



Final Results: DPW Phone and Email System Survey

March 2026

Summary

The Bedford DPW conducted this survey to better understand how residents contact the department, what services drive inquiries, how well current systems are functioning, and where improvements could enhance efficiency and the overall resident experience.

Key Findings

Survey results show that the phone remains the primary method of contact, though residents also make significant use of digital tools, particularly for trash and recycling services. While overall satisfaction with DPW communication is positive (approximately 65% satisfied with phone interactions), there is a clear preference for speaking with a live staff member, especially when issues are complex or do not fit neatly into predefined categories.

Trash and recycling services, along with highway-related concerns such as snow removal and potholes, account for the majority of resident inquiries. Feedback also highlighted confusion around how services are categorized, which can make it difficult for residents to determine the appropriate point of contact.

Residents expressed interest in expanded online service options, particularly for routine requests like missed pickups and easier, more intuitive issue reporting. However, many still rely on phone support for urgent or specific concerns. Common challenges identified include difficulty navigating the website, unclear contact pathways, delayed responses, and frustration with voicemail systems.

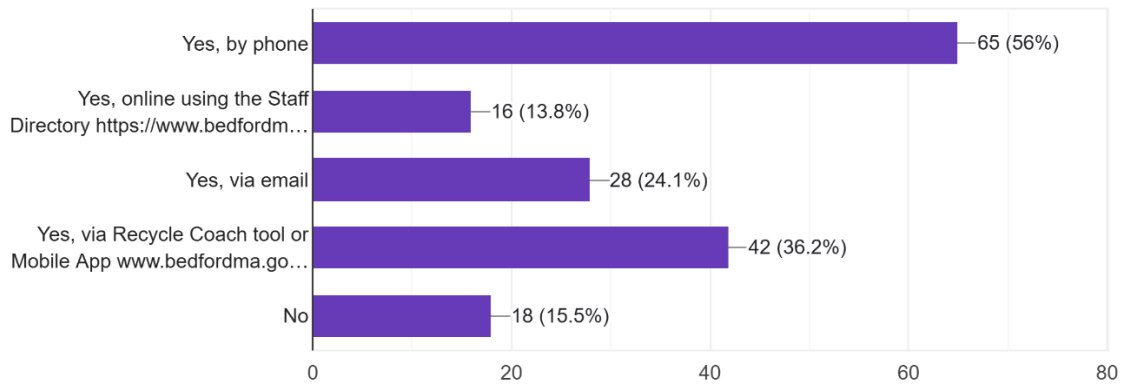
Next Steps

The survey indicates that Bedford DPW is generally meeting resident needs, with strong satisfaction overall. However, residents are seeking simpler navigation, faster responses, and more flexible service options, particularly online.

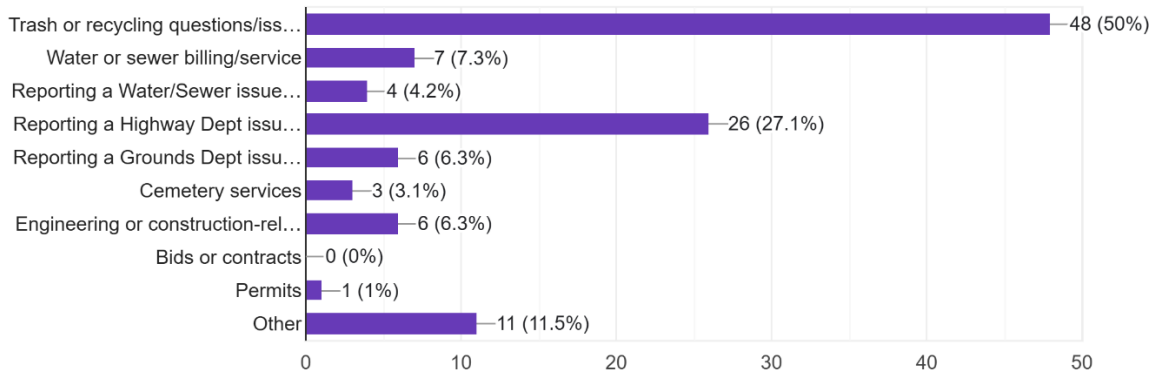
Balancing enhanced digital tools with accessible human support will be key to improving the overall customer experience.

