

BAO Licensee Survey: Proposed licensing fee increase

- Proposed for the 2024 licensing year

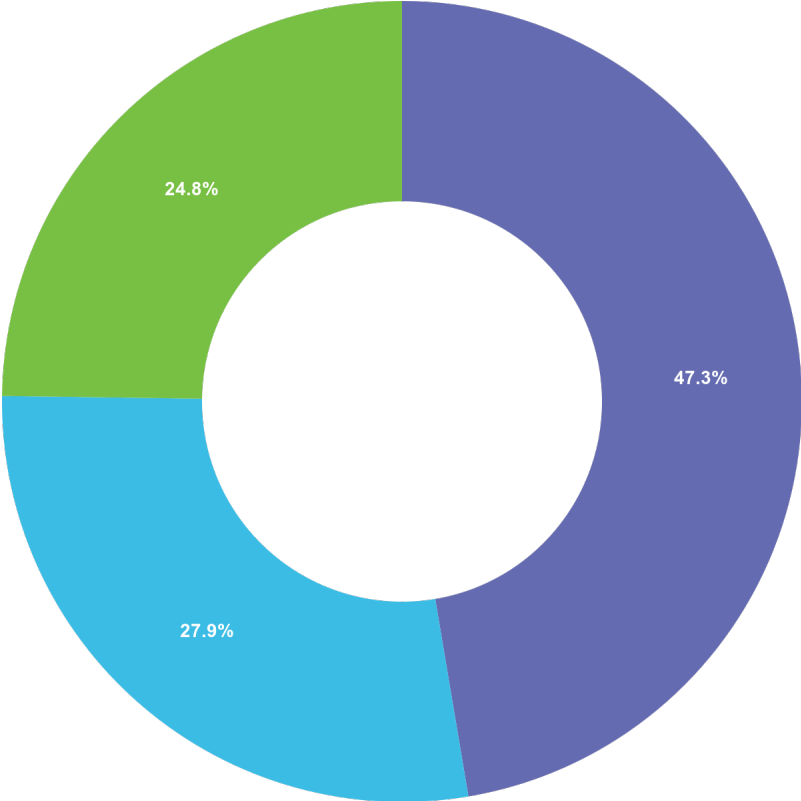
This anonymous survey is only for licensees of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO). The BAO is asking for your opinion on our proposed licensing fee increase for the 2024 licensing year. The fee increase is needed to address and pay for implementing our strategic plan and recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General (AG) of Ontario, as we grow our services and staffing level. The BAO has already implemented, or is in the process of implementing, 86 per cent of the action items to accomplish the AG recommendations.

The fee increase is needed to implement and sustain those improvements in regulating, providing guidance and supporting you as professionals to facilitate compliance and elevate the profession.

- For Personal Licensees: The fee increase would be 7.6 per cent simply to cover inflation.
- For Business Operators: The fee increase would address inflation, plus an increase (for operators only) to cover the BAO's growth obligations related to its strategic plan and AG recommendations. The fees would be equalized among operator types:
 - o Cemeteries, crematoriums and hydrolysis facilities would pay \$30 total per death (up from \$13.63).
 - o Funeral homes and transfer services would pay \$30 total per death (up from \$18.18).

Operators may increase their prices to pay for the fee increase. The proposed increase is subject to approval from the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. We thank you for taking this survey.

Q1 Do you understand the need for the licensing fee increase?*



Answered: 452 Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Yes	214
No	126
Undecided	112

Q2 If you answered “No”, how would you recommend paying for these costs?

--sample of comments

Sunday, March 12, 2023, 8:24 PM UTC

Streamline and reduce the level of service. A 100% increase cannot be justified in these economic times. This increase doesn't reflect a long term plan with staggered implementation. This substantial increase from the point of a cemetery will only contribute to an increase the number of cremated remains being disposed of outside the cemetery driving up our overhead even more. Example: the dramatic decline of full burials in the last ten years is a result of pricing itself out of the market. This overhead does not show any real tangible benefits to the consumer that isn't already in place. For non-profit cemeteries, this would be even more punitive.

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 2:53 PM UTC

As a past Chair of our previous regulating body, the Ontario Board of Funeral Services, I am shocked at the current staff size of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario. My recommendation would be for BAO to perform an audit on the cost value of each staffing position.

I would further recommend the audit be performed from the perspective of a regulating body and not a government department.

For example, is a Marketing Specialist really required? What does BAO have to promote and to whom? How does the BAO staffing levels compare to other Canadian provinces and American states?

At a time when all businesses are struggling with increased costs the BAO should be prudent as well.

I would also recommend the BAO focus efforts on increasing the number of applications for professional licensees to increase overall licensee generated income to BAO while addressing the very serious shortfall of licensees in our profession. Certainly the BAO hiring licensees from the available pool is not helpful and should be restricted to only when absolutely necessary.

I am pleased to see in the BAO proposal a balance between funeral and cemetery fees. This is long overdue.

