

Engage

MB

What We Heard

Budget 2023: Public Engagement Survey (Summary Report)

Project Overview

Each year, the Government of Manitoba encourages citizens and representatives of stakeholder groups to provide feedback regarding its annual budget. This pre-budget consultation includes activities such as virtual meetings, telephone town halls and an online survey available on EngageMB.ca website.

Engagement Overview

The budget consultation survey was available on the EngageMB.ca website between Jan. 20 and Feb. 17, 2023. The survey was promoted through a press release and a paid social media campaign, as well as during the stakeholder meetings and telephone town halls held in January and February 2023. A total of 3,791 individuals who registered with EngageMB.ca responded to the survey.

What We Heard

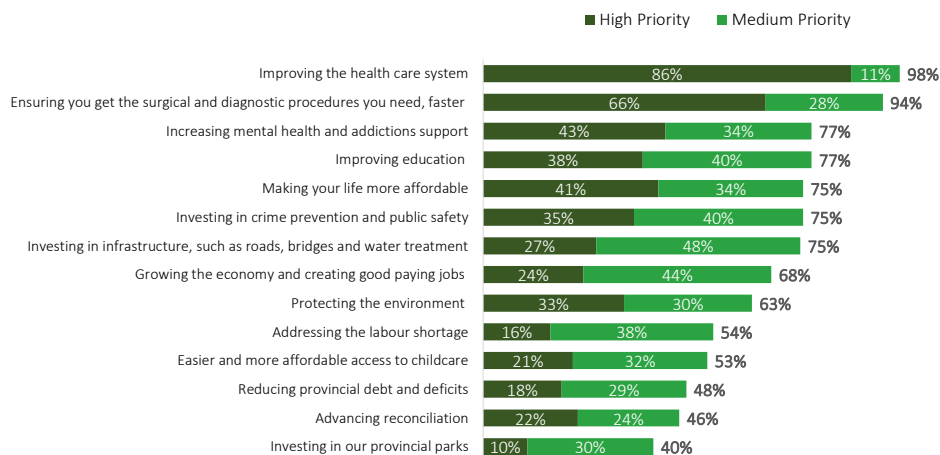
Overall Budget Priorities

Health care is the top priority for the upcoming budget among Manitobans. More than eight-in-ten believed that improving the health-care system should be a high priority for budget spending, while two-thirds also said that 'ensuring you get the surgical and diagnostic procedures you need, faster' should be considered a high priority spending area for the upcoming budget. Virtually everyone considered these two as at *least* medium priority areas for the provincial budget.

About two-in-five respondents responded that increasing mental health and addiction support, improving education, making life more affordable and investing in crime prevention should be high priorities for inclusion in the upcoming budget.

Overall Budget and Strategic Priorities

Almost everyone expects improvements in the healthcare system to be the highest priority

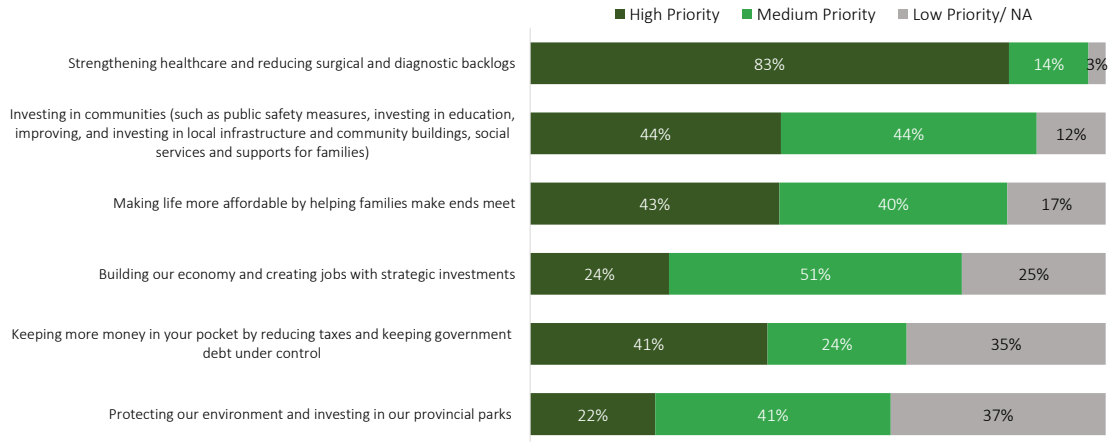


A1. The provincial government must set priorities when creating its annual budget. Please review the following list of spending priorities for the Manitoba government and indicate whether you think that each should be a high priority, medium priority, low priority or not a priority at all
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Respondents were also asked to indicate what they think about the six specific spending areas identified as priorities by the provincial government. Among these six areas, most respondents again selected health-care improvements as the highest priority area, at least twice as often as other areas such as investing in communities, making life affordable or reducing taxes.

