

POVERTY AND INCOME SECURITY

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE

**REPORT ON RESPONSES TO THE
POVERTY AND INCOME SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of an online questionnaire, which was administered by the National Council of Welfare for more than two months in late 2006. Overall, 5457 responses were received. This substantial number is a testimony to both the broad recognition by Canadians of poverty as an important social topic and of multiple efforts to promote awareness of the questionnaire by the NCW members and staff.

The questionnaire asked nine core questions. The first five related to strategy, specifically to the role of governments in fighting poverty, and the other four sought direction on programs and policy. The respondents had the option to choose from one of two formats:

- The “individual version”, which made it possible for any individual to provide feedback anonymously. This version contained twelve additional demographic questions, which allowed some insight into who the respondents were. Overall, 5034 responses were received in this way.
- The “organization version”, which made it possible for a designated person to respond on behalf of an official organization or business. While 423 organizations submitted their answers, this relatively small number may be somewhat misleading at first. Because of the umbrella structure of some of these organizations, the 423 respondents represented 5370 organizations in total, serving more than 1 million individual members.

Respondent self-selection by minority interest groups is always a concern with a topic this finely honed. In other words, it is important that respondents are not only numerous, but that they cover as broad a representation of Canadian society as possible. This is indeed the case here. The majority (73%) of respondents are concerned regular Canadians, who report to have no professional or volunteer role in the organized fight against poverty. While most respondents are middle aged, the overall age spectrum spans from youth to the elderly. 31% of all respondents have never lived in poverty, while 33% have lived in either extreme or prolonged poverty. 13% live in households with annual income of more than \$104,000, while 12% live in households with less than \$12,000 annually. Responses have been received from all provinces and territories, with Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec leading the way. The one slightly surprising statistic is gender related; 73% of the respondents are women.

But if any concerns about the composition of the respondent base remained, the consistency of the answers dispels them. Across the demographic groups there is a resounding agreement on all key practical and actionable aspects of the questionnaire:

- The respondents strongly agree (score 93.1) that governments should put higher priority on fighting poverty and they strongly agree (score 91.6) that the federal government should take a leadership role in this. They also strongly agree (score 89.4) that the anti-poverty strategy should specifically address the poorest Canadians.
- On the action front, the overall top ranked priority for income security (Guaranteed Annual Income) was also a top rank for most of the demographic groups. Similarly, the top ranked social services priority (Affordable Housing) ranked at the top for most demographic groups.
- An interesting insight came from the last two questions, where the respondents rated programs according to how well they worked. Most income security programs are rated as “valuable assets”, meaning that they are considered both important and well working. The situation is reversed for social services. The respondents identified none of the programs as “valuable assets”. Instead they saw most of them as “priorities for improvement”, suggesting that while these social programs are important they do not work well.

Feedback from more than 5000 Canadians is always valuable regardless of the message received. But because of the strong consensus among the respondents, the results of this questionnaire have a potential to become a valuable tool for shaping future strategy and policy.

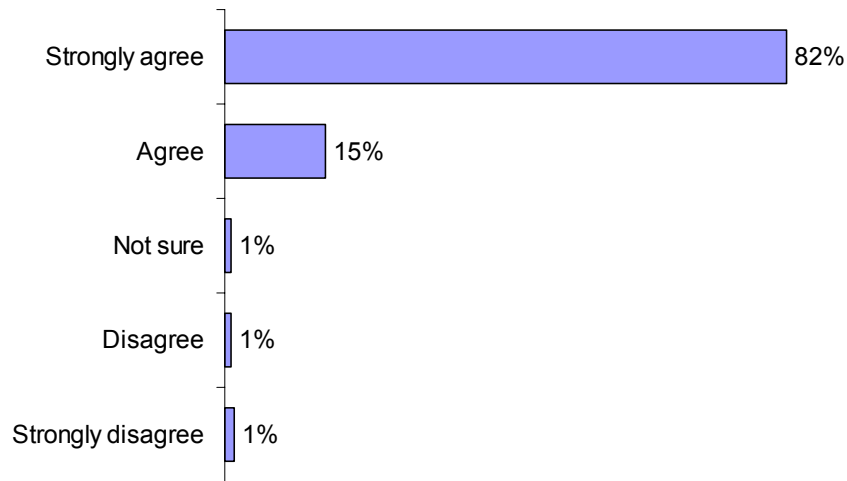
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SECTION 1. OVERALL RESULTS

Question 1. Do you think governments should put a higher priority on fighting poverty in Canada?

The distribution of respondents' answers to the question is shown in the chart below. 97% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that governments should put a higher priority on fighting poverty in Canada. This is a very high level of agreement, which also spans all demographic groups.



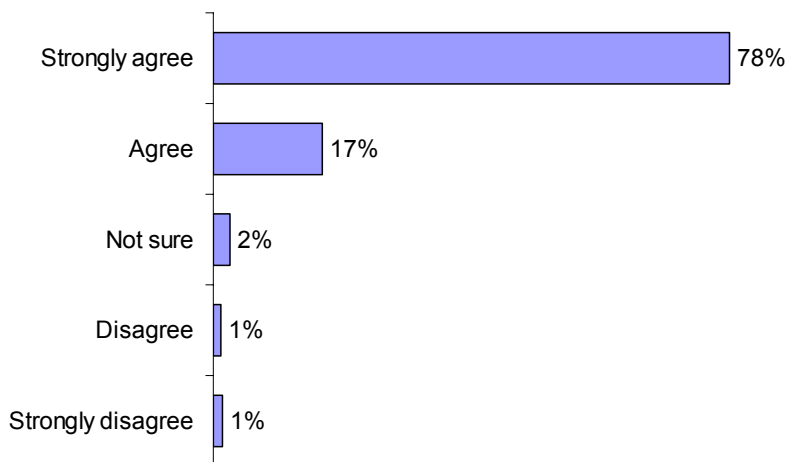
Another way of describing these results is to rate agreement on the scale of 0 to 100, where 100 is equivalent to “strongly agree” and 0 to “strongly disagree” (see the Methodology section for more detail). On this scale the average response amounts to 93.1, a strong level of overall agreement.

	Respondents' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	Equivalent level of agreement
Level of agreement with governments putting higher priority on fighting poverty in Canada	93.1	Strongly Agree

It would be a valid inquiry to study the profile of the dissenters in further detail. Unfortunately, the group of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed comprises only 118 respondents, a sample well distributed across the demographic groups and too small to reveal any meaningful information.

Question 2. Do you think the federal government should take a leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy?

Similar to Question 1, there is a strong consensus among the respondents that the federal government should take a leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy. 95% or respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition, which translates to an overall level of 91.6 (Strongly Agree).



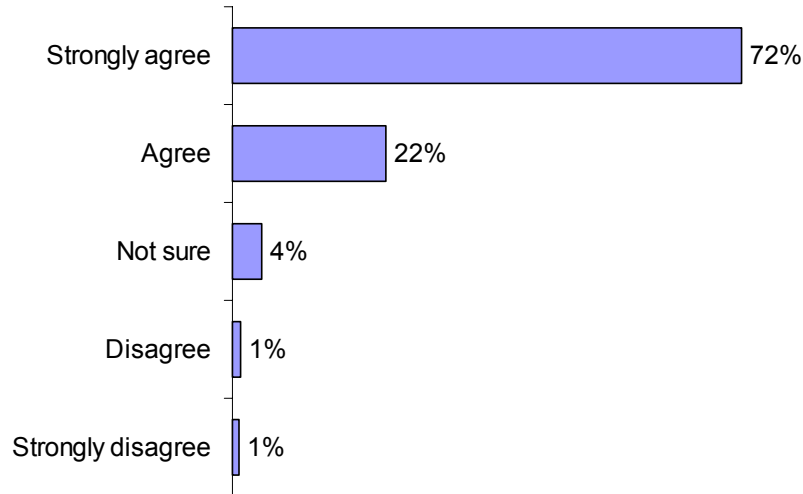
	Respondents' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	of agreement
Level of agreement with the federal government taking a leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy	91.6	Strongly Agree

Question 3. If there was a national anti-poverty strategy how important are the following elements to make it work?

The table below shows the overall levels of importance for each proposed element.

	Importance (scale 0 to 100)	Equivalent level of importance
An action plan with goals, commitments and accountability for results.	91.0	Highest Importance
Better coordination and shared responsibility across federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments.	90.0	Highest Importance
Analysis and knowledge of the root causes of poverty and inequality to ensure that policies work.	87.1	Medium High Importance
Consultation with Canadians, especially those living near or below the poverty line.	86.7	Medium High Importance
A law that commits governments to fight poverty.	81.3	Medium High Importance
Official measures of how many people live in poverty.	73.6	Medium High Importance

Question 4. In addition to reducing poverty rates generally, do you agree that an anti-poverty strategy must include programs that specifically benefit people who are the most disadvantaged and living in deepest poverty?



Once again, there is a strong consensus among the respondents on this question. 94% either agree or strongly agree with the proposition, generating an 89.4 level of agreement.

	Respondents' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	Equivalent level of agreement
Level of agreement that an anti-poverty strategy must include programs that specifically benefit people who are the most disadvantaged and living in deepest poverty	89.4	Strongly Agree

Question 5. Many governments have official poverty statistics that they use to set goals and measure results. How important are the following measures?

The following table shows the overall level of importance for the proposed measures.

	Importance (scale 0 to 100)	Equivalent level of importance
A measure based on the actual cost of necessities in your community such as food and housing.	89.1	Highest importance
A measure of extreme poverty (for example, when people cannot afford essentials like a warm coat and boots for the winter, or have become isolated because they cannot afford any social activity or the means to stay in touch with friends and relatives).	87.1	Medium high importance
A measure based on having to spend a much greater share of income on basic necessities compared to other Canadians.	81.7	Medium high importance
A measure of poverty that is used by similar countries, so we can compare how we are doing.	61.3	Medium importance

Question 6. The following are major public programs that provide INCOME AND INCOME SECURITY to individuals and families. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us how important each program is, where 1 means it is very important and 5 means it is least important. Then, in the second column, tell us how well you think the program is working, where 1 means it is doing an excellent job and 5 means it needs a lot of improvement.