Based on the findings, it would be beneficial to make some adjustments to both the phone system main menu and the DPW website and subpages. Key areas of improvement include updating the phone menu choices to better reflect the problem residents are calling about (Tree Concern instead of Grounds Division or Pot Hole instead of Highway Division) and reorganizing content on the DPW website to provide a clear pathway to reporting a problem or asking a question, with minimal clicks to get there.

Question 1: Have you contacted the Bedford DPW in the past 12 months? Check all that apply. (116 responses)



Question 2: Phone System Experience: When you last called the Bedford DPW, what was the main reason for your call? (96 responses)



Question 3: If you selected "Other" above, what did you contact DPW about? (12 responses)

Compost questions

What is the concrete conduit off Evans Ave? Native American?

Street lights

inadequate snow removal at intersection with Route 62

I received a letter about a possible issue with water flow in my house during the extreme cold weather and I had water running constantly as a preventive measure.

School Science Project

To get walk way from Eliot road to genetti so kids can get to the school bus stop

Records concerning my sewer connection

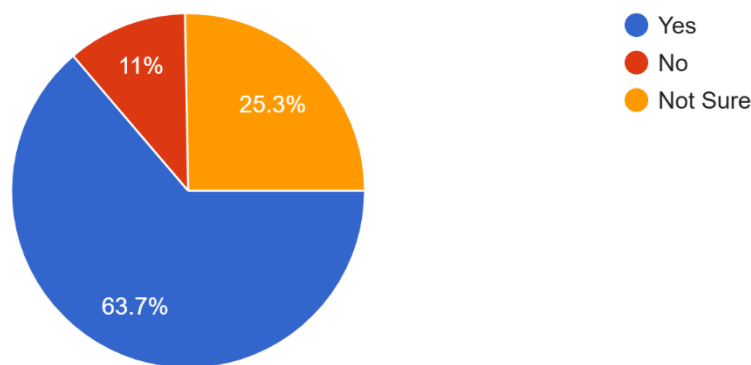
I don't remember using the phone service

snow removal on sidewalks

Elm Brook blocked at South Road bridge

Person in property claiming to be there at request of DPW but couldn't show paperwork

Question 4: Phone System Experience: Did the phone menu have the option you needed? (91 responses)



Questions 5: If you selected "No" above, what option did you expect to hear?

operator

I wasn't sure to which department to direct my inquiry.

Something regarding snow removal

A human to who would have directed my call to someone that could help me.

