The Pensions Canadians Want: Perceptions of Retirement (2016–2022)

Canadian Public Pension Leadership Council

June 26, 2023

The Canadian Public Pension Leadership Council (CPPLC)

The CPPLC is a not-for-profit organization comprised of non-partisan senior pension administrators and professionals from across the country. The CPPLC's mission is to facilitate and inform evidence-based discussions on national pension policy in support of retirement security for working Canadians.

Pollara Strategic Insights

Pollara Strategic Insights is a full-service research firm comprised of some of Canada's most senior and experienced research project leaders. It is involved in all sectors and disciplines of industry. It offers a range of research methodology to provide key insights on human behaviour, attitudes, wants, and needs.

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Acknowledgements

The Canadian Public Pension Leadership Council (CPPLC) commissioned the 2022 survey from Pollara Strategic Insights, which determined the methodology of the survey and independently conducted the survey.

The CPPLC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following staff of the CAAT Pension Plan for their work on the research report: Lilach Frenkel, Siba Ghrear, Vicki Lam, and Jenny Tam. The CPPLC also extends its thanks to the members of its Research Committee and Communications Committee for providing their expertise in reviewing this report.

Executive Summary

This study compares the results of opinion surveys conducted in 2016 and 2022. It provides insight into how Canadians' perceptions of retirement may have changed over the last six years, given global events such as the pandemic, impact of climate change, changes to the economy, and an increasing demand for labour.

The report also examines how geographic location, gender, and household access to workplace plans have affected these perceptions of retirement during this period.

Key Findings

The study gives rise to several key findings.

- Canadians consistently report preferences for predictable, lifetime guaranteed retirement income that is inflation-adjusted.
- Canadians' stress about retirement permeates all aspects of their lives. The overall well-being of respondents is negatively affected by financial stress caused by inadequate retirement planning. Fear of running out of money in retirement is reported to be the primary cause of this stress, causing a severe impact on personal health, career decisions, and choice of employers.
- Canadians consistently prioritize maintaining their living standards in retirement as a key financial objective. Non-essential goals such as travel or supporting family members rated less important in 2022.
- Canadians are less confident that they will attain their financial objectives. Notably, in 2022, there was a 15% decrease in Canadians reporting they were confident that they will be able to retire at their desired age.
- Canadians are hesitant about managing their retirement savings themselves. Consistently, less than half of respondents reported that they were well informed about any retirement source of income.

Recommendations

Canadians reported that they were not confident they would be able to achieve their retirement ambitions, especially if they had to determine how to achieve them on their own. Their low confidence, low financial literacy, and resulting financial stress have broad implications for pension administrators, employers, and policymakers. Given these aligned interests in improving Canadians' retirement prospects, what can stakeholders do to help Canadians reach their retirement goals?

Expand retirement income coverage in Canada

Improving Canadians' retirement security can have far-reaching benefits, including:

- Improved health and well-being of working Canadians
- Improved business performance by increasing employee retention and productivity
- Increased economic activity

To achieve these benefits, Canadians need more access to workplace pension plans and to innovative products that will secure predictable income in retirement. There are different ways to achieve this.

1. Increase access to collective plans: leverage homegrown expertise to increase participation in workplace pension plans by encouraging the growth of sector- and broader-based public sector plans.

2. Make it easier to provide pension plans for every Canadian: Apply lessons learned from other countries to improve participation in workplace pension plans, promote existing Canadian products, and ensure they cover those without traditional employment relationships.

3. Empower innovation to improve access to lifetime income: support the implementation of new products that will provide Canadians with simple and cost-effective options for turning accumulated savings into a lifetime income stream.

Continue investing in financial literacy programs

Canadians continue to report low levels of financial literacy. Individuals without access to any workplace plans reported the lowest levels of financial literacy about retirement planning, which is arguably the group that requires the **most** support. Employers, plan administrators, and policymakers are encouraged to invest in unbiased and holistic financial education support that covers all financial aspects of retirement planning.