	Importance 1 = high 5 = low	Works well 1 = high 5 = low
Unemployment, sickness and compassionate care benefits (through Employment Insurance).	1.84	3.39
Maternity and parental benefits (through Employment Insurance).	2.00	2.81
Social assistance (welfare benefits).	1.83	3.85
Canada and Quebec Pension Plan retirement benefits.	1.91	3.02
Canada and Quebec Pension Plan disability benefits.	1.90	3.22
Old Age Security.	1.84	3.13
Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors.	1.80	3.22
Child-related tax benefits (Including the Canada Child Tax Benefit).	2.00	3.09
The new monthly benefit for children under 6 years of age.	2.62	3.32
Student loans and grants.	2.04	3.46
Deductions and credits that reduce the income tax you have to pay.	2.37	3.41
Income and income security programs overall	2.01	3.27

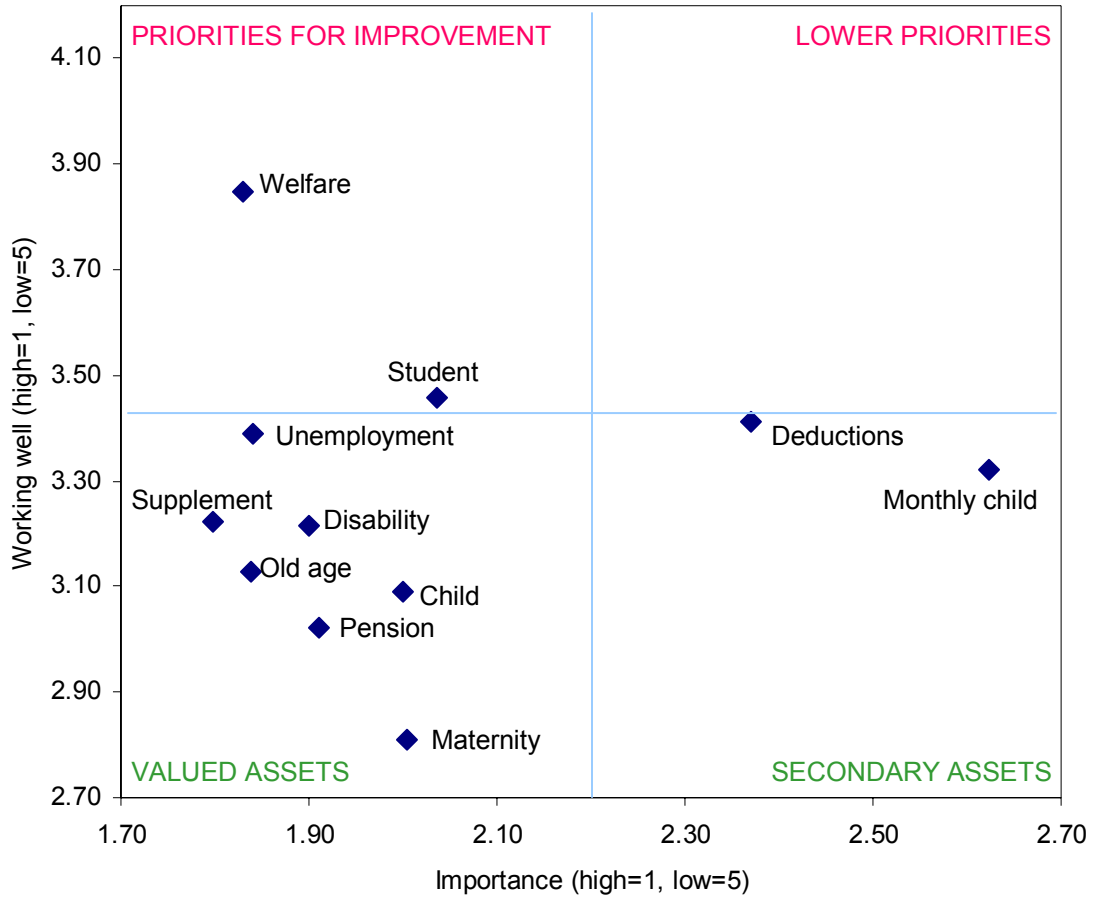
The response to this question is depicted in the table above. In general, the importance of all the public programs was perceived to be higher than the level of appreciation of how well each element works. Overall, the average importance of was 2.01, while the measure how well they work was 3.27.

An often useful way of depicting these results is in a two-dimensional plane such as the one shown on the next page. Here, items of higher importance are shown at the bottom along the vertical axis, while items perceived as working better than others will appear to the left along the horizontal axis.

This generates four quadrants of interest:

- **Valued assets** (lower left quadrant), which contains the programs that are perceived as important and also judged as working well when compared to others. The majority of the income security programs fall into this category.
- **Secondary assets** (lower right quadrant), which shows the programs that work well, but are not as important to the respondents.
- **Priorities for improvement** (upper left quadrant), which shows the programs that are considered important, but not working as well as others. Two programs fall into this category, “Student Loans and Grants” and “Social Assistance (Welfare Benefits)”.
- **Secondary priorities** (upper right quadrant). Typically, this quadrant would contain the programs that are considered less important and not working as well as others. This quadrant is empty.

Income and Income Security programs



In order to facilitate the visual clarity of the chart, the programs were given short labels to substitute for their long titles. The reference table below maps them back to their full program names.

LABEL	PROGRAM
Child	Child-related tax benefits (Including the Canada Child Tax Benefit).
Deductions	Deductions and credits that reduce the income tax you have to pay.
Disability	Canada and Quebec Pension Plan disability benefits.
Maternity	Maternity and parental benefits (through Employment Insurance).
Monthly child	The new monthly benefit for children under 6 years of age.
Old age	Old Age Security.
Pension	Canada and Quebec Pension Plan retirement benefits.
Student	Student loans and grants.
Supplement	Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors.
Unemployment	Unemployment, sickness and compassionate care benefits (through Employment Insurance).
Welfare	Social assistance (welfare benefits).

Question 7. The following are other SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES that can contribute to the well being and social security of individuals and families. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us how important each program is to social security, where 1 means it is very important and 5 means it is least important. Then, in the second column, tell us how well you think each program is working, where 1 means it is doing an excellent job and 5 means it needs a lot of improvement.

Similar to Question 6., the results are summarized in the table below and in the chart on the next page.

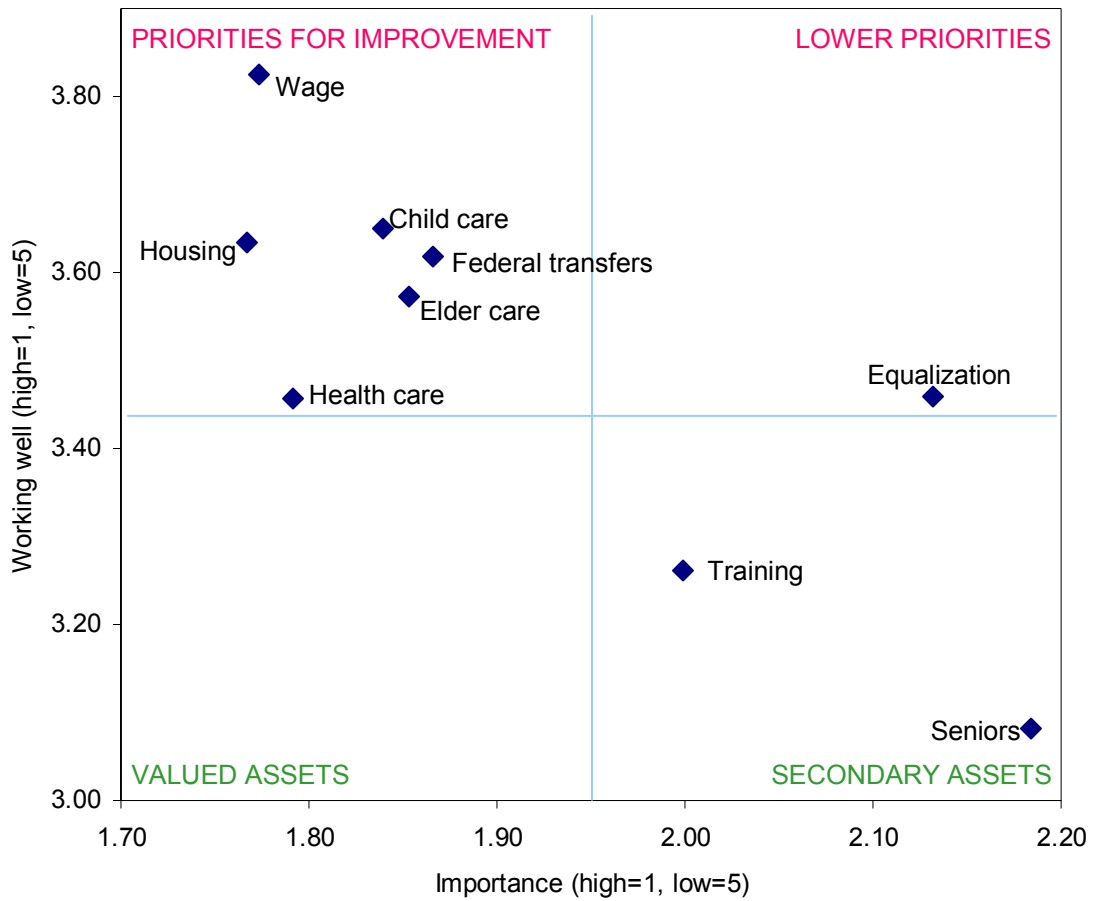
	Importance 1 = high 5 = low	Works well 1 = high 5 = low
Minimum wage laws.	1.77	3.64
Job-related training programs.	2.00	3.26
Child care spaces, supports and subsidies.	1.84	3.65
Elder care and other family supports.	1.85	3.57
Social housing and rent supports and subsidies.	1.77	3.83
Health care supports and subsidies (e.g., for prescription drugs, special dietary needs, disability aids, dental care).	1.79	3.46
Subsidies and discounts for seniors.	2.18	3.08
Federal financial transfers to the provinces and territories for health, education and social services.	1.87	3.62
Equalization payments to less well-off provinces and territories.	2.13	3.46
Social programs and services overall	1.91	3.51

Again, the results fall into four quadrants of interest. However, the chart indicates quite a different trend from the results in Question 6. The programs are roughly grouped along a diagonal from top left to bottom right. This means that the respondents felt the programs that are more important work less well, while those that are less important work better.

