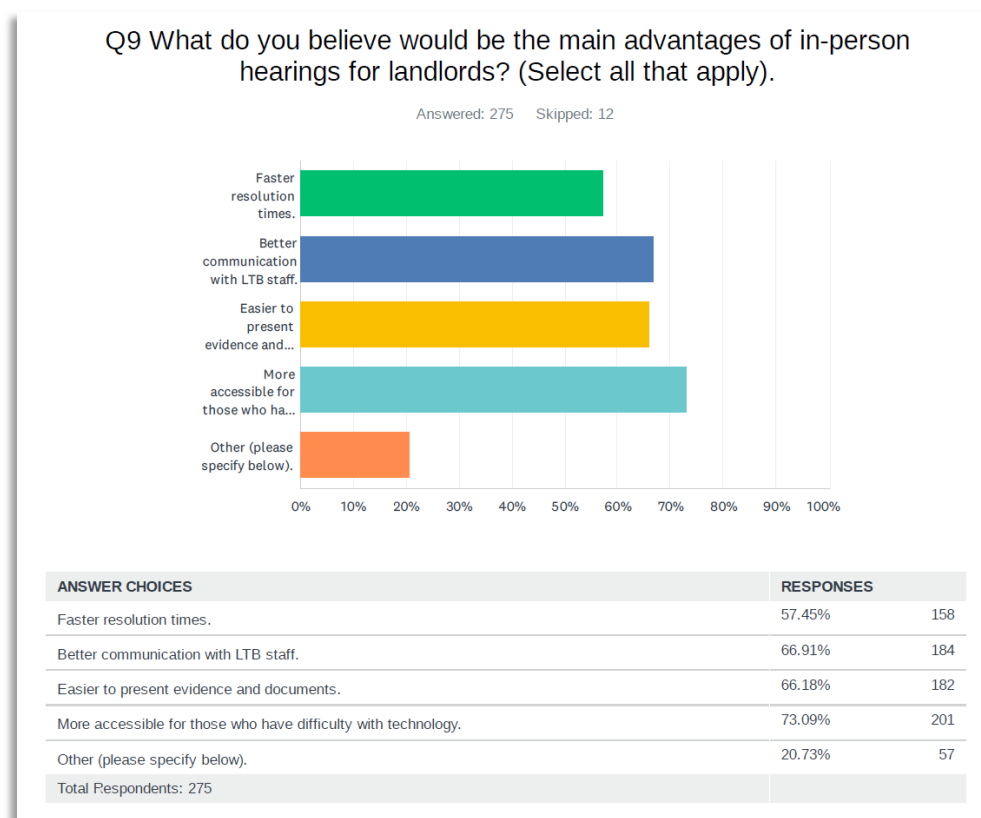
- “Virtual is more efficient, maybe more controls to improve like service level agreement on response time...”

Overall Conclusion

The key reasons for supporting reopening of in-person LTB services include:

- Severe delays and backlogs in the current system
- Difficulty using technology and lack of digital literacy
- Need for personal interaction, clarity, and immediate support
- Challenges navigating the virtual or electronic process without professional help

A small minority oppose reopening, arguing the virtual system is efficient but needs stronger performance standards.



Summary of Key Statistics (Q9)

A total of 275 respondents answered this question, while 12 skipped it. Since this was a "select all that apply" question, respondents could choose multiple answers.