High Priority Spending Area For Government

Healthcare is also #1 priority among the government's six priority spending areas



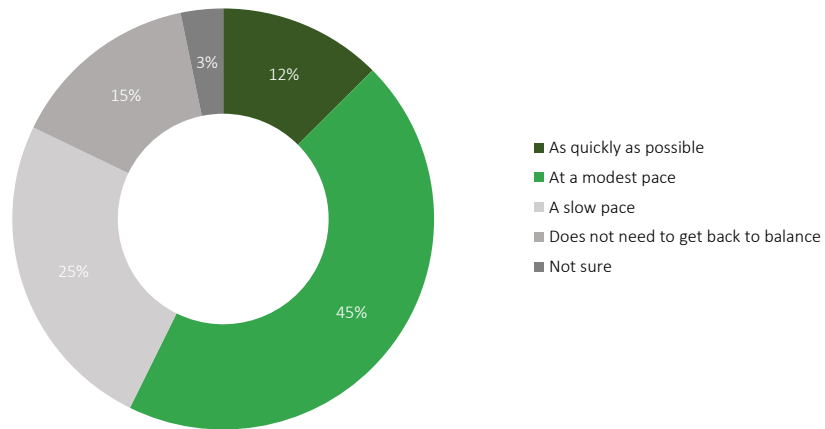
A3. Thinking about the government's 6 priority spending areas, please indicate whether you think they are a high priority, medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority
 Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Government Budget Deficit:

When asked about the pace that the government should take to reduce budgetary deficits and get back to balance, respondents preferred the government to take a modest to slow pace. Only one-in-ten respondents favoured achieving balance as quickly as possible.

Fiscal Balance Preferences

Respondents are likely to favour a modest or slow pace of getting back to balance



B1. The government is currently in a deficit. How quickly should the government work to get back to balance?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Men (17 per cent vs. nine per cent of women), those aged 55+ (14 per cent vs. 11 per cent of those aged <55), respondents living outside Winnipeg (18 per cent vs. nine per cent of Winnipeggers) and respondents with household income less than \$60,000 (16 per cent vs. 11 per cent with a household income of more than \$60,000) were more likely to favour the government getting back to balance as quickly as possible.

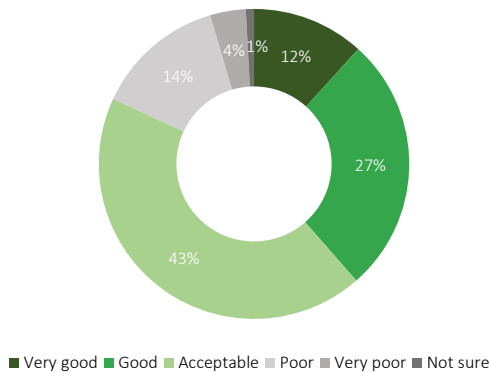
Outlook of Economic Condition:

Personal Financial Situation: Eight-in-ten respondents described their household finances as at least 'acceptable', while about one-in-five had poor household finances. More than half of those who answered the survey do not expect their financial situation to change this year while just over a quarter feel they could be worse off in 12 months.

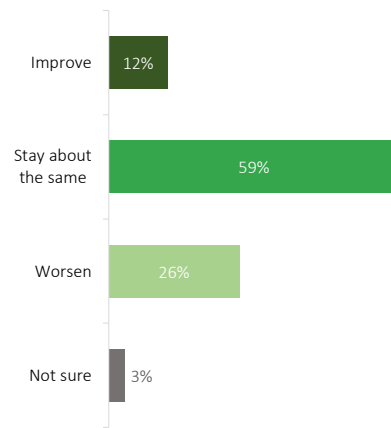
Respondents aged 55 and older (29 per cent vs 24 per cent of those aged under 55), those living outside Winnipeg (29 per cent vs. 24 per cent Winnipeggers), respondents born in Canada (27 per cent vs. 18 per cent of those who immigrated) and those with household income of less than \$100,000 (31 per cent vs. 19 per cent with household incomes of more than \$100,000) were more likely to feel pessimistic about their personal financial situation.