- The **Valued assets** quadrant (lower left) is empty. It would normally show the programs that are perceived as important, but also judged as working well.
- Most of the programs are grouped in the **Priorities for improvement** quadrant (upper left), which shows programs that the respondents considered important, but not working as well as others.
- **Secondary assets** (lower right quadrant) contains two programs that work well, but are not as important to the respondents.
- **Secondary priorities** (upper right quadrant) contains one program.

This trend is confirmed by the overall measures: When compared to the previous question, social programs were given higher importance than income security programs (1.91 vs. 2.01), but lower marks for working well (3.51 vs. 3.27)

Social Programs and Services



LABEL	PROGRAM
Child care	Child care spaces, supports and subsidies.
Elder care	Elder care and other family supports.
Equalization	Equalization payments to less well-off provinces and territories.
Federal transfers	Federal financial transfers to the provinces and territories for health, education and social services.
Health care	Health care supports and subsidies (e.g., for prescription drugs, special dietary needs, disability aids, dental care).
Housing	Social housing and rent supports and subsidies.
Seniors	Subsidies and discounts for seniors.
Training	Job-related training programs.
Wage	Minimum wage laws.

Question 8. This question concerns INCOME. From the following areas for investment and action, please pick the 5 you think could make the most difference in permanently reducing poverty rates.

The results in the following table show the respondent preferences for action in the area of income. The items are ordered by “rank strength”, the overall percentage of votes each option received.

	Rank strength (how often picked)	Rank
Guaranteed annual, liveable income.	13.4%	1
Higher minimum wages.	12.6%	2
Greater flexibility in combining work and welfare to keep more employment income and to build assets.	12.5%	3
Higher welfare rates based on real costs of living.	11.4%	4
Income supplements for people with employment limitations (adults with disabilities or with a disabled family member, lone parents with young children).	10.2%	5
Income supplements for low-wage workers.	7.8%	6
Income benefits for adults who care for dependents with disabilities and long-term illnesses.	6.7%	7
Improved child support (e.g., greater enforcement of child support payments, government-run advance maintenance system).	6.1%	8
Universal maternity benefits for all mothers.	4.8%	9
Increased child benefits.	4.7%	10
Increased access to Employment Insurance benefits.	4.3%	11
Higher Employment Insurance benefit rates.	2.8%	12
Increased access to welfare.	2.7%	13

It is worth noting that the spread between the top 3 choices is less than 1%, meaning that for all practical purposes these actions can be considered equally important. Despite these small differences, the order of the top items is relatively well maintained across all demographic categories, underscoring the consistency of opinion across the respondent base.

Question 9. This question concerns SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. From the following areas for investment and other action, please pick the 5 you think could make the most difference in permanently reducing poverty rates.

Similar to Question 8., the responses are shown with the rank of importance.

	Rank strength (how often picked)	Rank
More affordable housing and housing subsidies.	13.9%	1
Better jobs and skills training to move from poorly paid jobs to better ones and avoid or get off welfare permanently.	11.5%	2
Greater access to higher education (e.g., grants, low-cost loans, lower tuition).	10.5%	3
More quality, affordable child care spaces.	9.8%	4
Universal prescription drug and dental coverage.	7.9%	5
Easier access to needed benefits and services (e.g. simpler, more coordinated, less complex and less time-consuming process.)	7.8%	6
Specific programs for people most at risk of poverty.	7.6%	7
Measures to improve gender equality and address violence against women.	7.3%	8
Better recognition of foreign education, experience and credentials.	6.3%	9
Social economy and community economy development.	5.9%	10
More elder care.	5.1%	11
Greater access to recreational and other programs that contribute to health and well-being.	4.0%	12
Better access to legal services for family law matters.	2.4%	13

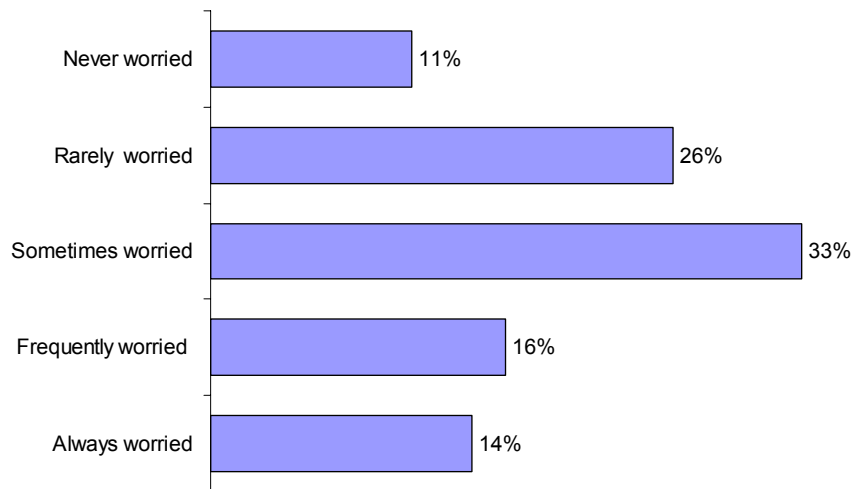
SECTION 2. INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Question 10. Regardless of your current level of income, what are the 3 greatest economic risks that you are concerned about personally when thinking about your own future?

	Rank strength (how often picked)	Rank
Being seriously ill, injured or disabled	15.0%	1
Not having enough money and support in old age	14.8%	2
Not having enough assets such as savings or owning property to get by in unexpected difficult financial circumstances	13.3%	3
Not making or having enough money	11.5%	4
Losing a job	6.9%	5
Not finding a good job that meets my needs	6.0%	6
Being unable to balance employment and family responsibilities	5.6%	7
Not finding quality, affordable elder care	3.9%	8
Having a family or personal relationship break down	3.8%	9
Having an older child or adult dependent that requires care	3.7%	10
Having a child to raise	3.2%	11
Other (*)	2.6%	12
Not having enough education, qualifications or skills for the job market	2.4%	13
Not finding quality, affordable child care	2.3%	14
Not being able to qualify for government programs	2.1%	15
Discrimination or harassment that affects my job and income	1.9%	16
Violence and abuse that affects my ability to work	0.8%	17

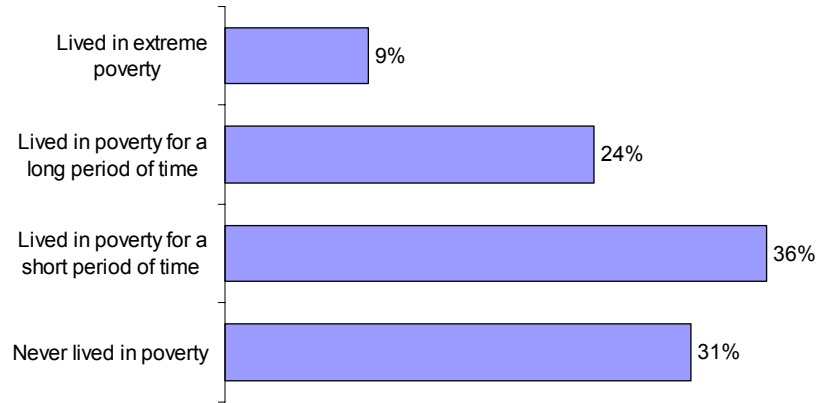
(*) For the large part, the open text comments provided in the “Other” category can be mapped evenly among the already given standard options with no material impact on their ranking. Of note are two new categories (financial struggles related to students, and concerns about housing), but they would only rank as 18 and 19 in the overall results if included.

Question 11. Do you worry about living in poverty or the possibility of living in poverty?



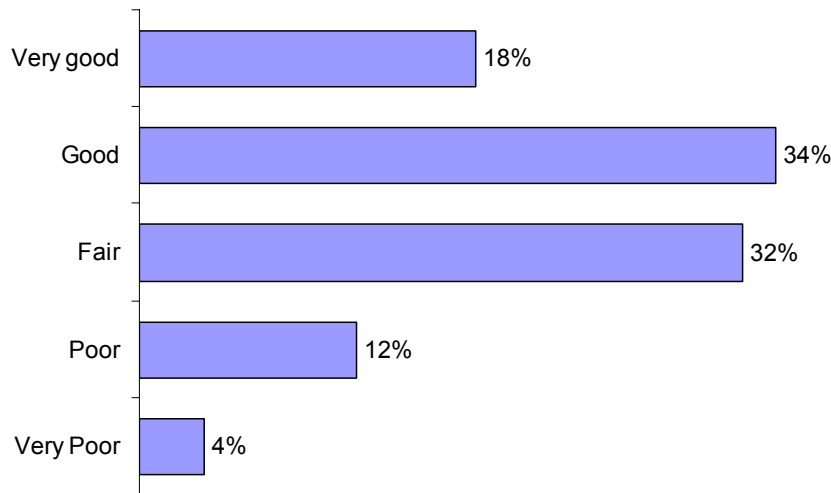
This confirms a relatively balanced split of respondents, allowing an insight into the opinions of those who worry often (30%), sometimes (33%), and almost never (37%).