I expected to reach the DPW not 911

easier

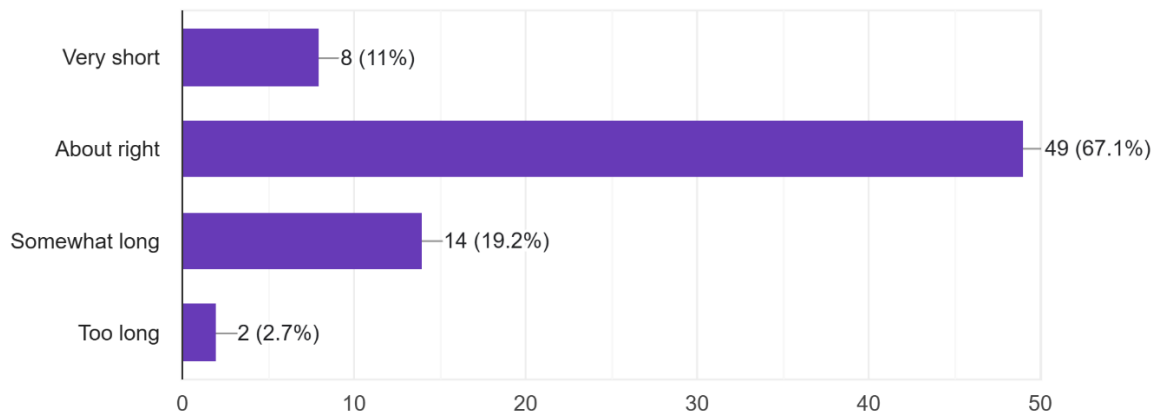
I had a direct phone # to call

Report an issue

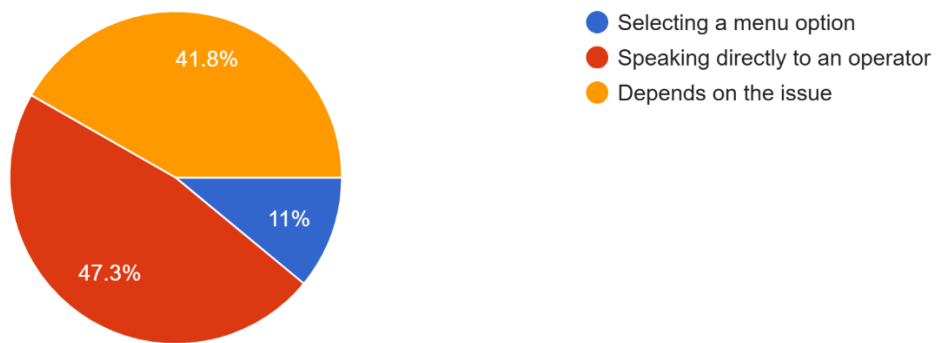
That calls were answered in a timely manner,

something other than answering machine

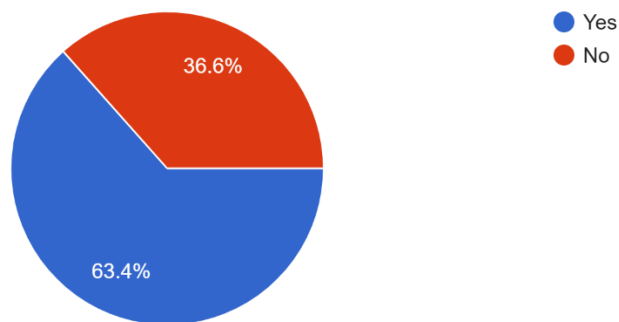
Question 6: Phone System Experience: How long did the recorded message feel before you could make a selection? (73 responses)



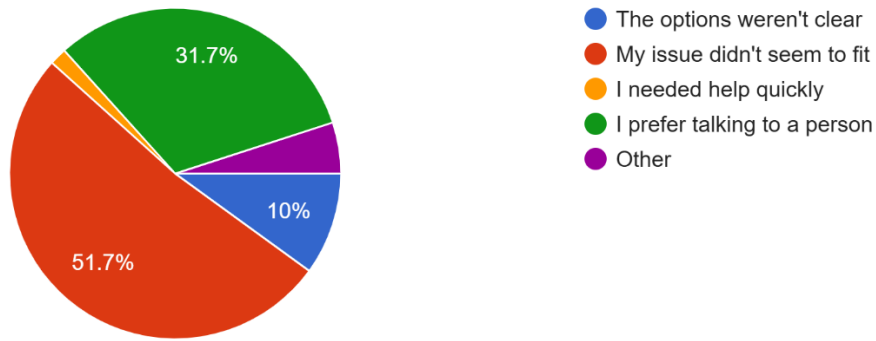
Question 7: Reaching the Right Person: When calling the DPW, which do you usually prefer? (91 responses)