The report aims to help pension administrators, employers, and policymakers better understand Canadians' perception of retirement, what Canadians need from their workplace and personal retirement savings programs, and what can be done collectively to help Canadians achieve their retirement goals.

Introduction

In Canada, the three traditional sources of retirement income, also known as the three pillars, are:

1. **Pillar 1: Government sponsored plans.** This includes Old Age Security (OAS), the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), and the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). OAS and GIS are income-tested programs that aim to provide Canadians with a base level of retirement income. OAS and GIS are publicly funded out of tax revenues. CPP is a career average defined benefit pension plan, funded by equal employer and employee contributions.
2. **Pillar 2: Workplace retirement plans.** Workplace retirement plans are employment-based and sponsored by employers and unions, or jointly sponsored by employers and workers. Registered pension plans, group registered retirement savings plans, and other group saving plans are part of this pillar.
3. **Pillar 3: Personal savings.** The third pillar is what individuals do on their own to take charge of saving for their retirement. Personal savings can be categorized into registered savings, such as Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) or Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs), and non-registered savings.

The retirement income system is designed to work with **all** three pillars. However, not enough Canadians participate in workplace registered pension plans. Statistics Canada reports that in 2021, only 39.7% of all workers were covered by a registered pension plan.[1] In other words, 60.3% of working Canadians do not have access to a workplace pension plan. This puts more pressure on publicly funded government plans and personal savings.

Personal savings are not making up for the lack of workplace pension plans. The Bank of Montreal found that the average account balance of an RRSP is $144,613.[2] This is insufficient to fund a 20- to 30-year retirement. In 2019, for example, the average Canadian household comprised of people age 65 and older spent around $64,000.[3] Research has also shown that participation in TFSAs is not representative of all Canadians. Those who contribute to TFSAs are, "on average older, are less likely to have children under the age of 18 and are more likely to be [married or in a common law relationship]."[4] They are also more likely to have higher education and higher incomes.

The report aims to help pension administrators, employers, and policymakers better understand Canadians' perception of retirement, what Canadians need from their workplace and personal retirement savings programs, and what can be done collectively to help Canadians achieve their retirement goals. Comparing results from opinion surveys conducted in 2016 and 2022 provides high-level insight into how recent events (such as the pandemic, climate change, and economic conditions), have shaped Canadians' perception of retirement. The report also analyzes responses to the 2022 survey by geographic location, gender, and household access to workplace pensions to understand better how to address Canadians' needs.

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[1] Statistics Canada, 2022. While this was an increase from 2019 (37.1%), the increase was due to a contraction of the labour force attributable to the pandemic rather than to an increase in the membership in the registered pension plans.
[2] BMO Financial Group, 2023
[3] Canadian Institute of Actuaries, 2021
[4] Al Zaman, 2018

Observation #1: Canadians consistently show preferences for predictable, inflation-adjusted, and lifetime guaranteed retirement income

This section looks at the most popular retirement plan features (measured by desirability) and what may be driving their popularity (measured by retirement-related stresses).

Respondents to the 2016 and 2022 surveys selected the following pension features as the most desirable for retirement:

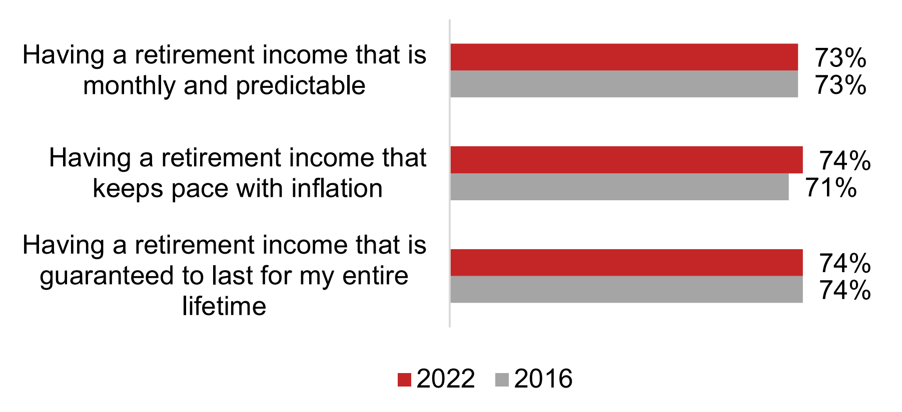
- Will last for the rest of their lives
- Keeps pace with inflation
- Is monthly and predictable