Question 12. In the past, I have (check as many as apply):



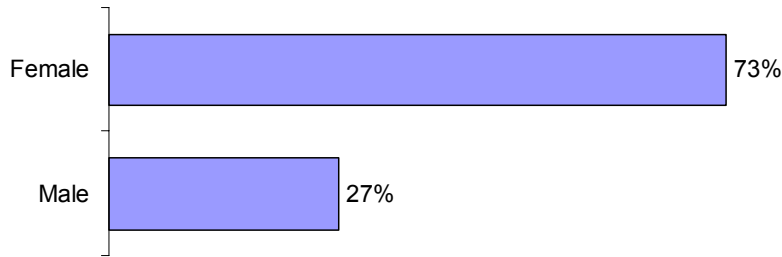
31% of the respondents have never experienced poverty, while 33% have lived in extreme or prolonged poverty. This finding, along with the responses to the previous question (Question 11.), indicates that the respondent base is well balanced. In other words, roughly equal input was received both from individuals who have experienced severe poverty and from those who have not had first hand experience with it.

Question 13. My overall knowledge of government income and social security programs, benefits and services (e.g., how they work, how to apply, what are the eligibility criteria) can be described as:



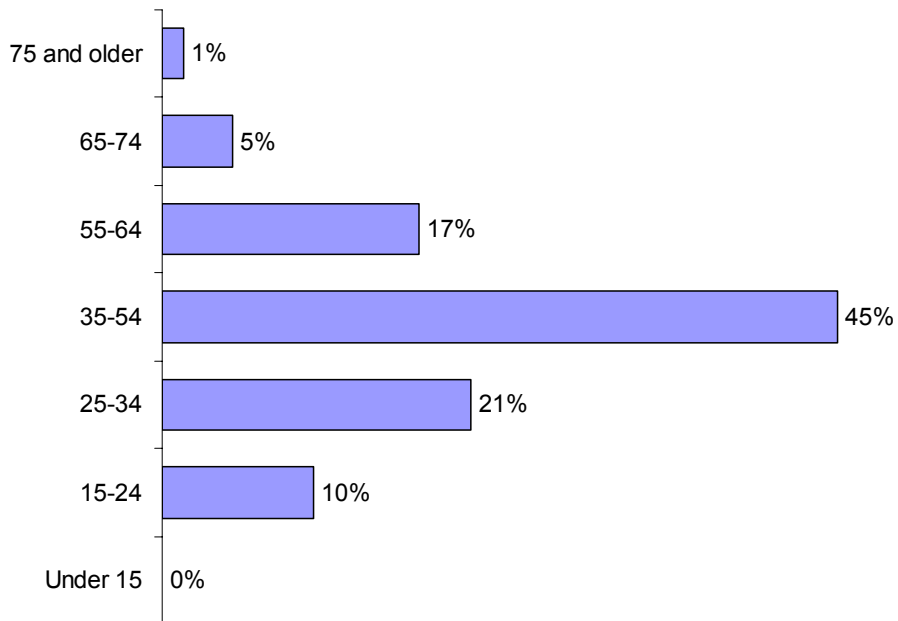
About half (52%) of the respondents feel that they have good or very good knowledge of government programs and services. This provides a reasonable level of confidence that the choices made in the policy section of the questionnaire were made in a knowledgeable and informed fashion.

Question 14. I am:



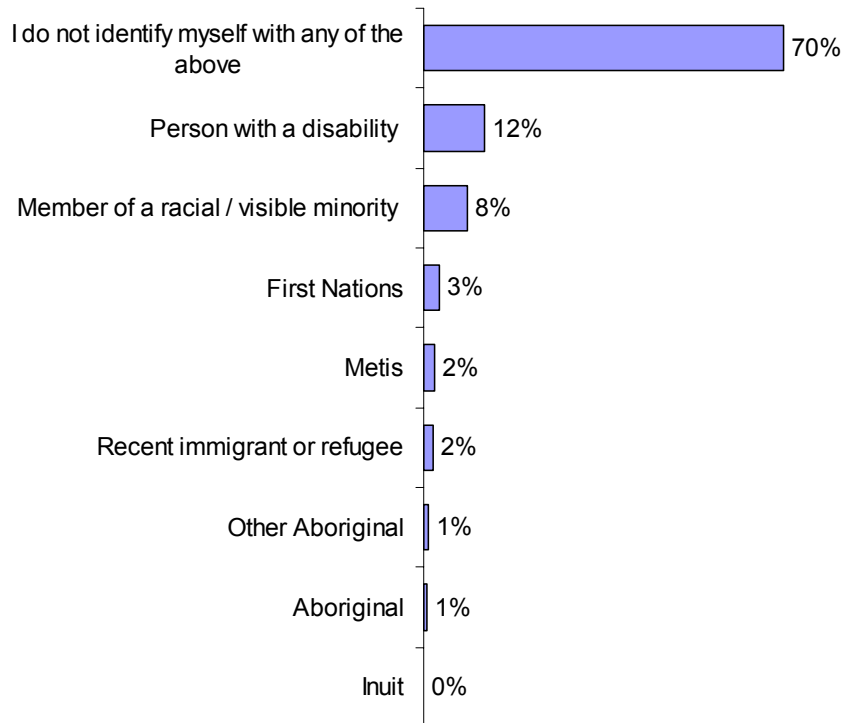
There is almost a 3:1 split in the respondents along the gender lines. From the Statistics Canada pre tax Low Income Cut-Offs we know that women are slightly more likely to experience poverty in Canada (16.6% of women vs. 14.4% of men). But a far greater reason for the gender imbalance seen here may be that women tend to care for others experiencing hardship and therefore took interest in responding to the questionnaire.

Question 15. My age is:



Almost half of the respondents (45%) fall into the 35 to 54 years age bracket.

Question 16. I identify myself as belonging to the following (check as many as apply):



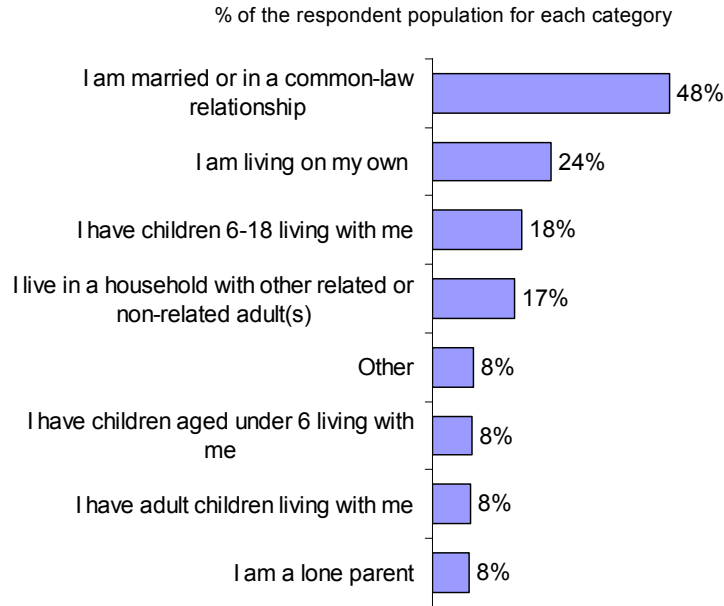
While the 2001 census shows 16% poverty rates among Canadians overall, it points out that poverty rates are 22% among immigrants, 34% among Aboriginal people, and 23% among people with disabilities. Although the numbers of respondents in these groups are generally low in this questionnaire, (30% of all respondents in total), their responses bring in their perspective into the overall results.

Question 17. My situation is best described as (check as many as apply):

According to the Statistics Canada pre tax Low Income Cut-Offs, poverty rates vary in Canada based on family status, e.g.:

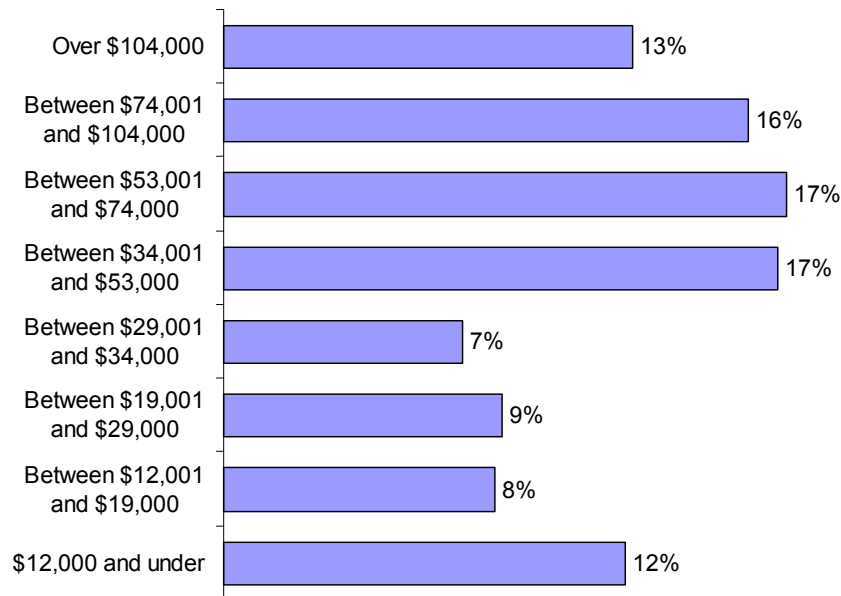
- 6.6% of two-earner families with children
- 10.0% of two-parent families with children
- 11.6% of children in two-parent families
- 22.2% of male lone parents
- 47.1% of female lone parents
- 52.1% of children in female lone-parent families

The responses to Question 17. (next page) provide an indication of how these groups were represented among the respondents to the questionnaire.



Of the 386 respondents who chose the “Other” category, most simply provided clarifications to the standard categories, mapped evenly across the available options, without materially changing the reported frequencies. The only somewhat consistent new category that emerged was temporary housing (e.g. homelessness, shelter, or student residence). However, if this category was added to the chart above, it would rank at less than 1% overall.