Impression of Household Economic Condition

The majority of respondents don't expect any change in their economic conditions in 2023



D3. How would you describe your own household's finances today?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

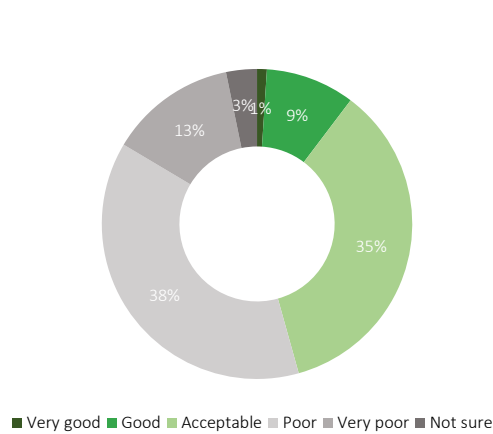


D4. In 2023, do you expect your household's financial situation to improve, worsen or stay about the same compared to 2022?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

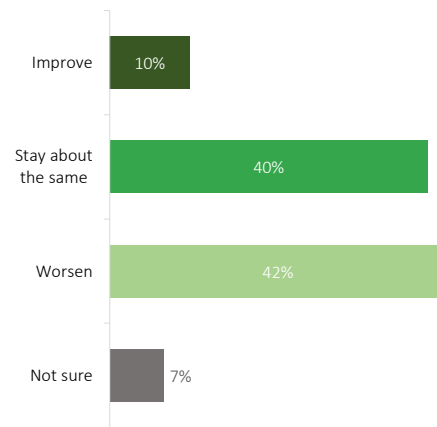
Manitoba Economic Outlook: Manitobans were somewhat more pessimistic about Manitoba’s economic conditions than their personal financial situation. About half of respondents believed that Manitoba’s current economic condition is ‘poor’, while only one-in-ten mentioned it as good. About two-in-five believed that the economic conditions will worsen in the next 12 months while almost the same amount feel it would remain the same. One-in-ten Manitobans expect the province’s economic situation to improve in 2023.

Impression of Provincial Economic Condition

Manitobans are pessimistic about the provincial economic outlook



D1. How would you describe the economic conditions in Manitoba today?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)



D2. In 2023, do you expect the economic conditions in Manitoba to improve, worsen or stay about the same compared to 2022? Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Cost of Living

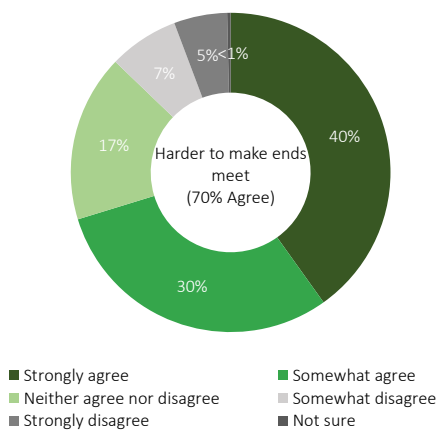
Seven-in-ten of those surveyed are currently finding it hard to make ends meet. These are more likely to be respondents aged 18 to 34 (76 per cent vs. 68 per cent aged 35 and older) and those with a household income of less than \$60,000 (83% vs. those with household incomes of more than \$60,000).

Manitobans were most worried about paying for everyday expenses, as two-thirds of respondents were worried at least sometimes while almost a third were worried often about this.

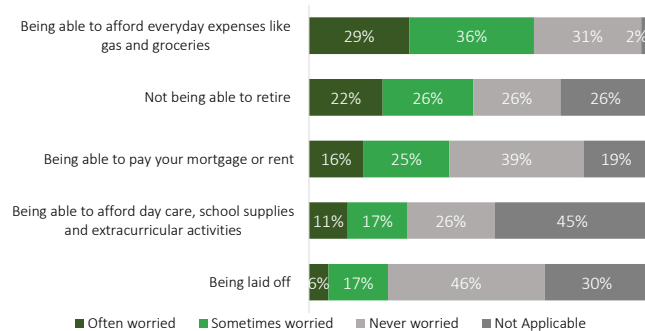
Mortgage payments and the inability to retire were also making about two-in-five respondents worried sometime in the last two months.

Financial Concerns

The majority of Manitobans are worried about everyday expenses and finding it hard to make ends meet



C1. Do you agree or disagree that you are finding it harder to make ends meet these days?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

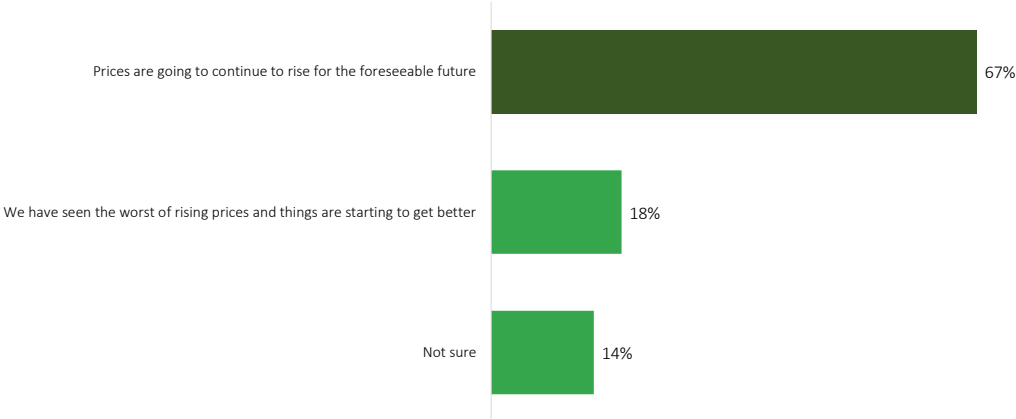


C2. In the past couple of months, how often have you worried about each of the following
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