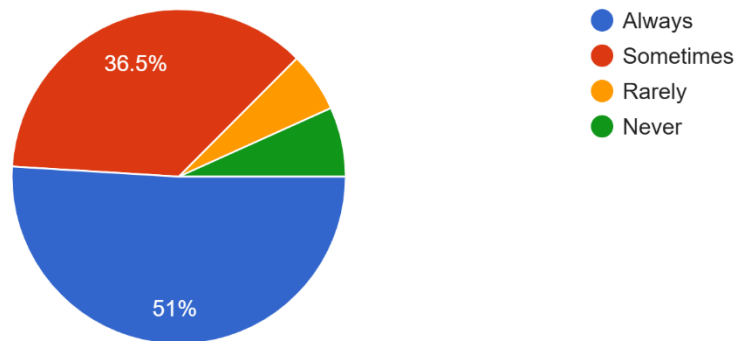
Question 8: Reaching the Right Person: When calling the DPW, have you ever pushed "0" to speak to an operator because you weren't sure which option to choose? (82 responses)



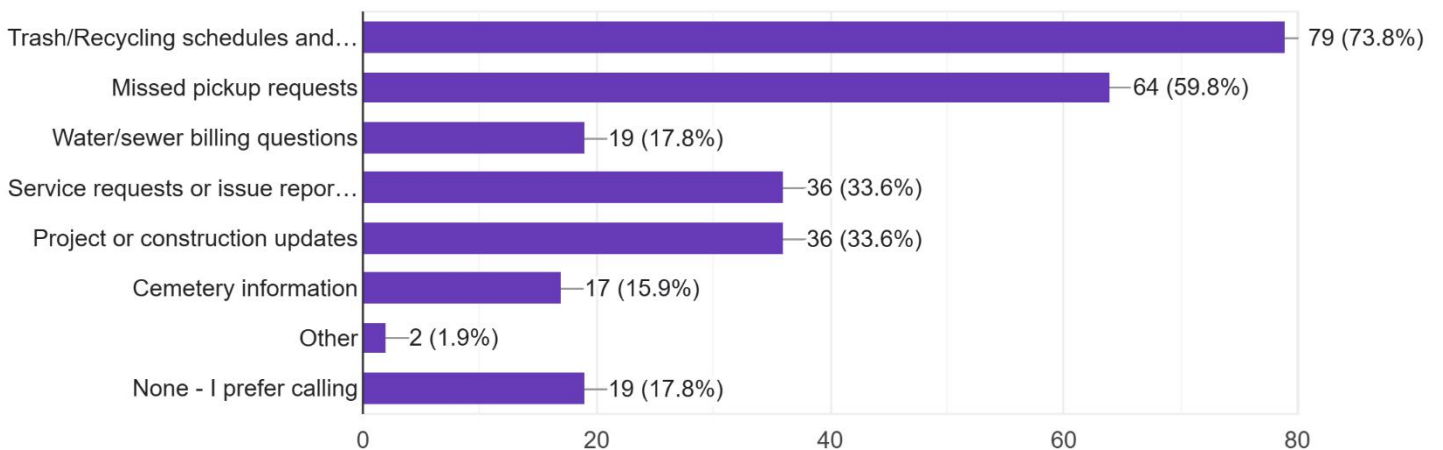
Question 9: If yes, what made you unsure? (60 responses)



Question 10: Online Tools vs Phone Calls: Before calling DPW, do you check the Town website or online tools first? (104 responses)



Question 11: Online Tools vs Phone Calls: Which services would you prefer to handle online, if available? (107 responses)