In both surveys, about three in four respondents rated each of these features as “most desirable,” selecting them from a list of several important pension features.[5] In 2022, there was a slight increase in the desire for “having retirement income that keeps pace with inflation,” which rose from 71% in 2016 to 74% in 2022 (Figure 1).

The consistent desirability of these three features suggests that respondents viewed them as the essential features of a desirable retirement plan. For ease of reading, in this report they are referred to as the “Essential Pension Features.”

Figure 1. Desirability for the Essential Pension Features (2016–2022)

Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all desirable and 10 is extremely desirable, please rate the desirability of the following features of a pension plan.



Proportion of respondents who rated desirability as 8 to 10.

[5] See Appendix A, Table A.1.

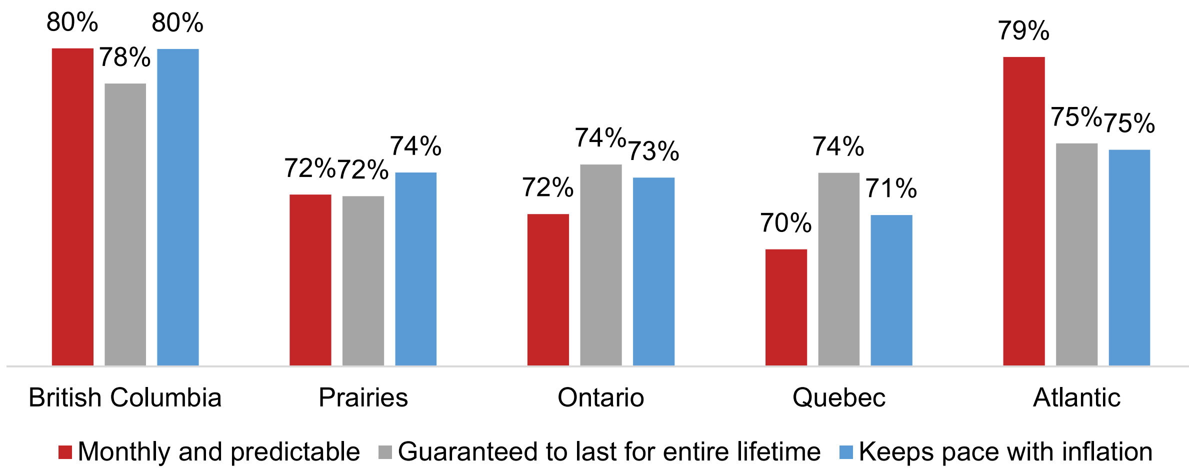
Geography has some impact on the desirability of the Essential Pension Features

Respondents across Canada rated the Essential Pension Features as their most desired features (Figure 2). However, there were some geographic variations in the desirability of a monthly and predictable income and an income that keeps pace with inflation.

The desirability for a monthly and predictable income was more popular in British Columbia (80%) and Atlantic Canada (79%) than the interior of Canada. British Columbians were more likely to desire a pension that keeps pace with inflation compared to Ontarians and Quebeckers (80% compared to 73% and 71% respectively).

Figure 2. Canadians show differences in desirability of Essential Pension Features across regions (2022)

Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all desirable and 10 is extremely desirable, please rate the desirability of the following features of a pension plan.



Proportion of respondents that rated desirability as 8 to 10.