While Manitobans are worried about inflation and are struggling to make ends meet, they don't see the end in sight and expect the prices to rise for the foreseeable future. This belief is more prominent among those aged 18 to 34 (74 per cent believe the prices will rise vs. 65 per cent of those aged 35 and older), Women (70 per cent vs. 64 per cent of men), those living outside Winnipeg (71 per cent vs. 65 per cent of Winnipeggers), and those households earning less than \$100,000 (72 per cent vs. 61 per cent with household incomes of more than \$100,000).

Inflation Outlook

Inflation is expected to increase for the foreseeable future



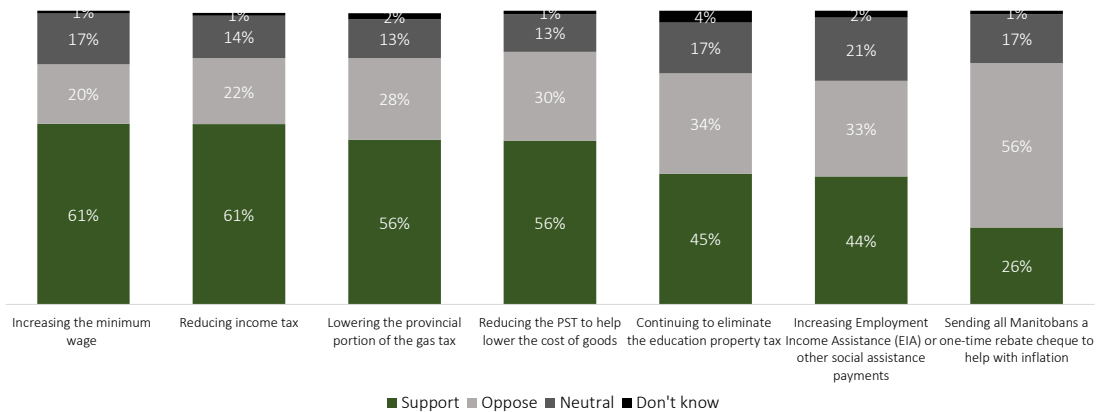
C3. Do you feel we have seen the worst of rising prices and high inflation and things are starting to get better, or do you feel prices and inflation will continue to rise for the foreseeable future?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Measures to Improve Affordability:

When asked about the measures that the government could adopt to give back to Manitobans if it had the money to do so, three-in-five supported reducing income tax or increasing the minimum wage, while more than half of respondents also favoured lowering the provincial portion of the gas tax or reducing PST to help lower the cost of goods.

Measures to Improve Affordability

Increasing minimum wage and/or reducing income tax are the most supported measures



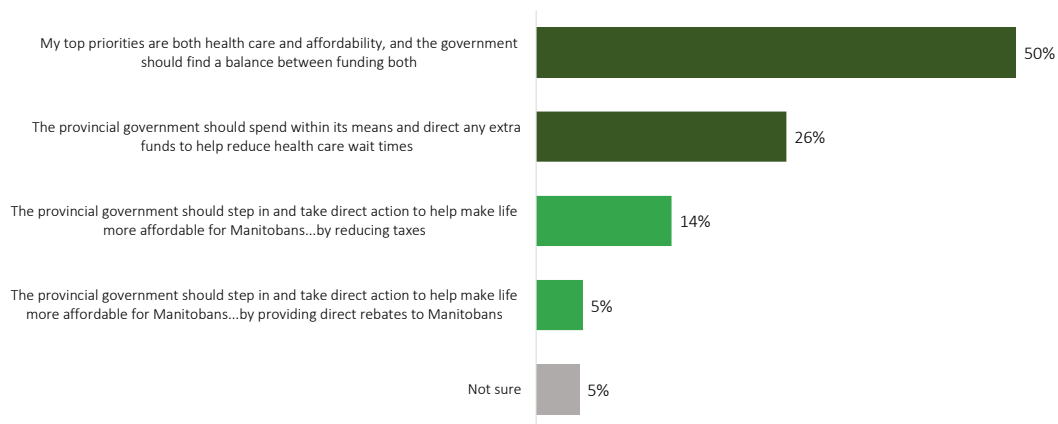
C4. If the provincial government had additional dollars to provide back to Manitobans in some form, would you support or oppose the following measures?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

While respondents expect the government to support them during this period of inflation, improvements in the health-care system were equally important for them. Half of the respondents said both healthcare and affordability are their top priorities and want the government to balance funding between both these areas. Another quarter believe that the government should spend within its means and focus on reducing health-care wait times.