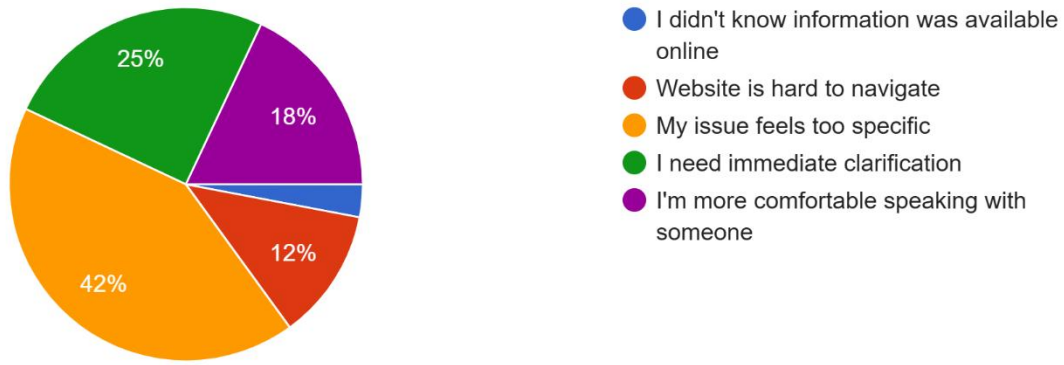


Question 12: If you answered "Other" above, please specify (3 responses)

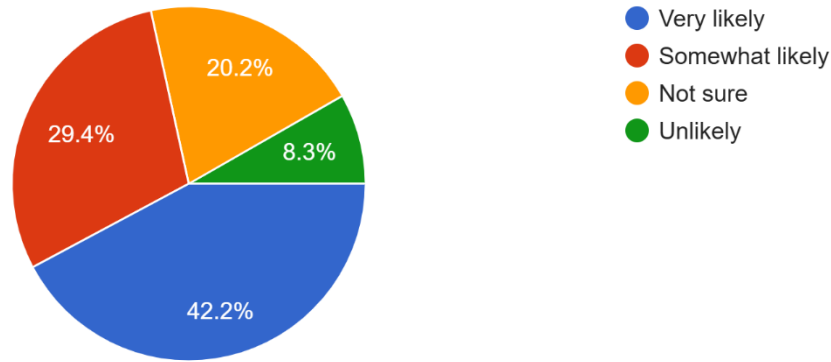
Since town office hours are limited, it is helpful to have as much ability as possible to do business online. However, it should be very clear on the website which things can be handled online and which require a phone call.

Online is ineffective. My issue is to get dpw help, not to read extraneous articles
I don't pester employees with non-urgent matters.

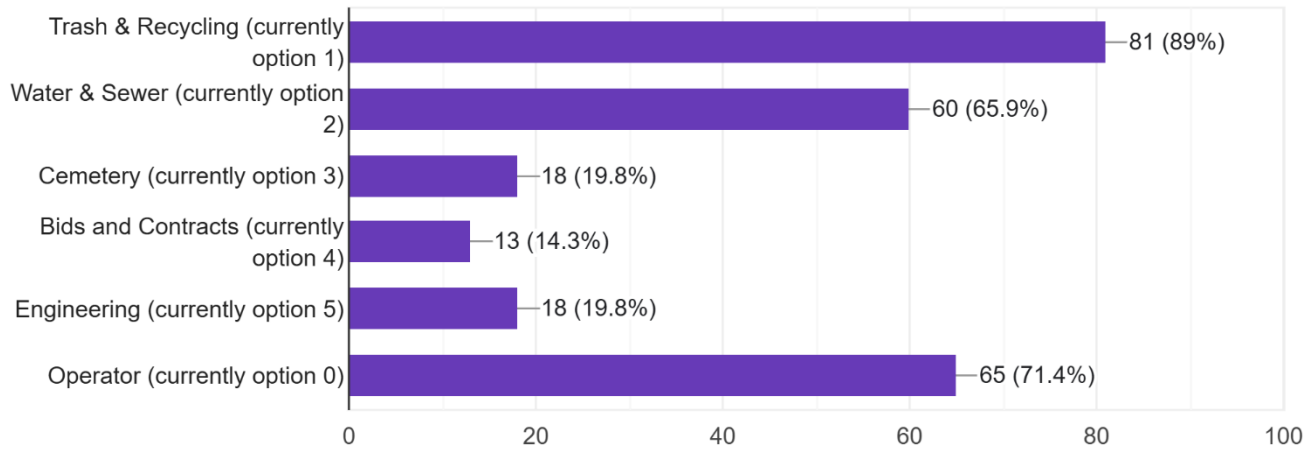
Question 13: Online Tools vs. Phone Calls: What usually makes you choose to call instead of going online? (100 responses)