Most Identified Advantages

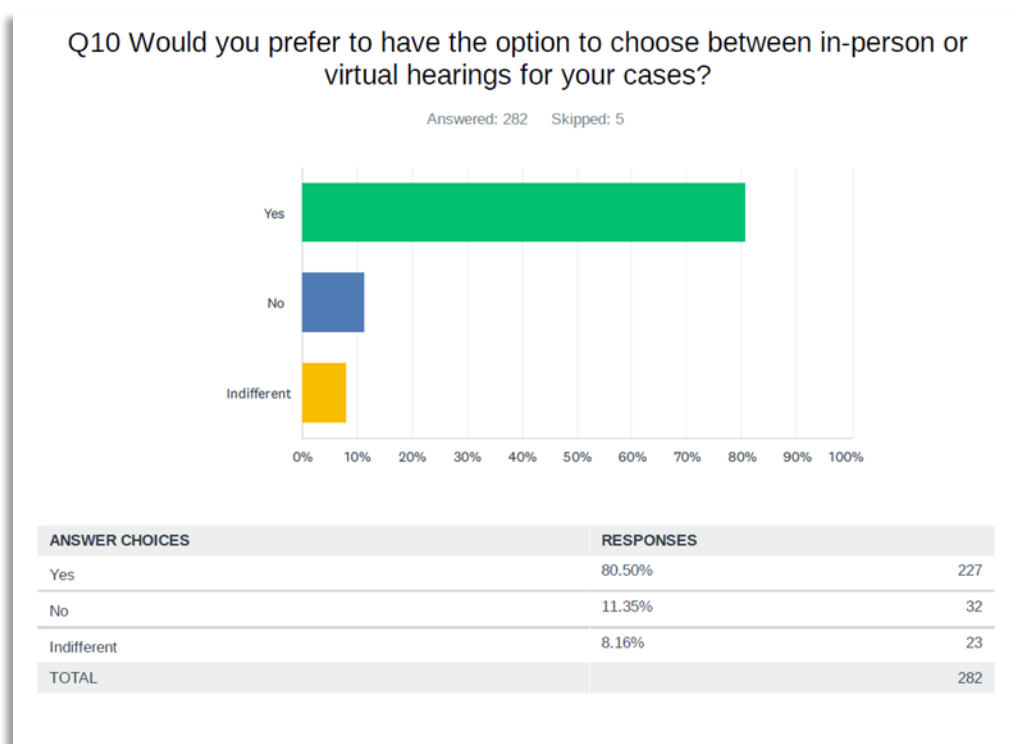
- More accessible for those who have difficulty with technology – 73.09% (201 respondents)
This is the top-ranked advantage, indicating that many users believe in-person hearings remove barriers faced by individuals who struggle with computers, internet access, or virtual hearing processes.
- Better communication with LTB staff – 66.91% (184 respondents)
Over two-thirds believe in-person hearings would improve communication and clarity.
- Easier to present evidence and documents – 66.18% (182 respondents)
A significant majority feel that in-person settings make it easier to share and review physical evidence.
- Faster resolution times – 57.45% (158 respondents)
More than half believe in-person hearings could shorten delays and lead to quicker outcomes.

Other Advantages Identified

- Other (specified by respondents) – 20.73% (57 respondents)
These open-text responses typically include concerns about:
 - Credibility assessment
 - Preventing misuse of virtual attendance (e.g., no-shows, hiding behind screens)
 - “Hallway resolutions” that occur informally in person

Key Insight

Respondents overwhelmingly believe that in-person hearings improve accessibility, communication, and evidentiary clarity, while also potentially reducing delays. The emphasis on technology barriers reinforces themes seen in Q3, where respondents frequently cited technical challenges and lack of personal interaction in virtual hearings.



Summary of Key Statistics (Q10)

A total of 282 respondents answered this question, with 5 skipping it.

Preference for Choice Between Hearing Formats

- Yes – 80.50% (227 respondents)
This is an overwhelming majority.
It shows that 4 out of 5 respondents want flexibility to choose the hearing format that works best for them.
- No – 11.35% (32 respondents)
A small portion prefer not to have the option—likely favouring one format exclusively (typically in-person or virtual).
- Indifferent – 8.16% (23 respondents)
A minority have no preference either way.

Key Insight

This question shows the strongest level of agreement across the entire survey. Respondents overwhelmingly want the ability to choose between virtual and in-person hearings. This supports a hybrid model, aligning with feedback in Q6 and Q7 about reopening in-person options while maintaining virtual access.

Analysis and Discussion

The survey results reveal several clear and compelling patterns that illustrate broad dissatisfaction with current LTB service delivery and strong demand for reinstating in-person services. Together, the data suggest that the LTB's existing virtual and online systems are not meeting the needs of many small landlords, especially those experiencing urgent tenancy issues, technological barriers, or prolonged delays in dispute resolution.

1. Delays Are the Most Significant and Consistent Issue

Across open-ended responses, delays in obtaining hearings and decisions are identified as the most critical barrier.

Examples from respondents include:

- Losing over \$100,000 in damages and unpaid rent while waiting for a hearing date
- Comments such as “The hearings take too long”

These delays directly affect landlords' financial stability, property security, and willingness to continue providing rental housing.

Interpretation:

The LTB's service backlog is not merely inconvenient; it is causing severe and measurable harm to small and midsize landlords. Faster, more predictable timelines are the single most important reform needed. The demand for in-person hearings is closely tied to the belief that returning to traditional processes will help reduce wait times.