Less than one-in-five want the government to prioritize affordability by reducing taxes or providing direct rebates to Manitobans.

Health care or Affordability

Government needs to find balance funding both priorities: Health care and Affordability



C5. With record inflation and debt received during the COVID-19 pandemic, governments are under significant financial stress. Which from the list below is closest to your top priority for government to focus funding on?
 Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Health Care

Eight-in-ten respondents felt that increasing the number of health-care professionals in the systems should be a high priority to improve the health care system, followed by efforts to reduce surgical wait times and backlogs, which is considered a high priority by two-thirds of respondents.

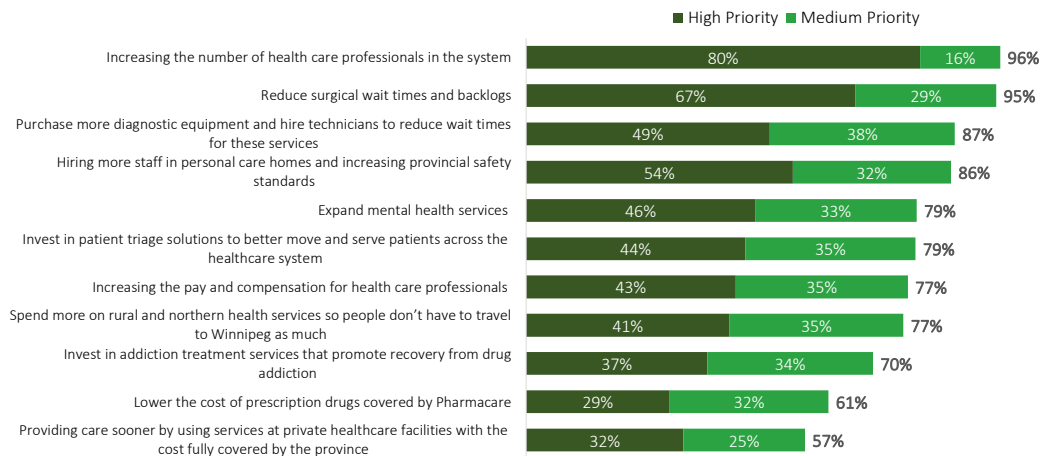
More than half of respondents also believe that care of Manitoba’s seniors is a spending priority, specifically increasing the human resources available in personal care homes and standardization of safety measure.

Respondents aged 18 to 34 are more likely to favour expanding mental health services (84 per cent selected high/ medium priority vs. 77 per cent of those aged 35 and older), increasing pay for health care professionals (83 per cent vs. 76 per cent aged 35 and older), and investing in addiction treatment services (76 per cent consider it high/medium priority vs. 68 per cent aged 35 and older).

In general, women and those living in Winnipeg were more likely to favour almost all of the measures than their counterparts.

Health Care Priorities

Hiring more professionals and reducing surgical times/backlogs should be prioritized



E1. Health care makes up almost 50 per cent of the annual spending by the Manitoba government and there will be additional spending for health care in this budget. Please review the following list of spending priorities for health care services and indicate whether you think each should be a high priority, medium priority, low priority or not a priority at all
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Public Safety & Homelessness

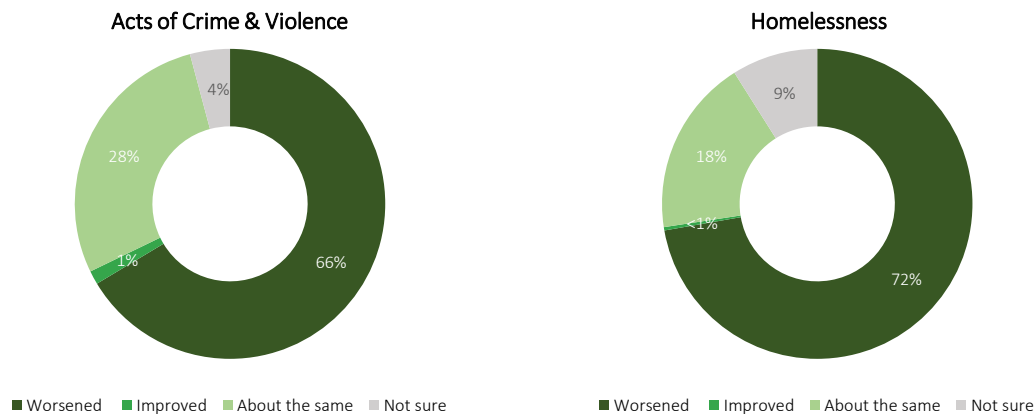
When asked about public safety and homelessness, two-thirds of Manitobans said that they feel crime and violence is worse in Manitoba compared to a few years ago. Almost three-quarters answered that the homelessness situation has worsened in the province compared to what things were like two to three years ago.