Women find the Essential Pension Features highly desirable

In 2022, women expressed more desire than men for all the Essential Pension Features (Table 1). Women may particularly benefit from participating in retirement plans with the Essential Pension Features as ample research shows that women experience less financial security and more barriers to accumulating retirement savings compared to men.[6]

[6] Fox and Melissa, 2018; Hasler and Lusardi, 2019; Warren, McKay and Greene, 2022

Table 1. Women place higher value on Essential Pension Features (2022)

Essential Pension Feature	Women	Men
Monthly and predictable	76%	70%
Guaranteed to last for an entire lifetime	77%	71%
Keeps pace with inflation	76%	72%
Proportion of respondents that rated desirability as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely desirable and 1 is not desirable at all.		

Canadians without pension plans find Essential Pension Features desirable

Respondents without access to workplace plans rated all pension plan features as less desirable than those with access to a workplace plan did[7] (Table 2). Nonetheless, they still rated the Essential Pension Features as the most desirable retirement features of all the features presented.

Table 2. Canadians with access to pension plans value Essential Pension Features (2022)

Essential Pension Feature	Household Access to Any Pension Plan	No Access to Pension Plan
Monthly and predictable	76%	67%
Guaranteed to last for an entire lifetime	77%	68%
Keeps pace with inflation	77%	67%
Proportion of respondents that rated desirability as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely desirable and 1 is not desirable at all.		

Canadians' stress about retirement permeates all aspects of their lives

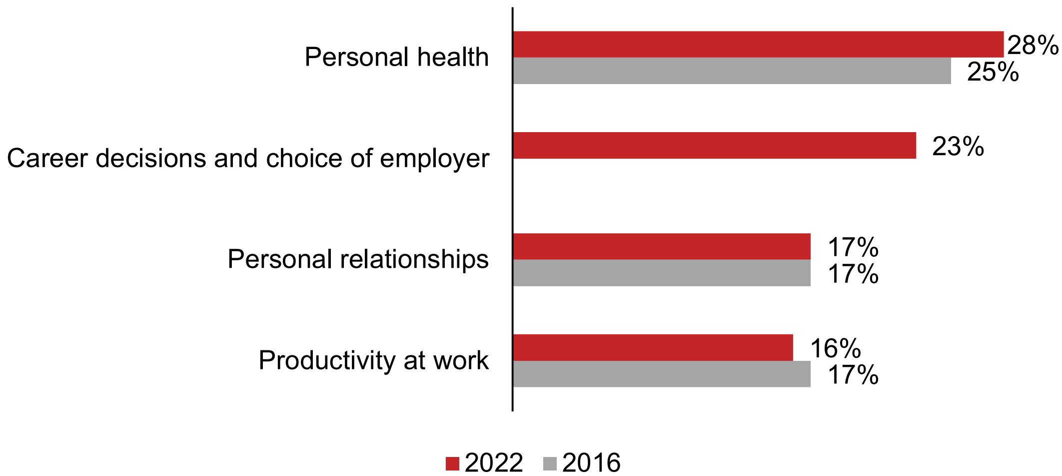
Myriad studies show that financial stress can negatively affect individuals' personal health, mental well-being, and their relationships with family members.[8] In both surveys, respondents consistently stated that retirement planning stress is most likely to impact their personal health (Table 3). In 2022, 28% of respondents reported that their stress about retirement had a big effect on their personal health (i.e., 8–10 on a 10-point scale). Nearly half the respondents (47%) indicated that this stress at least moderately affected their personal health (6–10 on a 10-point scale).

Also in 2022, nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) stated that retirement planning stress has a strong impact on their career decisions and choice of employers (8–10 on a 10-point scale).[9] About four in ten (43%) said that the stress of retirement planning would at least moderately affect their career decisions and choice of an employer (6–10 on a 10-point scale).

[7] See Appendix A.
[8] See, for example: Friedline, Chen and Morrow 2020, Kelley et al. 2022, and Huang, Ghose and Tang 2020.
[9] The 2016 survey did not ask about the effect of stress about retirement on career decisions and choice of employers.

Figure 3. Effect of retirement stress on different facets of life (2016–2022)

Using a 10-point scale where 1 is no effect at all and 10 is tremendous effect, does the stress you feel with respect to retirement planning have a negative impact on other aspects of your life?