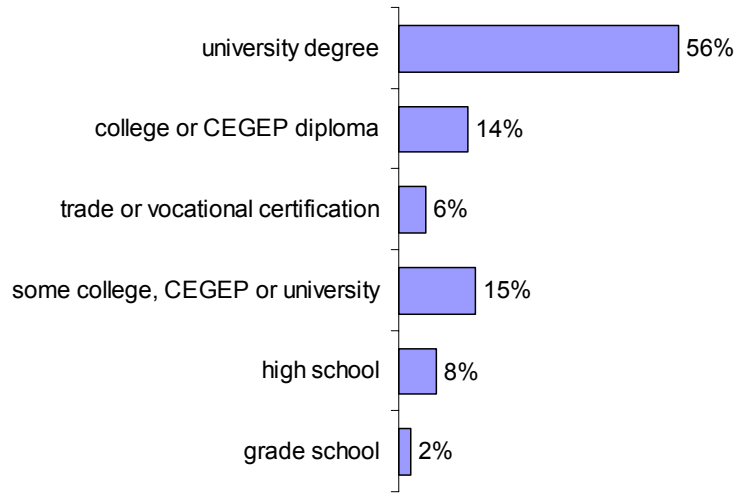
Question 18. The total income of my household is:



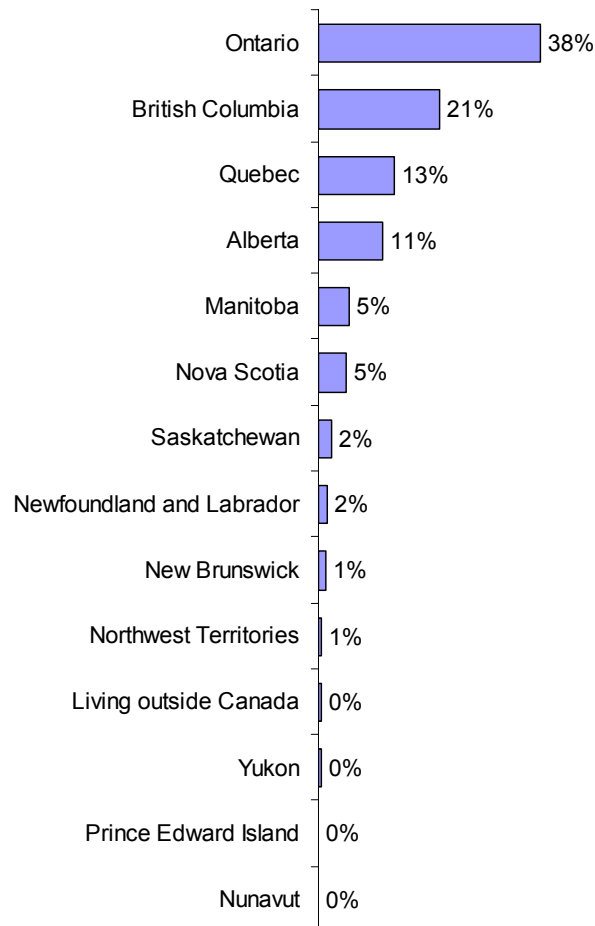
The responses to this question indicate that the respondents cover a good cross section of Canadian income segments. About a third (29%) live in households earning more than \$74,000 annually. Approximately the same number of respondents (29%) live in households earning less than \$29,000.

Question 19. I have completed the following levels of education (check as many as apply):

The following chart is based on the highest level of education reported by each respondent.

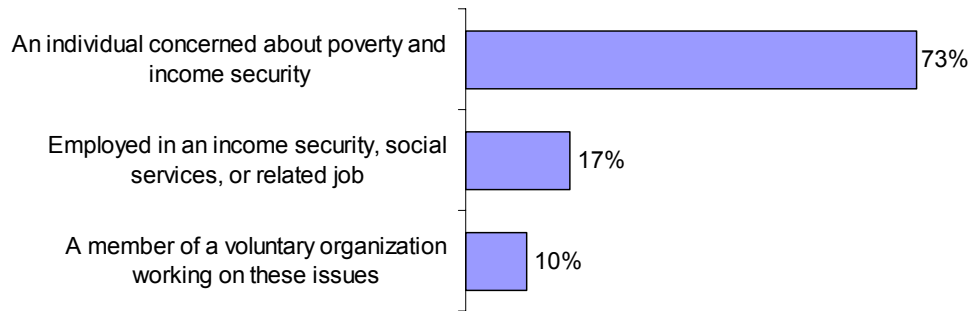


Question 20. I live in:



While the frequency of the last four categories rounds to 0%, some responses from all categories were received.

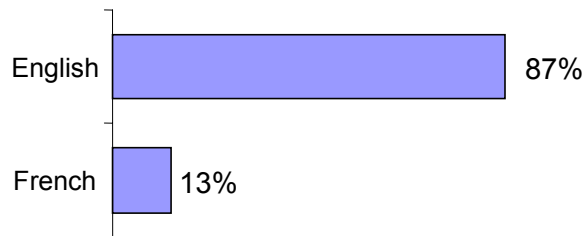
Question 21. I am:



Almost ¾ of the respondents are “regular Canadians”, or people who are not affiliated with fighting poverty professionally or on a volunteer basis.

Language

The following shows the split of respondents by the language of the questionnaire they selected. (This is the only demographic category that is not “self reported”. It is of “behavioural” nature instead, since it was collected as a by product of the questionnaire design)



Share your ideas:

In addition to answering the standardized questions, the respondents had the opportunity to further elaborate on their situation in an open text feedback (collected under separate cover). About 52% of the respondents (2818 in total) took advantage of this opportunity. Their comments roughly split into the following categories:

Topic	% occurrence (out of total 2818 comments)
Governance and personal values	15%
Income assistance	11%
Business and economics	9%
Education and training	8%
Vulnerable minorities	8%
Housing	8%
Employment	8%
Health and lifestyle	7%
Personal experiences	7%
Social programs	6%
Child care	6%
About this survey	5%
Disagreement with the spirit of the questionnaire	2%

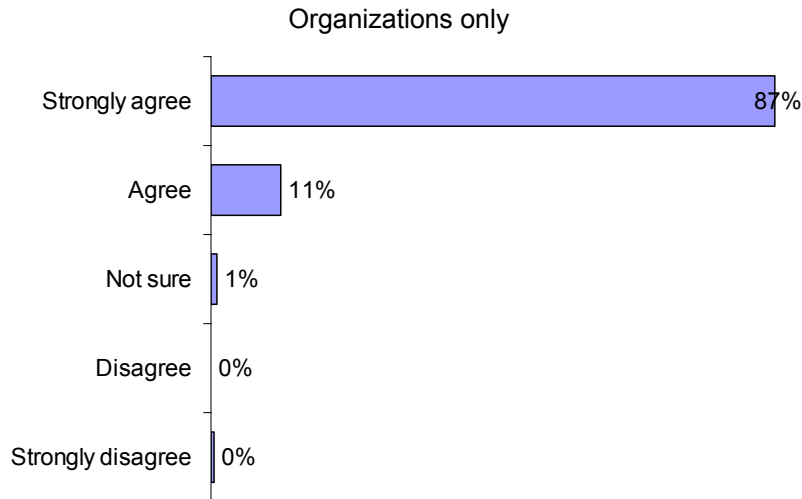
SECTION 3. RESPONSES FROM ORGANIZATIONS

As part of the questionnaire, 423 answers were collected from individuals who represented a wide variety of Canadian organizations. Their responses to Questions 1 through 9 were included in the overall results presented in Part 1 of this report. However, because of the potentially significant number of people these organizations represent, their responses are also presented separately below. In reading the data, caution should be exercised for the following reasons:

1. Strictly speaking, the responses were collected under a circumstance significantly different from the remainder of the respondents. The organization representatives were asked to provide their names, titles and addresses and were therefore aware that their responses could be questioned in the future.
2. The sample is very small. Therefore the confidence intervals for these results are much larger, i.e. the numbers are less accurate, than for the remainder of the population (please consult the Methodology section for more detail).

However, for practical reasons such as policy and strategy design, the organizations’ answers show no actionable departure of opinion from the responses received from the overall population.

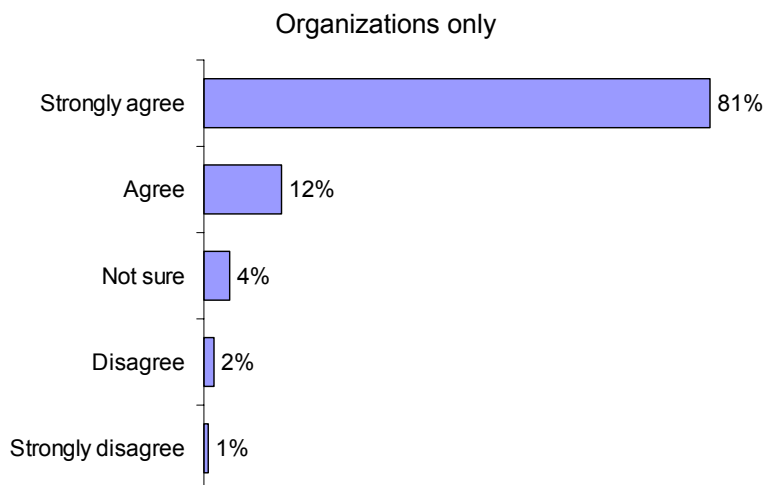
Question 1. Do you think governments should put a higher priority on fighting poverty in Canada?



Organizations only	Organizations' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	Compare to overall population	Equivalent level of agreement
Level of agreement with governments putting higher priority on fighting poverty in Canada	95.6	93.1	Strongly Agree

The overall level of agreement is 95.6 (Strongly Agree), slightly higher than the 93.1 (Strongly Agree) of the overall population.

Question 2. Do you think the federal government should take a leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy?