Question 14: Online Tools vs. Phone Calls: If DPW offered more self-service options online, how likely would you be to use them? (109 responses)



Question 15: Improving the Phone Menu: Which of the following phone options are the most important to keep? Check all that apply. (91 responses)

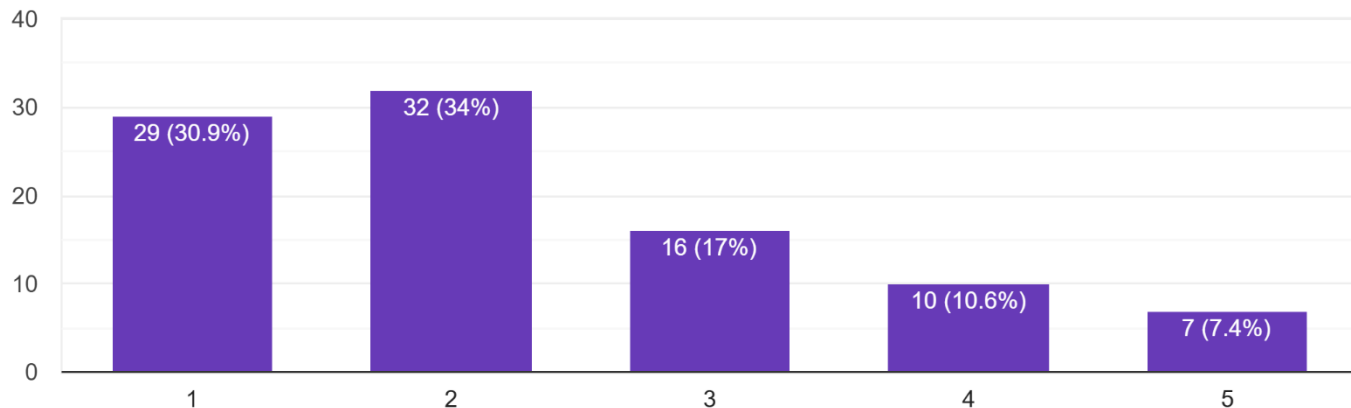


Question 16: Improving the Phone Menu: Is there a service or issue you frequently call about that is NOT clearly represented in the menu? (28 responses)

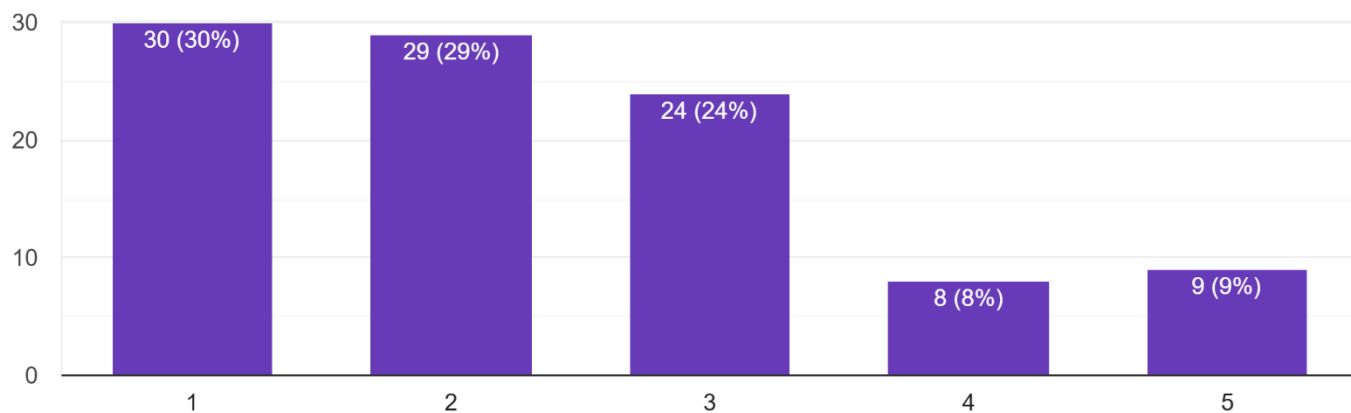
- Pothole hotline
- Loose manhole covers banging all hours as vehicles drive over them, busted weekend
- Clarifying a specific question
- Dangerous conditions near the school and sidewalks
- Snow treatment (winter)/Landscaping (namely tree maintenance)
- It would be helpful to know who to contact to report potholes