Proportion of respondents that rated stress as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is a big effect and 1 is no effect. The second facet of life was only used in the 2022 survey, and hence there is no data for 2016.

Consistent with this finding, a recent Mercer report found that Canadian employees across income levels, ethnicities, age, gender, and job seniority emphasize their physical and mental health when making career decisions. In Mercer's estimation, this emphasis on well-being trumps the desire for career advancement, job security, or their relationship with their bosses.[10]

The stress of retirement planning does not only affect employees' decision to stay with an employer; it also affects their productivity at work. In both surveys, around one-third of respondents indicated that the stress of retirement planning at least moderately impacted their productivity (6–10 on a 10-point scale). The National Payroll Institute calculates that worrying about finances at work cost employers more than $40 billion in 2022.[11]

Canadians are most stressed about running out of money in retirement

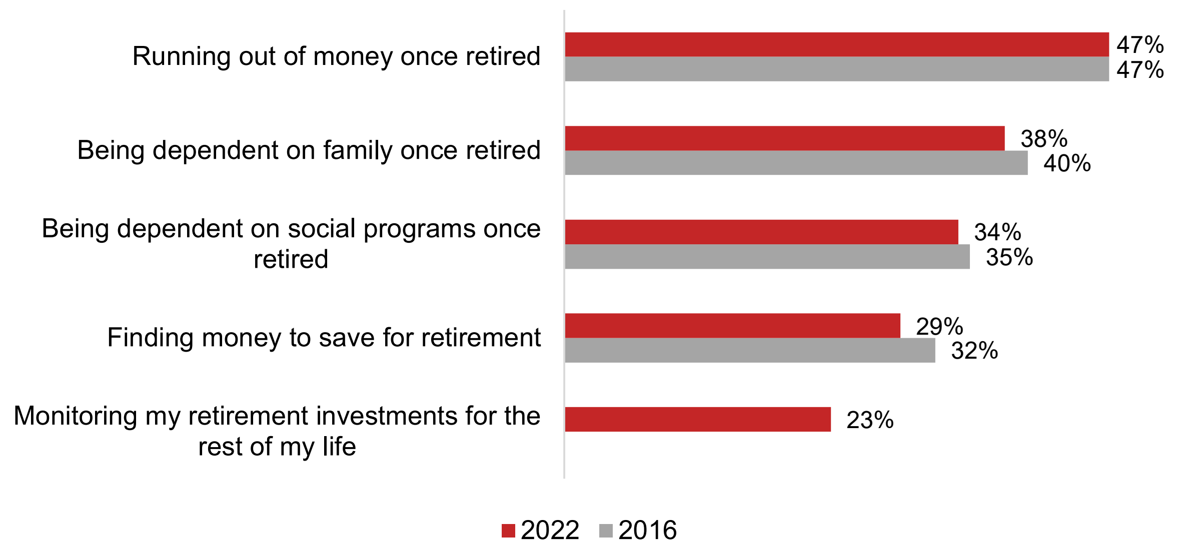
When considering their retirement stressors, almost half of respondents (47%) consistently reported that they are very worried about running out of money in retirement (8–10 on a 10-point scale) (Figure 4). This stress is likely a key driver behind Canadians' high ratings of monthly and predictable income as a desirable retirement plan feature.

[10] Mercer, 2022

[11] National Payroll Institute, 2022

Figure 4. Canadians' stress about retirement concerns (2016–2022)

For each of the following statements, please rate your level of stress about saving for retirement. Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all stressful and 10 is extremely stressful.



Proportion of respondents that rated stress as 8 to 10. The last concern was only used in the 2022 survey; hence there is no data for 2016.

Stress about running out of money was relatively consistent across all regions, with British Columbians showing the most concern about running out of money in retirement (Table 3).