Those aged 35 and older were more likely to believe that crime and violence has worsened (71 per cent vs. 54 per cent of those aged 18 to 34).

The sentiment of worsening homelessness was somewhat stronger in women than in men (74 per cent vs. 69 per cent). Winnipeggers were also more likely to say that the homelessness situation has worsened as compared to non-Winnipeggers (77 per cent vs. 65 per cent).

Public Safety and Homelessness

Respondents feel that both acts of crime or violence and homelessness have worsened



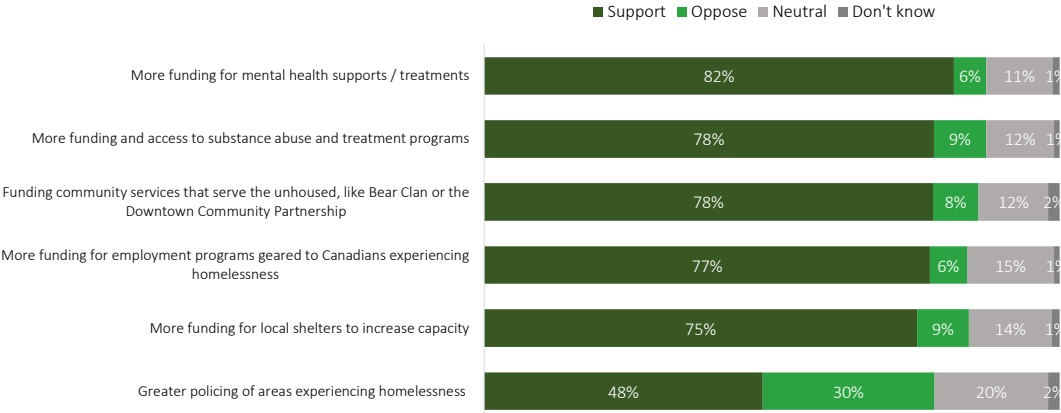
F1. Do you feel **acts of crime and violence** in Manitoba has worsened, improved or are about the same compared to what things were like two to three years ago?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

F2. Do you feel the **homelessness** situation in Manitoba has worsened, improved or are about the same compared to what things were like 2-3 years ago?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Manitobans were asked how they felt about possible solutions to address the homelessness situation. Three-quarters or more of Manitobans supported all of the proposed solutions such as funding community services, more funding for mental health, substance use, employment programs or increased capacity at local shelters – with the exception of greater policing in areas experiencing homelessness, which garnered the support of slightly less than half of respondents.

Actions to Address Homelessness

Most Manitobans support proposed actions, except increasing policing of affected areas



F3. In thinking about the possible solutions to homelessness in Manitoba, to what extent would you support or oppose the following?
 Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

It is noteworthy that the younger age cohort (aged 18 to 34) more strongly supported almost all of the solutions that involve increasing funding, as compared to those aged 35 and older. On the other hand, increasing policing of areas with homelessness generated stronger support among seniors aged 55 and older, with 62 per cent of them supporting it compared to 41 per cent of those aged 18 to 54.

Manitobans living outside of Winnipeg were also more likely to support increasing policing of the affected areas as compared to those living in Winnipeg (54 per cent vs. 44 per cent). Those who immigrated to Canada were also more likely to support increased policing vs. those born in Canada (55 per cent vs. 48 per cent).

Reconciliation

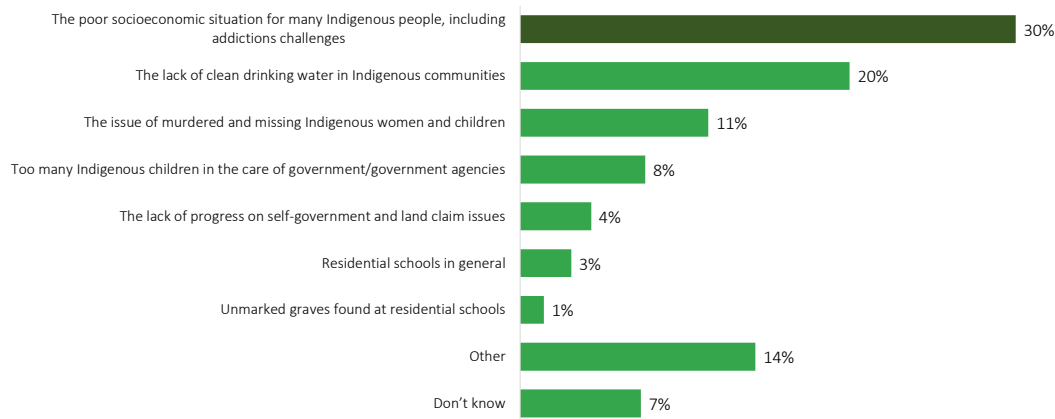
Manitobans provided a range of responses when asked about the situation or issue that affects their view of the atmosphere in Manitoba regarding reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Three-in-ten mentioned that the poor socio-economic situation for many Indigenous people, including addiction challenges, captures their attention the most and dominates their impression about the situation in Manitoba.