Organizations only	Organizations' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	Compare to overall population	Equivalent level of agreement
Level of agreement with the federal government taking a leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy	92.2	91.6	Strongly Agree

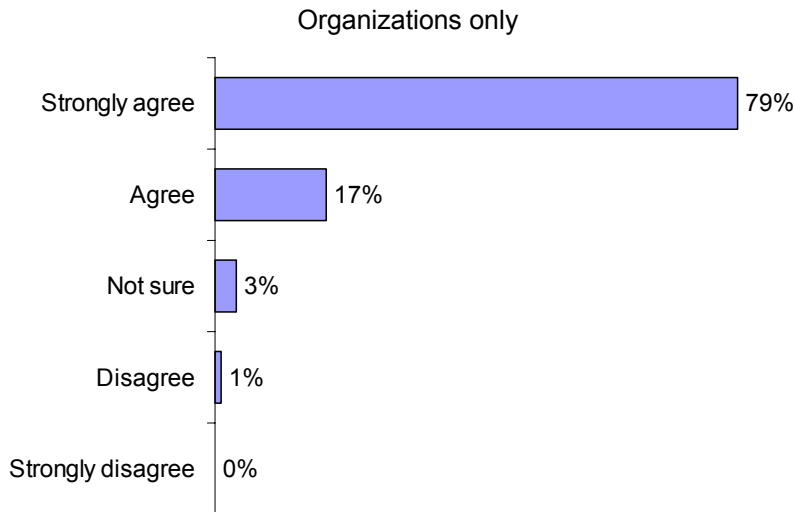
The overall level of agreement with this question is 92.2 (Strongly Agree), slightly higher than the 91.6 (Strongly Agree) of the overall population.

Question 3. If there was a national anti-poverty strategy how important are the following elements to make it work?

Organizations only	Importance (scale 0 to 100)	Compare to overall population	Equivalent level of importance
An action plan with goals, commitments and accountability for results.	92.9	91.0	Highest Importance
Better coordination and shared responsibility across federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments.	91.6	90.0	Highest Importance
Consultation with Canadians, especially those living near or below the poverty line.	88.0	86.7	Highest Importance
Analysis and knowledge of the root causes of poverty and inequality to ensure that policies work.	86.7	87.1	Medium High Importance
A law that commits governments to fight poverty.	83.5	81.3	Medium High Importance
Official measures of how many people live in poverty.	74.5	73.6	Medium High Importance

The only difference from the overall results is the reversed order of importance between Consultations, and Analysis and Knowledge. In all other cases the importance score is slightly higher for organizations than for the overall population of respondents.

Question 4. In addition to reducing poverty rates generally, do you agree that an anti-poverty strategy must include programs that specifically benefit people who are the most disadvantaged and living in deepest poverty?



Organizations only	Organizations' agreement (scale 0 to 100)	Compare to overall population	Equivalent level of agreement
Level of agreement that an anti-poverty strategy must include programs that specifically benefit people who are the most disadvantaged and living in deepest poverty	92.5	89.4	Strongly Agree

Again, the organizations are slightly more in agreement with this proposition than the overall population.

Question 5. Many governments have official poverty statistics that they use to set goals and measure results. How important are the following measures?

Organizations only	Overall importance (scale 0 to 100)	Compare to overall response	Equivalent level of importance
A measure based on the actual cost of necessities in your community such as food and housing.	89.4	89.1	Highest importance
A measure of extreme poverty (for example, when people cannot afford essentials etc ..)	85.4	87.1	Medium high importance
A measure based on having to spend a much greater share of income on basic necessities compared to other Canadians.	83.9	81.7	Medium high importance
A measure of poverty that is used by similar countries, so we can compare how we are doing.	62.2	61.3	Medium importance

For all practical purposes, these results are about the same as those of the overall population.

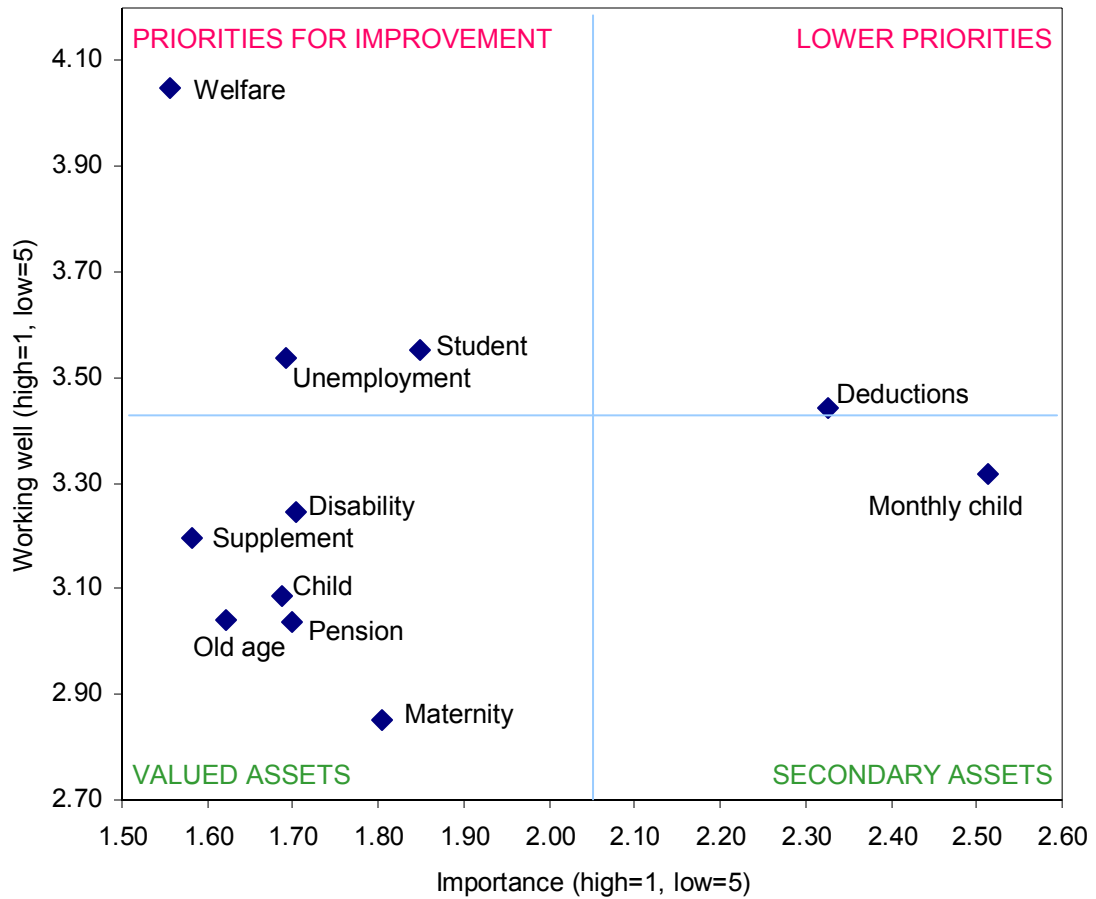
Question 6. The following are major public programs that provide INCOME AND INCOME SECURITY to individuals and families. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us how important each program is, where 1 means it is very important and 5 means it is least important. Then, in the second column, tell us how well you think the program is working, where 1 means it is doing an excellent job and 5 means it needs a lot of improvement.

Organizations only	Importance 1 = high 5 = low	Works well 1 = high 5 = low
Unemployment, sickness and compassionate care benefits (through Employment Insurance).	1.69	3.54
Maternity and parental benefits (through Employment Insurance).	1.80	2.85
Social assistance (welfare benefits).	1.56	4.05
Canada and Quebec Pension Plan retirement benefits.	1.70	3.04
Canada and Quebec Pension Plan disability benefits.	1.70	3.25
Old Age Security.	1.62	3.04
Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors.	1.58	3.20
Child-related tax benefits (Including the Canada Child Tax Benefit).	1.69	3.09
The new monthly benefit for children under 6 years of age.	2.51	3.32
Student loans and grants.	1.85	3.55
Deductions and credits that reduce the income tax you have to pay.	2.33	3.44
Income and income security programs overall (organizations)	1.82	3.31
Compare to the entire population	2.01	3.27

As the table above and the chart on the next page indicate, the responses are similar to those of the entire respondent populations. The trends are slightly more pronounced, with the organizations attaching a slightly higher importance (1.82 vs. 2.01) and a slightly worse mark for working well (3.31 vs. 3.27) than the entire population of respondents.

As a consequence, a third item was brought up to the **Priorities for Improvement**. “Unemployment, Sickness and Compassionate Care Benefits” was added to the originally identified two priorities of “Student Loans and Grants” and “Social Assistance (Welfare Benefits)”.

Income and Income Security Programs
Organizations only



LABEL	PROGRAM
Child	Child-related tax benefits (Including the Canada Child Tax Benefit).
Deductions	Deductions and credits that reduce the income tax you have to pay.
Disability	Canada and Quebec Pension Plan disability benefits.
Maternity	Maternity and parental benefits (through Employment Insurance).
Monthly child	The new monthly benefit for children under 6 years of age.
Old age	Old Age Security.
Pension	Canada and Quebec Pension Plan retirement benefits.
Student	Student loans and grants.
Supplement	Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors.
Unemployment	Unemployment, sickness and compassionate care benefits (through Employment Insurance).
Welfare	Social assistance (welfare benefits).