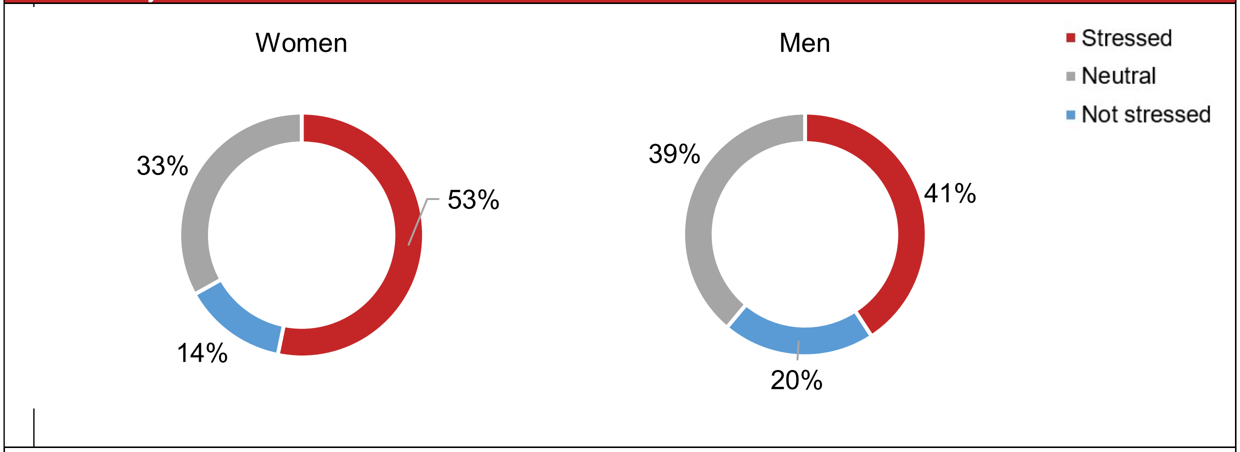
Table 3. Canadians show concern about running out of money across all regions (2022)

	BC	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic
For each of the following statements, please rate your level of stress about saving for retirement: "Running out of money once retired" (scale of 1–10, where 10 is a big effect and 1 is no effect):					
Concerned about running out of Money (8–10)	52%	46%	47%	44%	48%

Women were 12% more likely to be concerned about running out of money compared to men (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Stress about running out of money once retired, by gender (2022)

For each of the following statements, please rate your level of stress about saving for retirement: “Running out of money once retired.” Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all stressful and 10 is extremely stressful.

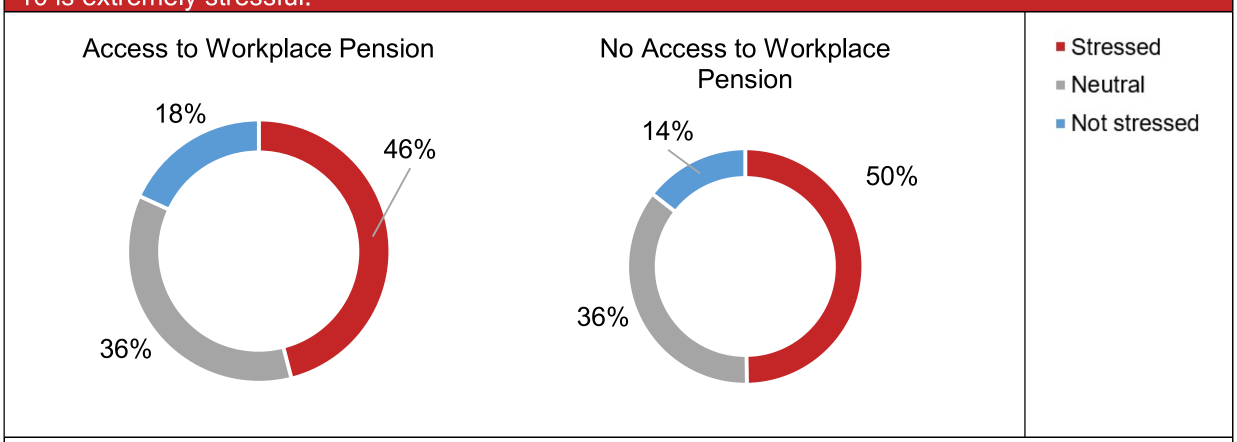


“Stressed” represents a rating between 8 and 10 of stress, “Neutral” represents a rating between 4 and 7, and “Not Stressed” represents a rating of 1 to 3.