Lack of clean drinking water in Indigenous communities was second on the list, with 20 per cent having chosen this situation to be the most concerning. About one-in-ten or less Manitobans were concerned about the other issues listed.



Reconciliation: Most concerning situation

Poor socioeconomic situation of many Indigenous people captures the most attention



G1. When you think of the need and efforts around reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples, what is the specific issue or situation that most captures your attention and dominates your impression about environment in Manitoba?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Winnipeggers were more likely to be concerned about the socioeconomic situation of Indigenous people (34 per cent vs. 25 per cent those living outside Winnipeg) as were men (32 per cent vs. 28 per cent of women) and those with a household income of \$60,000 or more (33 per cent vs. 25 per cent with a household income of less than \$60,000).

Manitobans aged 55 and older (24 per cent vs. 17 per cent aged 18 to 54) and non-Winnipeggers (23 per cent vs. 18 per cent of Winnipeggers) were more likely to be concerned about lack of clean drinking water in Indigenous communities.

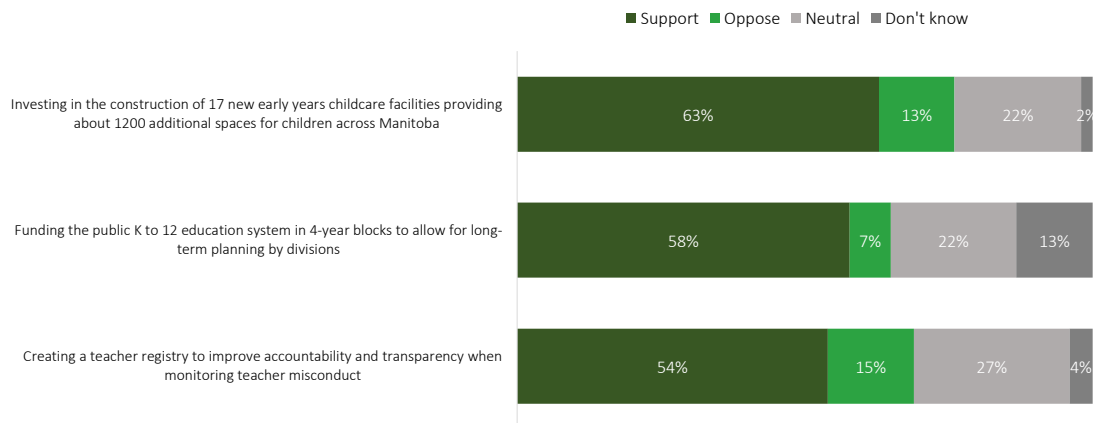
Issues related to murdered and missing Indigenous women and children affected younger respondents more than their older counterparts; 16 per cent mentioned it capturing their attention vs. 10 per cent of those aged 35 and older. Women were also more likely to be concerned about this issue as compared to men (16 per cent vs. six per cent).

Education

When asked about their opinion on new education initiatives, approximately two-thirds of Manitobans supported the investment in the construction of 17 early years childcare facilities across Manitoba. Other listed initiatives, i.e., funding the public K to 12 education system in four-year blocks and creating a teacher registry to improve accountability/transparency also garnered support of at least half of the Manitobans.

Support for Education Initiatives

Manitobans most support the investment in new early years childcare facilities



H1. Do you support or oppose the following government initiatives?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Younger respondents (aged 18 to 34) are more likely than their older peers to support the investment in new facilities (71 per cent vs. 59 per cent of those 35 and older). Women also support the initiative more strongly than men (65 per cent vs. 60 per cent).