2. Strong Preference for In-Person Options Due to Accessibility and Communication Issues

Quantitative results show overwhelming support for both in-person hearings and in-person customer service:

- 68.79% believe LTB should reopen for in-person hearings.
- 73.68% believe in-person customer service should resume.
- 80.50% want the *option* to choose between in-person and virtual hearings.

Text responses further support this:

- Difficulty presenting evidence virtually
- Trouble communicating with adjudicators or staff online
- Lack of personal interaction and clarity during virtual processes
- Better outcomes expected from face-to-face communication

Interpretation:

Landlords overwhelmingly feel that online tools and virtual hearings have introduced avoidable barriers. Many believe that in-person formats allow for:

- clearer communication
- better evidence presentation
- fewer misunderstandings
- improved credibility assessments
- greater procedural fairness

The data strongly suggest that a hybrid model, giving users a choice, would maximize fairness and accessibility.

3. Significant Digital Literacy and Technology Barriers

Many respondents identified difficulties using Tribunal Ontario Portal (TOP) or other online systems, including:

- lack of familiarity with the portal
- login errors
- internet connectivity issues
- needing to hire a paralegal to navigate online processes
- discomfort with or inability to rely on technology

Interpretation:

The LTB's digital transformation has not been accompanied by adequate supports for users with lower digital literacy. Virtual hearings and online filing systems inadvertently disadvantage:

- older landlords
- rural participants
- landlords with limited internet
- individuals with disabilities
- those without technical expertise

Reopening in-person counters at LTB offices would greatly improve accessibility and reduce inequality in access to justice.

4. Technical and Phone-Access Issues Reduce User Confidence

From Q3, the highest reported challenges include:

- 65.32% experiencing long phone wait times
- 49.60% reporting lack of personal interaction
- 35.08% experiencing difficulty presenting evidence online
- 22.58% facing technical issues

Interpretation:

The core systems that support virtual hearings, such as phone lines, Zoom, and online filing, are frequently unreliable. Every layer of the virtual experience has friction points. This has contributed to declining trust in the LTB's digital approach and reinforces calls for accessible, in person assistance.

5. Strongest Theme: Desire for Flexibility (Hybrid System)

Across multiple questions, respondents consistently emphasized choice:

- 80.50% want the ability to select virtual or in-person hearings.
- Many believe virtual hearings can work, but only when both sides can reliably participate.
- Those who are satisfied with virtual formats often note time savings or travel reduction, but they do not want the system to remain exclusively virtual.

Interpretation:

The most widely supported model is hybrid: maintain virtual hearings for those who prefer them, while restoring in-person options for those who need them. This approach would accommodate diverse user needs and reduce inequities created by a one-size-fits-all system.

6. What This Means for the LTB

The findings point to several implications:

a. Current virtual systems do not meet users' expectations or needs.

Technical limitations, delays, and communication barriers create perceptions of unfairness and inefficiency.

b. In-person services remain essential for procedural fairness.

Users believe face-to-face interaction improves clarity, credibility assessment, and evidence handling.

c. Digital services must be significantly improved if they are to remain a primary option.

Users request:

- faster turnaround times
- more responsive customer service
- clearer portal instructions
- more reliable virtual hearing technology

d. Equity concerns are emerging.

Respondents worry that technologically savvy or corporate landlords may benefit disproportionately compared with small, rural, older, or less technologically literate landlords.

7. What This Means for Landlords

a. Many landlords feel abandoned by the current system.

Long delays result in lost income, property damage, and emotional exhaustion.

b. Landlords need accessible, reliable pathways to resolve disputes.

Reopening in-person services is seen as a way to restore fairness and reduce uncertainty.

c. Hybrid access indicates increased flexibility and control.

Landlords want to choose the format that best fits their situation: whether urgent, straightforward, complex, or technology heavy.

Overall Insight

Across nearly every question, a strong and consistent pattern emerges:

Landlords overwhelmingly want the LTB to restore in-person services while retaining virtual options, creating a flexible and accessible hybrid model.

They associate in-person services with:

- faster and fairer outcomes
- better communication
- easier evidence handling
- improved accessibility
- reduced reliance on unreliable technology

At the same time, the virtual system is valued for its convenience, but only when it functions reliably.

The findings point to an LTB system at a critical inflection point, where user confidence can be rebuilt through renewed in-person access, improved digital supports, and meaningful service-time improvements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey results reveal several dominant and recurring themes among respondents. These insights reflect major service gaps, user frustrations, and strong preferences regarding how LTB services should be delivered going forward.