Respondents had similar levels of stress about the possibility of running out of money in retirement regardless of their access to workplace plans (Figure 6). This suggests that Canadians not only need access to workplace plans, but they also need access to plans with features that address their worries about running out of money in retirement.

Figure 6. Canadians with access to workplace plans report less stress about running out of money

For each of the following statements, please rate your level of stress about saving for retirement: “Running out of money once retired.” Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all stressful and 10 is extremely stressful.



“Stressed” represents a rating between 8 and 10 of stress, “Neutral” represents a rating between 4 and 7, and “Not Stressed” represents a rating of 1 to 3.

Observation #2: Canadians continue to place importance on maintaining their standard of living in retirement

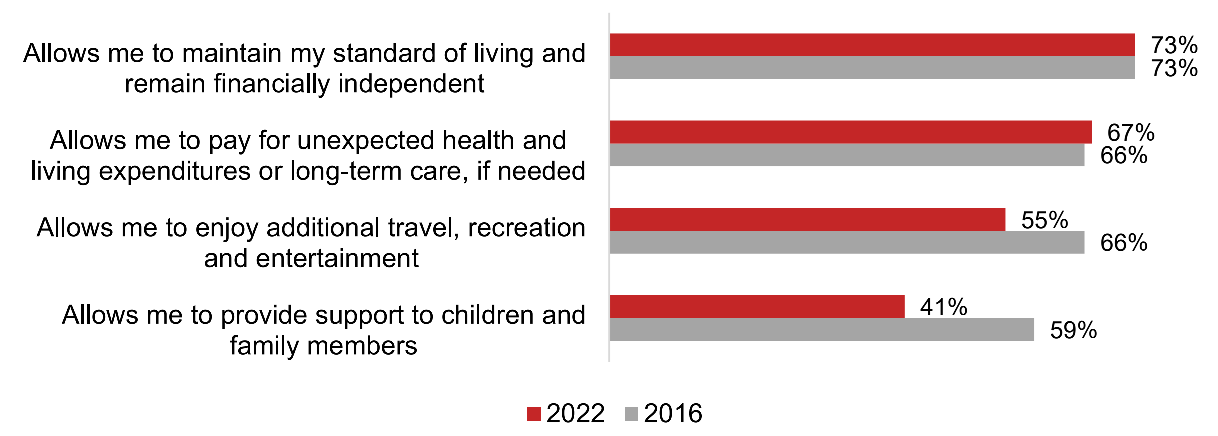
This section looks at what financial goals Canadians hope to achieve with their retirement income. Understanding their goals also helps with understanding the popularity of the Essential Pension Features.

Canadians were consistent when ranking the importance of their financial objectives (Figure 7). In both 2016 and 2022, they reported that their most important financial objectives in retirement were maintaining their standards of living and remaining financially independent. They also continued to place high importance on being able to afford health and long-term care expenditures.

In contrast, compared to 2016, respondents were 18% less likely to consider supporting family or friends as an important financial goal and 11% less likely to consider travelling and enjoying their retirement as an important goal. This indicates that respondents were more focused on their financial needs and less focused on financial "wants" compared to 2016.

Figure 7. The importance of different financial objectives in 2016 and 2022

Thinking about your retirement income, please rate how important are the following objectives in terms of what the income will allow you to do. Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important.



Proportion of respondents that rated importance as 8 to 10.

The increased focus on financial security in 2022 is not surprising in the wake of the rising costs of living.[12] Inflation in Canada reached an average rate of approximately 7% in 2022, the highest it had been in decades.[13] Moreover, according to a survey from Food Banks Canada, one in five Canadians reported going hungry between March 2020 and March 2022[14]. Given this context, it is understandable that the non-essential financial objectives were less valued by respondents.