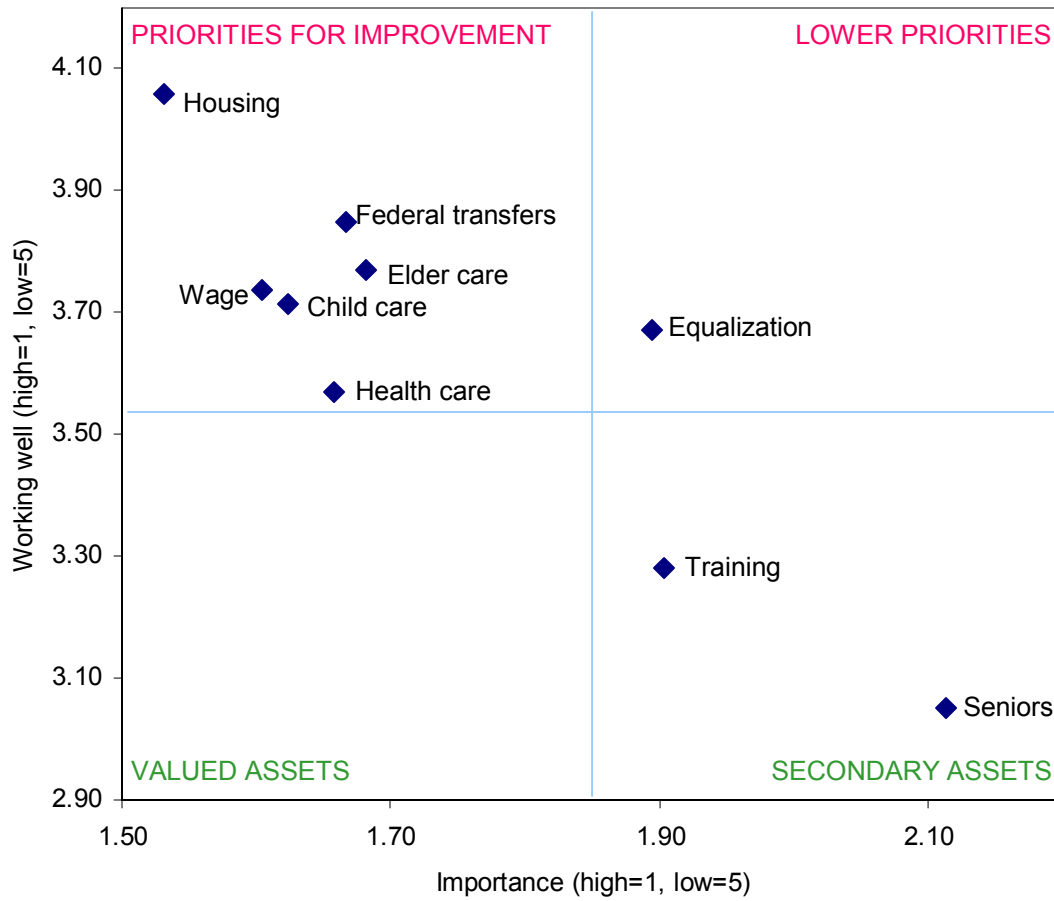
Question 7. The following are other SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES that can contribute to the well being and social security of individuals and families. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us how important each program is to social security, where 1 means it is very important and 5 means it is least important. Then, in the second column, tell us how well you think each program is working, where 1 means it is doing an excellent job and 5 means it needs a lot of improvement.

	Importance 1 = high 5 = low	Works well 1 = high 5 = low
Organizations only		
Minimum wage laws.	1.60	3.74
Job-related training programs.	1.90	3.28
Child care spaces, supports and subsidies.	1.62	3.71
Elder care and other family supports.	1.68	3.77
Social housing and rent supports and subsidies.	1.53	4.06
Health care supports and subsidies (e.g., for prescription drugs, special dietary needs, disability aids, dental care).	1.66	3.57
Subsidies and discounts for seniors.	2.11	3.05
Federal financial transfers to the provinces and territories for health, education and social services.	1.67	3.85
Equalization payments to less well-off provinces and territories.	1.90	3.67
Social programs and services overall (organizations)	1.74	3.63
Compare to the entire population	1.91	3.51

As for Question 6., the responses are similar to those of the entire respondent populations. Again, the trends are slightly more pronounced, with the organizations attaching a slightly higher importance (1.74 vs. 1.91) and a slightly worse mark for working well (3.63 vs. 3.51) than the entire population of respondents.

The four quadrants contain the same items as for the entire respondent population, with the only notable difference being “Social Housing and Rent Supports and Subsidies” identified as the least working program.

Social Programs and Services
Organizations only



LABEL	PROGRAM
Child care	Child care spaces, supports and subsidies.
Elder care	Elder care and other family supports.
Equalization	Equalization payments to less well-off provinces and territories.
Federal transfers	Federal financial transfers to the provinces and territories for health, education and social services.
Health care	Health care supports and subsidies (e.g., for prescription drugs, special dietary needs, disability aids, dental care).
Housing	Social housing and rent supports and subsidies.
Seniors	Subsidies and discounts for seniors.
Training	Job-related training programs.
Wage	Minimum wage laws.

Question 8. This question concerns INCOME. From the following areas for investment and action, please pick the 5 you think could make the most difference in permanently reducing poverty rates.

Organizations only	Rank strength (how often picked)	Rank	Compare to overall population rank
Higher welfare rates based on real costs of living.	13.9%	1	4
Guaranteed annual, liveable income.	13.4%	2	1
Greater flexibility in combining work and welfare to keep more employment income and to build assets.	12.7%	3	3
Higher minimum wages.	12.6%	4	2
Income supplements for low-wage workers.	8.7%	5	6
Income supplements for people with employment limitations (adults with disabilities or with a disabled family member, lone parents with young children).	8.5%	6	5
Increased access to Employment Insurance benefits.	5.7%	7	11
Income benefits for adults who care for dependents with disabilities and long-term illnesses.	5.2%	8	7
Increased child benefits.	4.7%	9	10
Universal maternity benefits for all mothers.	4.3%	10	9
Improved child support (e.g., greater enforcement of child support payments, government-run advance maintenance system).	4.1%	11	8
Increased access to welfare.	3.1%	12	13
Higher Employment Insurance benefit rates.	3.0%	13	12

While the ranks for these options are shifted around somewhat when compared to the overall respondents' answers, the group of the top four options remains the same. Apart from the inherent error due to the small sample size for organizations, the rank strengths for these options are also very close to each other, leaving us to safely conclude that there is no practical difference between the priorities expressed by organizations and the overall population of respondents.

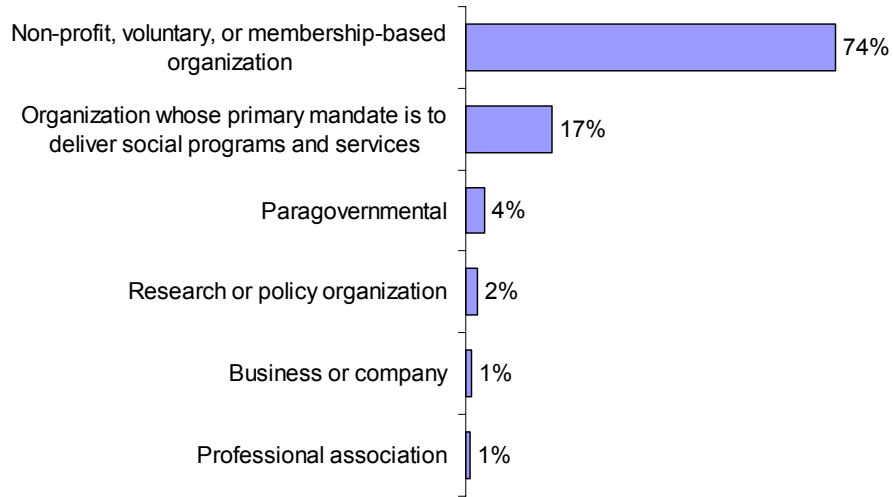
Question 9. This question concerns SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. From the following areas for investment and other action, please pick the 5 you think could make the most difference in permanently reducing poverty rates.

Organizations only	Rank strength (how often picked)	Rank	Compare to overall population rank
More affordable housing and housing subsidies.	15.8%	1	1
Better jobs and skills training to move from poorly paid jobs to better ones and avoid or get off welfare permanently.	11.1%	2	2
More quality, affordable child care spaces.	10.2%	3	4
Greater access to higher education (e.g., grants, low-cost loans, lower tuition).	8.9%	4	3
Easier access to needed benefits and services (e.g. simpler, more coordinated, less complex and less time-consuming process.)	8.2%	5	6
Specific programs for people most at risk of poverty.	7.6%	6	7
Measures to improve gender equality and address violence against women.	7.5%	7	8
Universal prescription drug and dental coverage.	7.4%	8	5
Social economy and community economy development.	7.3%	9	10
Better recognition of foreign education, experience and credentials.	5.4%	10	9
More elder care.	4.1%	11	11
Greater access to recreational and other programs that contribute to health and well-being.	3.3%	12	12
Better access to legal services for family law matters.	3.2%	13	13

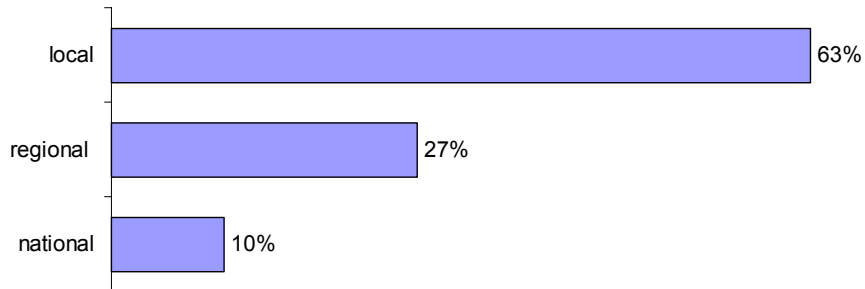
Similar to the previous question, the ranking for the top 2 options is the same as for the overall respondents, and the next 6 ranks are slightly shifted around when compared to the overall respondents' answers. Again, the rank strengths for these options are also very close to each other, suggesting that there is no practical difference between the priorities expressed by organizations when compared to those of all respondents.

SECTION 4. MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS

Which category best describes your organization:



Your organization is:

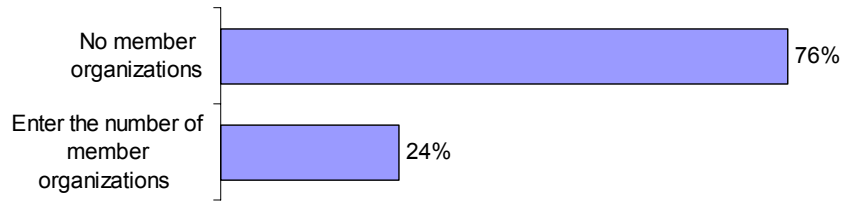


About how many individual members are part of your organization?

362 organizations responded to this question, reporting an approximate total of 949,000 members.

If we extrapolate this number to the entire sample of 423 organization, the total membership represented by these organizations can be estimated roughly as 1,109,000 members.

Are you responding for an organization, association, or federation that has other member organizations? How many member organizations?