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 12:11 PM UTC

Same as last year

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 4:38 AM UTC

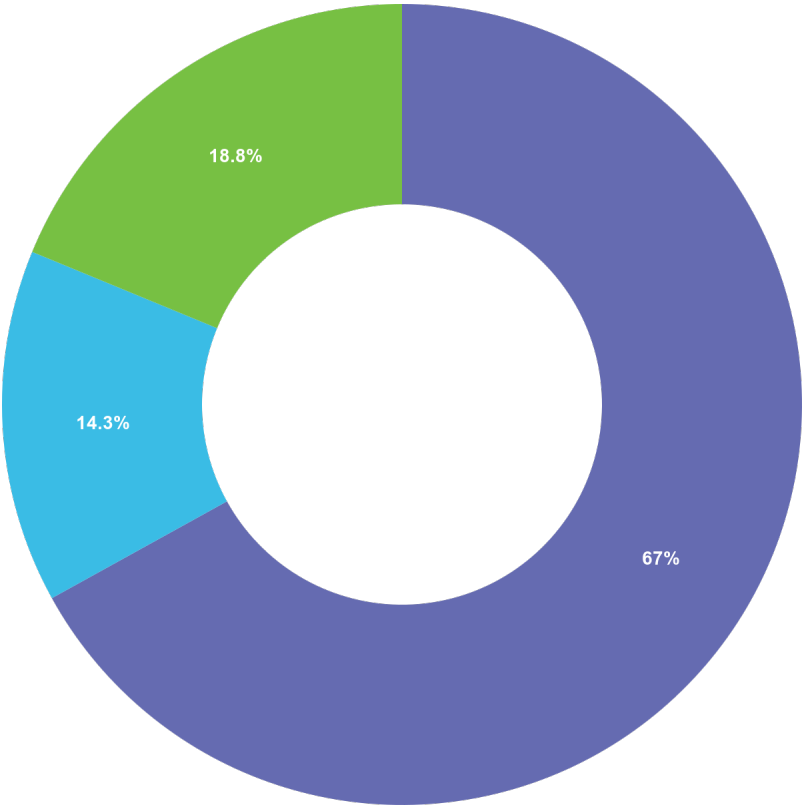
Any way except by the consumer

Monday, March 6, 2023, 4:01 PM UTC

Ontario government grant to the BAO

Answered: 141 **Unanswered:** 311

Q3 For transparency, to show consumers what is included in your business' prices:
Would you prefer that the BAO per death fee be included as a line item in your contracts with consumers and in your online and printed price list?



Answered: 442 Unanswered: 10

Choice	Total
Yes	296
No	63
Undecided	83

Q4 You may leave your comments here. Thank you.

--sample of comments

Monday, March 13, 2023, 9:47 PM UTC

The issue with a fee increase is that we do not see the current value in what the BAO provides to a private cemetery such as ours - and now to drive those additional fees to us seems completely unwarranted. If you have additional costs in managing certain sectors or geographic areas, I suggest you look at increasing fees for those individuals however for those of us who are all volunteers at privately held cemeteries who do all the work themselves, we neither need nor want your oversight, input or involvement.

Sunday, March 12, 2023, 4:42 PM UTC

These fees have taken a large jump and the consumers is already dealing with enough increase to add more at this time is not wise. If you do implement this increase what we receive that would help us in our day-to-day business

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 2:53 PM UTC

I worry that the BAO is not operating in a cost effective manner as they can simply force an increase on licensees to cover whatever costs they incur.

For example, I wonder what the termination cost of Carey Smith will end up being?

The manner in which our previous regulator was dismissed is of concern to many in our profession.

While I respect and understand the need for sensitivity in dismissal situations, the need for transparency by a regulatory body is expected. In fact, a regulatory body must have a heightened level of transparency.

The timing, suddenness and silence as to cause, results in our professions integrity coming into question.

What happened? What is the cost (financial and otherwise) of the BAO's decision?

On the issue of transparency, I would encourage more daily operations insights to licensees and less newsletters promoting ourselves to ourselves. For example, what is the cost of the computer project that the BAO is suggesting to implement? Was there an RFP? If yes, what did it contain? What research was completed to make your decision? What alternatives were reviewed and why were they dismissed?

All of this information is not only helpful to support the BAO's ultimate decision but may also provide helpful information to Licensed Establishments with their own businesses.

I hope my comments and suggestions have been received in the positive light in which I intended. Thank you for the opportunity.

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 4:38 AM UTC

Percentage of increase is not reasonable

Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 2:32 AM UTC

I have no problem with the increase. Unless I'm way off, it would appear that the number of deaths is steadily on the rise which will help offset lost revenue as consumers choose simpler services. However I believe strongly that we should be able to recover that direct cost to us. Perhaps it could be an incentive for firms to increase starting wages to draw more people into the profession. One can only hope.

Answered: 182 **Unanswered:** 270