1. Severe Delays Are the Most Critical Issue

Respondents consistently described extensive wait times for hearings, sometimes close to or over a year. Several respondents reported suffering major financial losses, including one who lost over \$100,000 in property damage and unpaid rent while waiting for a hearing date.

Delays are perceived as the single greatest failure of the current system.

2. Broad Support for Reopening In-Person Hearings and Services

The majority of respondents believe returning to in-person operations will enhance fairness, speed, and clarity:

- 68.79% support reopening for in-person hearings.
- 73.68% support reopening for in-person customer service.
- Many cite better communication, clearer evidence presentation, and less technological confusion.

3. Technology Barriers Are Widespread and Disruptive

Many users struggle to navigate the Tribunals Ontario Portal (TOP) or virtual hearing platforms.

Common issues include:

- difficulty uploading or presenting evidence
- unreliable internet or audio/video problems
- lack of digital literacy
- problems requiring help from paralegals simply to file forms

These barriers disproportionately harm older landlords, rural participants, and those with limited technology access.

4. Phone and Online Support Are Insufficient

The most frequently reported challenge was long waiting times over the phone (65%), followed by lack of personal interaction and difficulty getting answers to questions.

Respondents feel support channels are unreliable, slow, and unresponsive.

5. Strong Preference for a Hybrid System

An overwhelming 80.50% want to choose between in-person and virtual hearings.

Respondents recognize the convenience of virtual hearings, particularly for rural landlords or those with mobility/time constraints but reject the idea of a “virtual-only” system.

6. In-Person Services Improve Fairness and Communication

Respondents frequently noted that:

- evidence is easier to present in person
- credibility and body language are easier for adjudicators to assess
- problems can be addressed immediately at a counter
- no-shows and “Zoom confusion” would decrease

Actionable Recommendations

Based on survey results, the following recommendations directly address the challenges and preferences expressed by respondents.

1. Implement a Hybrid Service Model (In-Person + Virtual Options)

Make both formats available and allow parties to choose.

This aligns with the 80% who want choice and would immediately improve accessibility.

A hybrid model should include:

- in-person hearings
- virtual hearings
- in-person customer service counters
- online filing options
- telephone assistance for low-tech users

This approach meets the needs of both tech-savvy users and those who struggle with digital tools.

2. Restore In-Person Counters for Filing and Assistance

Given that 73.68% support reopening in-person customer service, and many struggle with TOP, LTB should:

- reopen in-person counters at LTB
- ensure staff at these counters are **properly trained** (a major issue respondents noted related to ServiceOntario locations)

- provide help with forms, evidence preparation, and portal use

This reduces reliance on paralegals for basic filing tasks.

3. Improve the Tribunals Ontario Portal (TOP)

Respondents identified instability, difficulty navigating the system, and poor user experience.

TOP improvements should include:

- clearer instructions and tutorials
- simplified navigation
- more stable upload features for evidence
- accessible language and mobile-friendly design
- real-time support (chat or phone) for portal issues

4. Strengthen Phone and Online Support Services

Given that 65% reported long wait times, the LTB should:

- increase call centre staffing
- implement callback systems to reduce wait times
- create a dedicated helpline for virtual hearing technical issues
- improve multilingual support where possible

This directly supports respondents who reported phone delays, lack of communication, and difficulties getting answers.

5. Provide Targeted Support for Vulnerable Users

Survey responses indicate that certain groups struggle the most with virtual services:

- older landlords
- rural residents with poor internet
- individuals with limited digital literacy

The LTB should offer:

- one-on-one assistance
- technology orientation sessions
- simplified guides for participating in virtual hearings
- priority access to in-person hearings for high-needs users

6. Enhance Transparency and Communication

Respondents noted they often cannot get clear timelines or updates.

Recommendations include:

- automated status updates for applications and hearings
- published average wait times
- consistent email and phone communication standards
- more proactive outreach during delays

Overall Conclusion

The survey paints a clear picture:

Landlords overwhelmingly want accessible, efficient, and fair LTB services, and they believe this requires bringing back in-person options while improving virtual tools.

Restoring in-person services, reducing delays, and enhancing technological supports are not just preferences; they are essential reforms needed to rebuild confidence in the LTB system.

Appendices

Appendix A — Full Response File (Attached as a separate PDF file).

Appendix B — Full Survey Questionnaire in English (Attached as a separate PDF file).

Appendix C — Full Survey Questionnaire in French (Attached as a separate PDF file).