Of the 24% of organizations that represent other organizations, the total membership they reported is 4,947. This allows a calculation that indicates the overall number of organizations represented here as 5,370 organizations.

SECTION 5. IMPACT OF RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The tables on the next three pages illustrate the impact of respondent demographics on the responses received. The information is organized in the following manner:

- To depict the differences between respondent groups, selected questions were used.
 - To capture possible differences in opinions on strategy, the average response to Question 2 (Agreement with the federal government’s leadership role in developing an anti-poverty strategy) is shown. In the tables, this row is labelled as Q2.
 - To illustrate possible differences in opinions on policy, a combined overall average scores of “importance” and “working well” from the responses to Questions 6 (Income and Income Security) and Question 7 (Social Programs and Services) are shown. In the tables, these two rows are labelled Q6,7.
 - Specifically on action related to income, the top five ranked areas for action from Question 8 (Income Policy) for each respondent group are shown.
 - Specifically on action related to services, the top five ranked areas for action from Question 9 (Social Security Programs and Services) for each respondent group are shown.
- Not all respondent categories are shown for all types of demographics. Instead, only those that have the highest potential to differ from the overall respondent average are shown. In addition in many cases, individual categories are grouped together in a meaningful manner to create a larger sample size. For example, in the first table under “geography” all provinces are included, but combined into regions (west, east, north, Quebec, Ontario). But in the third table under “income” only the extreme two groups of income categories are shown, because they are the most likely to demonstrate differences.
- In addition it is also important to note that different individual respondents chose to skip answering different demographic questions, therefore the total of the demographic counts will be always lower than the overall count of individual respondents. One exception is the English / French split (first table), which is derived from the language of the survey and therefore the counts add up to the 5034 of individual respondents accurately.

The demographic information is meant to be used for illustration purposes only. Strictly speaking, the validity of the data in the tables is hampered by the following three factors:

- Sample size. Results from smaller samples cannot be safely declared as statistically different from each other. (See more on confidence intervals in the Methodology section)
- Validity of responses. All the demographic questions are self-reported and anonymous, therefore cannot be verified. As an example, questions regarding gender, age, or earnings should not be expected to be 100% correct.
- Specifically for comparing of ranks (Questions 8 and 9), the differences are often driven by very small variations in counts. For example, the responses to Question 8 for organizations (see previous section) showed that there was less than 1.5% spread of rank strength between the first and fourth rank. Even so, it is remarkable how well the first ranked responses for both Questions 8 and 9 carry across the demographic groups.

In summary, the following three tables illustrate that the overall responses reported in Section 1 are quite consistently followed throughout the demographic groups. For all practical purposes no demographic group justifies or calls for a separate policy or action.

Impact of Respondent Demographics

		Respondents			Geography (Question 20)						Language	
		All respondents	Individuals only	Organizations only	West: (BC, Alb, Man)	East: (NB Nfd, NS, PEI)	North: (NT, Nun, Yuk)	Quebec	Ontario	English individual respondents	French individual respondents	
	Count	5457	5034	423	1929	390	58	645	1865	4434	600	
Q2	Support for federal leadership	91.6	91.6	92.2	91.6	93.5	86.0	88.8	92.4	92.0	88.5	
Q6,7	Importance of programs	1.97	1.98	1.79	2.03	2.01	1.77	1.73	2.02	2.02	1.71	
Q6,7	Programs working well	3.37	3.37	3.45	3.37	3.37	3.26	3.25	3.40	3.38	3.35	
Priority for action in income (Q8) top 5 ranked	Guaranteed annual income.	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Higher welfare rates based on real costs of living.	4	4	1	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	
	Greater flexibility in combining work and welfare.	3	3	3	2	3	5	4	3	2	4	
	Income benefits for adults with dependents with disabilities.	7						5			5	
	Higher minimum wages.	2	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	
	Income supplements for low wage workers	6		5								
	Income supplements for people w empl. limitations	5	5		5	5	4		5	5		
Priority for action in services (Q9) top 5 ranked	Easier access to benefits and services	6		5	5							
	More quality, affordable child care spaces.	4	4	3	4	4	2		4	4		
	Measures to improve gender equality.	8				5	3					
	Greater access to higher education	3	3	4	3	1	4	5	3	3	5	
	Better jobs and skills training	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	
	Universal prescription drug and dental coverage.	5	5						5	5		
	More affordable housing.	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	
	Specific programs for people most at risk of poverty.	7						3			4	
	Social and community economy development.	10						4			3	

Note: For definitions and further information see the Methodology section for details

Impact of Respondent Demographics (cont.)

		All respondents	Gender (Q14)		Age (Q15)		Minority (Q16)		
			Women	Men	Younger than 34	55 years old and older	Recent immigrants	Persons with Disabilities	Visible minorities and Aboriginal Persons
	Count	5457	3568	1328	1528	1154	100	608	793
Q2	Support for federal leadership	91.6	92.5	89.3	89.6	93.5	90.8	93.3	89.5
Q6,7	Importance of programs	1.97	1.93	2.13	2.12	1.82	2.08	1.97	2.03
Q6,7	Programs working well	3.37	3.40	3.29	3.24	3.43	3.19	3.53	3.45
Priority for action in income (Q8) top 5 ranked	Guaranteed annual income.	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	3
	Higher welfare rates based on real costs of living.	4	4	4	5	4	4	2	2
	Greater flexibility in combining work and welfare.	3	2	3	3	2	5	5	4
	Higher minimum wages.	2	3	2	1	3	1	4	1
	Income supplements for people w empl. limitations.	5	5	5	4	5	3	3	5
Priority for action in services (Q9) top 5 ranked	Easier access to benefits and services	6						4	
	More quality, affordable child care spaces.	4	4	5	4	3	4		4
	Measures to improve gender equality.	8	5						
	Greater access to higher education	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
	Better jobs and skills training	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
	Universal prescription drug and dental coverage.	5		4	5	5		5	
	More affordable housing.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Specific programs for people most at risk of poverty.	7					5		5

Note: For definitions and further information see the Methodology section for details

Impact of Respondent Demographics (cont.)

		All respondents	Experience (Q12)		Income (Q18)		Education (Q19)		Familiarity (Q13)		Q21
			Never lived in poverty	Lived in extreme poverty or for a long time	Less than \$29,000 per household	More than \$74,000 per household	Grade or high school	College, CGEP, or university	Very good or good knowledge of government programs	Very poor or poor knowledge of government programs	
	Count	5457	1680	1851	1415	1389	489	3404	2568	875	1306
Q2	Support for federal leadership	91.6	90.4	93.1	93.0	90.6	91.2	91.7	92.7	89.2	91.2
Q6,7	Importance of programs	1.97	2.06	1.92	1.92	2.02	2.07	1.95	1.98	2.01	1.93
Q6,7	Programs working well	3.37	3.24	3.54	3.44	3.30	3.31	3.37	3.40	3.39	3.35
Priority for action in income (Q8) top 5 ranked	Guaranteed annual income.	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Higher welfare rates based on real costs of living.	4	5	2	3	5	3	4	4	5	4
	Greater flexibility in combining work and welfare.	3	1	4	4	1	5	2	3	3	2
	Higher minimum wages.	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3
	Income supplements for people w empl. limitations	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5
Priority for action in services (Q9) top 5 ranked	Easier access to benefits and services	6		5	5			5			5
	More quality, affordable child care spaces.	4	3			3		3	4	4	3
	Greater access to higher education	3	4	2	2	4	3	4	3	3	4
	Better jobs and skills training	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2
	Universal prescription drug and dental coverage.	5		4	4		4		5	5	
	More affordable housing.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Specific programs for people most at risk of poverty.	7	5					5			

Note: For definitions and further information see the Methodology section for details

SECTION 6. METHODOLOGY

This Questionnaire

This was an online questionnaire conducted from October 16th to December 20th, 2006. Numerous promotional tools including email, mass media, and partner networks were used to draw the respondents to the website.

Two versions of the questionnaire were made available, in both official languages, depending on the type of the respondent:

- A confidential individual questionnaire (Questions 1 to 21), and
- A questionnaire for organizations (Questions 1 to 9 only, replacing the demographic Questions 10 to 21 by specific questions about organizational types.)

Standardization of Scales

In order to facilitate easy responses to the survey, some questions required the respondents to rank the importance (Q3 and Q5) or agreement (Q2, Q3, Q4) on a five-item scale. However, to better capture the meaning of the results in this report, the outcomes are presented on a scale from 0 to 100. The following table illustrates this and helps translate the numbers back into a five point scale if necessary.

Agreement	Importance	100-point scale value	Equivalent range
Strongly agree	Highest importance	100	From 87.5 to 100
Agree	Medium high importance	75	From 62.5 to 87.5
Not sure	Medium importance	50	From 37.5 to 62.5
Disagree	Medium low importance	25	From 12.5 to 37.5
Strongly disagree	Low importance	0	From 0 to 12.5

For example, the average agreement with Question 1 of 93.1 falls into the (87.5 ; 100) interval and therefore indicates that the respondents Strongly Agree with the question asked.

Assumption of Equal Weight

All questions were assumed to have equal importance. In other words, no weighting was used to roll up, average, or compare individual answers.

Other Comments on Derived Statistical Measurements

- For most respondent subgroups the differences between mean (average) answers are so small that they cannot be conclusively declared statistically different at these sample sizes. For example, the mean and margin of error in Q2 are 91.6 and 0.47 for the overall respondent population (count of 5,457), 91.6 and 0.49 for the individual respondents (count of 5,034), and 92.2 and 1.65 for the organizations (count of 423).
- 95% confidence interval was assumed in all statistical calculations. The margin of error represents one half of the 95% confidence interval around the calculated mean.
- Different questions had different numbers of respondents (different numbers of skipped answers). This was taken into account in all statistical calculations. Skipped answers change the number of occurrences in the sample and therefore drive many of the derived variables including standard deviation and confidence intervals.
- While the survey answers are not normally distributed, the assumption of normality necessary for some calculations was reasonably approximated.