

CANADA PULSE INSIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inflation's Ripple Effect Leaving Canadians Under Growing Financial Pressure and Anxiety

May 6, 2026 – Toronto, Ontario –As higher oil prices drive a steep climb in costs at the gas pump and push up prices throughout the supply chain, a new CityNews/Canada Pulse Insights survey finds many Canadians under intense financial pressure, with three times as many saying their personal finances worsened in the last month (30%) as improved (10%), for a net score of -20 — and not a single demographic group or region reporting a net gain. Lower-income Canadians (under \$50,000: -33), older adults 55+ (-25), women (-22), and residents of Atlantic Canada (-29), Alberta (-26) and British Columbia (-25) report the steepest declines in their financial position.

That rise in inflation, combined with concern about the future as consumers pull in their horns and corporations and businesses tighten their belts, is also causing deep anxiety for a majority of Canadians and is hitting families and individuals across the country. Looking ahead just 60 days, roughly four in five adults (78%) expect to worry about day-to-day household finances, one-third (34%) say they are likely to struggle to make ends meet, and millions foresee risks of job loss, defaulting on payments, or even bankruptcy.

Pocketbook Pain

Specifically focused on their financial position, one in ten (10%) Canadians indicated their financial situation has improved since last month, versus three in ten (30%) who said their financial position has worsened over the same timeframe. This produces a net score of -20. The remainder (60%) stated that their financial position has remained the same.

Those most likely to indicate that their financial position has improved over the last month (10%) are the youngest Canadians (aged 18–34: 14%), men (13% versus women at 7%), and those earning over \$50,000 per year (11%). Regionally, improvement is highest in Québec (14%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (11%), and British Columbia (10%), followed by Alberta/Atlantic Canada (8%), and Ontario (7%).

Those most likely to indicate that their financial position has worsened over the last month (30%) are those in the lowest income range (earning \$50,000 or less: 40%), middle-aged and older Canadians (aged 35+: 32%), men (31%) and women (29%) in almost equal measure, and those living in Atlantic Canada (37%), followed by those residing in British Columbia (35%) and Alberta (34%).

Comparing the “improved” (10%) and “worsened” (30%) groups yields a net score of -20 (subtracting the smaller figure from the larger and assigning a positive or negative sign to the result). Using this net score, we can identify which Canadians and regions are faring better or worse than others when it comes to their personal financial situation.

As of this month, there is no single demographic group or region in the country that has a net improvement score for their financial position over the last month — all are in net negative territory. Those who have fared the worst over the last month are those with the lowest income

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(under \$50K per annum: -33), the oldest Canadians (55+: -25), women (-22), and those living in Atlantic Canada (-29), Alberta (-26), British Columbia (-25), and Ontario (-23).

Net scores by group are as follows:

- **Age:** 18–34: -11; 35–54: -22; 55+: -25
- **Gender:** men: -18; women: -22
- **Income:** under \$50K: -33; \$50K–\$99K: -14; \$100K+: -15
- **Province/region:** Atlantic Canada: -29; Alberta: -26; British Columbia: -25; Ontario: -23; Québec: -11; Saskatchewan/Manitoba: -10

By the numbers: Amped Anxiety

The survey also asked Canadians how they expect to experience the next two months on a wide range of financial pressures. The following are highlights, along with an estimate of how many **adult Canadians (18+, approximated here at 31 million)** these percentages represent.

Over the next 60 days:

- **78%** (26,149,000) say they will be worried about their personal or family day-to-day finances, including **38%** (12,578,000) who say they will worry the most.
- **34%** (11,220,000) say they will likely struggle to make ends meet, including **11%** (3,641,000) who say they will struggle the most.
- **14%** (4,634,000) believe they may lose their job or be laid off because of a lack of business or work, including **4%** (1,324,000) who are most anxious about losing their job.
- **14%** (4,634,000) say they will not have the ability to purchase the products needed for themselves or their family, including **7%** (2,317,000) who say they will be least able to do so.
- **13%** (4,303,000) say they will likely default on making payments on loans or a mortgage, including **3%** (993,000) who say this is most likely to happen.
- **7%** (2,317,000) say they are likely to declare bankruptcy, including **2%** (662,000) who believe they are most likely to do so.

About the survey

This survey was conducted with 1,547 Canadian adults as part of a [Canada Pulse Insights](#) national omnibus survey, fielded from April 24-28, 2026. A random sample of Canadian adult respondents was invited to complete the omnibus survey through an online panel platform managed by [SAGO](#), one of the world's largest and most respected sample and panel suppliers. The data were weighted according to census benchmarks, so the sample aligns with Canada's population by age, gender, educational attainment, and region. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is ± 2.5 percentage points, 19

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times out of 20. Any discrepancies between the detailed tables and published results are due to rounding. Respondents were given the choice to answer the survey in either English or French.

Both Canada Pulse Insights and Sago are accredited members of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and adhere to its Canadian Code of Market, Opinion, and Social Research and Data Analytics. The resultant detailed tables and questions used for this survey are posted to the Canada Pulse insights website as a companion part of this release.

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