Street light out – but not frequent
 The street sign is missing. No reply or confirmation after 2 months.
 Questions for town clerk
 I haven't called yet but the disposal of sharps is a problem
 Prefer live person on phone and online
 Road conditions. Road & sidewalk snow removal.
 Pothole repair

Question 17: Overall Satisfaction: Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience contacting the DPW by PHONE? (94 responses)



Question 18: Overall Satisfaction: Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience contacting the DPW by EMAIL/WEBSITE? (100 responses)



Question 19: Overall Satisfaction: What is one thing DPW could do to make contacting us easier? (52 responses)

Your system basically works. I sometimes have trouble finding the desired info. Will be trying to review burning yard waste after this white stuff disappears (Do have a burning number)
 Not sure.
 confirm requests/needs
 Expand the online options
 Expand office hours back to Mon-Fri.

a brief description of staff areas of responsibility associated with the names in the staff directory would be helpful. Sometimes not clear who to write to about a problem

Large item pickup is confusing and has too many steps.

I'm fine with it as is!

direct access to operator instead of listening to a long drawn out list of options before you can request operator

Have more information available online and having a way to submit issues online.

I could not leave a message as the recording kept looping!

NA

Not sure but this years plowing on side roads sucked and salting way to late, especially on hills

less time getting phone connection

Keep the operator

Ask operator not to sound as though the caller is wasting her time. Have someone actually respond to the call.

Require DPW to follow through if they said they would

No suggestions in mind.

Avoid presenting a specific list of options after navigating down several levels and finding my need isn't listed, and there's no "other" option.

The waste wizard tool is wonderful but it's buried somewhere in the town website. I'd like it to be more easily found.

Training so that anyone, not necessarily an operator, can answer the phone and transfer to the correct department that can help.

I contacted the DPW due to treacherous road conditions. All the road around me had been treated but I had to basically ice skate to get my daughter to her bus stop. I emailed after being sent to the 911 line when I originally called to report the problem. My email received no response. My road continued to be poorly taken care of all season. Just simply responding to calls and emails would be appreciated.

I think you are OK. I e-mailed once and received a very quick reply.

Be more responsive to emails and phone messages

Put yourself in shoes of little old lady, trying to get something fixed

Everything is done well

As a senior citizen who is a self taught computer user, I prefer being able to talk to someone rather than using my computer

The DPW is amazing. Thank you for your hard work this winter. Also, very helpful is mailed post cards

Clone Liz A. She is phenomenal at following up both from website and email inquiries

You are doing things just fine. Bedford DPW IS THE BEST!

Consider a 311 line to report quality of life issues

Have operator direct you to the right person to get the job done

The biggest improvement is almost always how quickly messages or call backs are returned/answered

Having a person answer the phone

operator's availability

Not sure right now

?

not sure

Reduce the number of mailing lists for DPW issues

Always return a call if requested

Haley is great to speak with!

Better website

The website is confusing and I have found inconsistent info between different menus/tabs

An automated ACK of receipt would be helpful.

Clearer access to recycle coach.

See above survey

The Team is doing a great service to the Bedford Community! Very knowledgeable, dedicated and caring Team!

Fewer options before Operator

Speak slowly

Not sure; sometimes the operator knows the answer to a question, rather than going into someone's vmail, so the Operator is a SUPER critical role in getting an immediate answer.

Too new to town to respond

I find that the online system is cumbersome and could be simplified

Please do not get rid of a person to totally automate the system