Labour Shortage

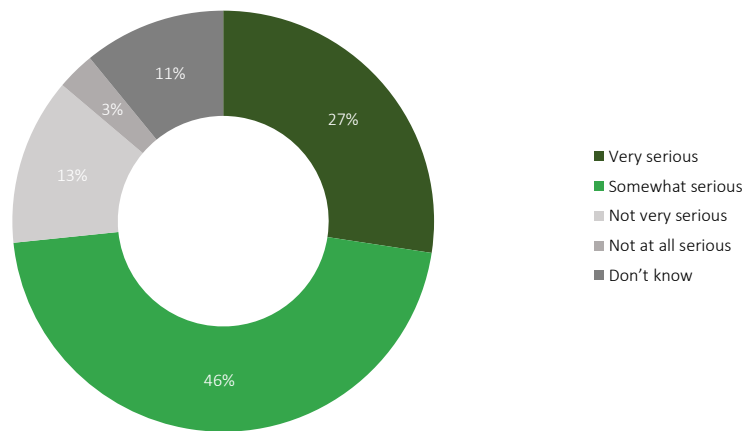
Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of Manitobans believed that shortage of skilled labour poses a threat to the economic growth of the province.

Manitobans aged 55 and up were more likely to believe that labour shortage is a threat as compared to young Manitobans aged 18 to 34 (8 per cent vs. 63 per cent).

Non-Winnepeggers were also more concerned about the impact of skilled labour shortage on provincial economic growth, as compared to Winnipeggers (79 per cent vs. 69 per cent)

Shortage of Skilled Labour

Manitobans understand that labour shortage can pose a serious threat to economic growth



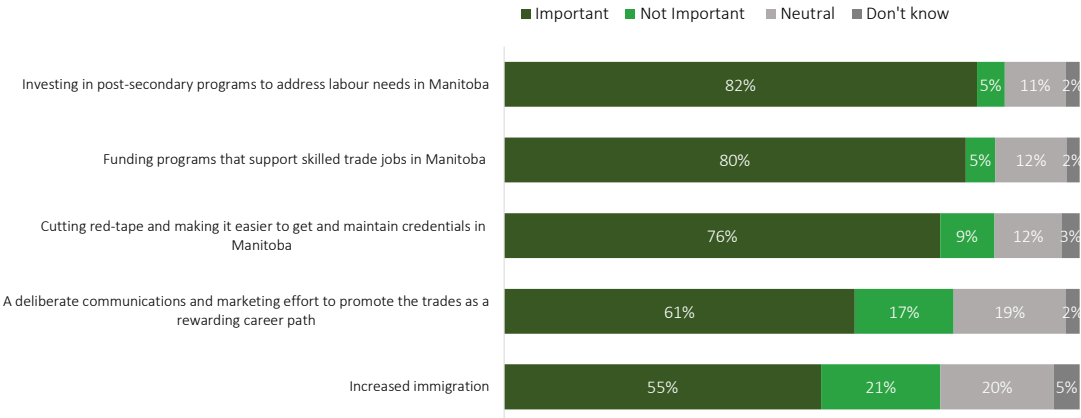
H2. How serious a threat to economic growth in Manitoba is a shortage of skilled labour?
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Manitobans were asked to assess the importance of possible actions to address the skilled labour shortage in the province. Eight-in-ten respondents felt that it is important to invest in post-secondary programs to address labour needs or fund programs that support skilled trade jobs in the province. About three-quarters of respondents also believed that measures to cut red-tape and make accessing credentials easier in Manitoba are also important.

Just over half of respondents responded that increasing immigration is an important step to addressing the labour shortage in the province.

Actions to Address Skilled Labour Shortage

Investment in post-secondary and other programs supporting trade jobs are important



H3. How important are the following actions to address the labour shortage in Manitoba
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

Manitobans aged 55 and up were more likely to favour all the suggested initiatives as compared to those aged 18 to 54.

Seventy per cent of Manitobans born outside Canada felt it is important to have a deliberate effort to promote the trades as a rewarding career path as compared to 61 per cent of those born in Canada. Those who immigrated to Canada were also more likely to believe that increasing immigration could address the labour shortage (64 per cent find it important vs. 54 per cent of those born in Canada).

Familiarity with Government Strategies

Overall, Manitobans were not very familiar with the government strategies implemented over the last number of years. Only about one-in-five Manitobans were familiar (very or somewhat) with 'The Surgical and Diagnostic Task Force' while fewer were familiar with other initiatives implemented in the past.

Familiarity – Government Strategies

Not many are familiar with the government strategies implemented over the last few years



14. Below is a list of strategies that the Manitoba government has developed and implemented over the last number of years. How familiar are you with each of the following:
Base: All respondents (N=3,971)

In general, men were more likely to say that they are familiar with these strategies. Young Manitobans were more likely to be familiar with the Economic Growth Action Plan (20 per cent vs. nine per cent of those aged 55 and older) and the Multi-Year Highway Investment Strategy (18 per cent vs. 11 per cent of those aged 55 and older).

In general, Winnipeggers were more familiar with many of the government initiatives compared to those living outside Winnipeg.

Active Offer Statement

This information is available in an alternate format on request. Please contact
<ProgramAreaEmail@gov.mb.ca>

Questions?

[Provide contact information for questions or comments.]