[12] Bernstien, 2022
[13] Worldwide Inflation Data, 2022
[14] The Canadian Press, 2022

Importance of maintaining standard of living is consistent across Canada

In 2022, there was no statistically significant difference in the percentages of respondents who believed it was important to maintain their standard of living and remain financially independent in retirement. (Table 4)[15]

Table 4. Canadians rate the importance of maintaining their standard of living consistently across regions (2022)

	BC	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic
Thinking about your retirement income, please rate how important are the following objectives in terms of what the income will allow you to: "Allows me to maintain my standard of living and remain financially independent" (scale of 1–10, 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important):					
Important (8–10)	77%	72%	73%	72%	73%

Women rate importance of maintaining standard of living higher than men

Women ranked the importance of maintaining their living standard and financial independence higher than men (Table 5). This finding corresponds with international research, which has found that women are especially concerned about maintaining their standard of living in retirement.[16]

Table 5. Women rate importance of maintaining standard of living higher than men (2022)

	Women	Men
Thinking about your retirement income, please rate how important are the following objectives in terms of what the income will allow you to: "Allows me to maintain my standard of living and remain financially independent" (scale of 1–10, 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important):		
Important (8–10)	77%	69%

Household access to a pension plan has little impact on the importance of maintaining standard of living

There was no statistically significant difference between respondents with and without access to workplace plans (Table 6). The most popular response for both groups was 10 out of 10 (extremely important) with 43% of respondents with access to a workplace plan and 42% of respondents without access to a workplace plan selecting that answer.

Table 6. Importance of maintaining standard of living is unaffected by household access to pensions (2022)

	Household Access to Any Pension Plan	No Access to Any Pension Plan
Thinking about your retirement income, please rate how important are the following objectives in terms of what the income will allow you to: "Allows me to maintain my standard of living and remain financially independent" (scale of 1–10, 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important):		
Important (8–10)	74%	71%

[15] For the purpose of this report, statistical significance is defined as a p-value of .05 or less, indicating that the observed difference within a comparison is unlikely to be attributed to chance alone.
[16] Fidelity International, 2021

Observation #3: Fewer Canadians are confident they will reach their objectives and be able to retire when they want, and manage their savings

Despite the high importance Canadians placed on maintaining their standards of living in retirement, few expressed confidence that they will meet this key financial objective. This section looks at Canadians' confidence in achieving their financial goals and being able to retire at the age they want to.

Only 29% of the 2022 respondents were confident that they will maintain their standard of living in retirement, while one in five respondents expressed hesitation about reaching this goal (Table 7). In comparison with 2016, their confidence decreased by 3%, although this is not a statistically significant decline.

Notably, respondents reported a 15% decline in confidence about their ability to retire at their desired age. In 2022, fewer than three in ten (29%) respondents reported that they were confident that they would be able to retire when they want. On average, Canadians expected to work six more years than they would like (they want to retire at 61 years of age but they expect to retire at 67 years).

Table 7. Canadians show less confidence in their ability to achieve retirement goals (2016–2022)

	2022	2016
How confident are you at being able to maintain your desired standard of living in retirement?	29%	32%
How confident are you that you will be able to retire at your desired retirement age?	29%	44%
Proportion of respondents that rated confidence as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely confident and 1 is not confident at all.		

These results are not surprising considering the economic climate in 2022. In a survey conducted by the Angus Reid Institute in 2022, 53% of respondents stated that they could not keep up with increases in the cost of living.[17] Canadians have resorted to dipping into their savings, taking on more debt, and pausing contributions to RRSPs or TFSAs. These financial strategies have obvious negative implications for Canadians' confidence in their ability to retire when they want.

Respondents also reported little confidence in their ability to manage their retirement savings themselves. In both surveys, only one-third of respondents reported that they are confident managing their retirement savings.

British Columbians are the least confident they will maintain their standards of living in retirement

In 2022, British Columbians, followed closely by Ontarians, were the least confident that they will be able to maintain their living standards in retirement (Figure 8). British Columbia had the lowest percentage of respondents who were confident about maintaining their living standard and the largest percentage of respondents who were hesitant about maintaining their living standards.

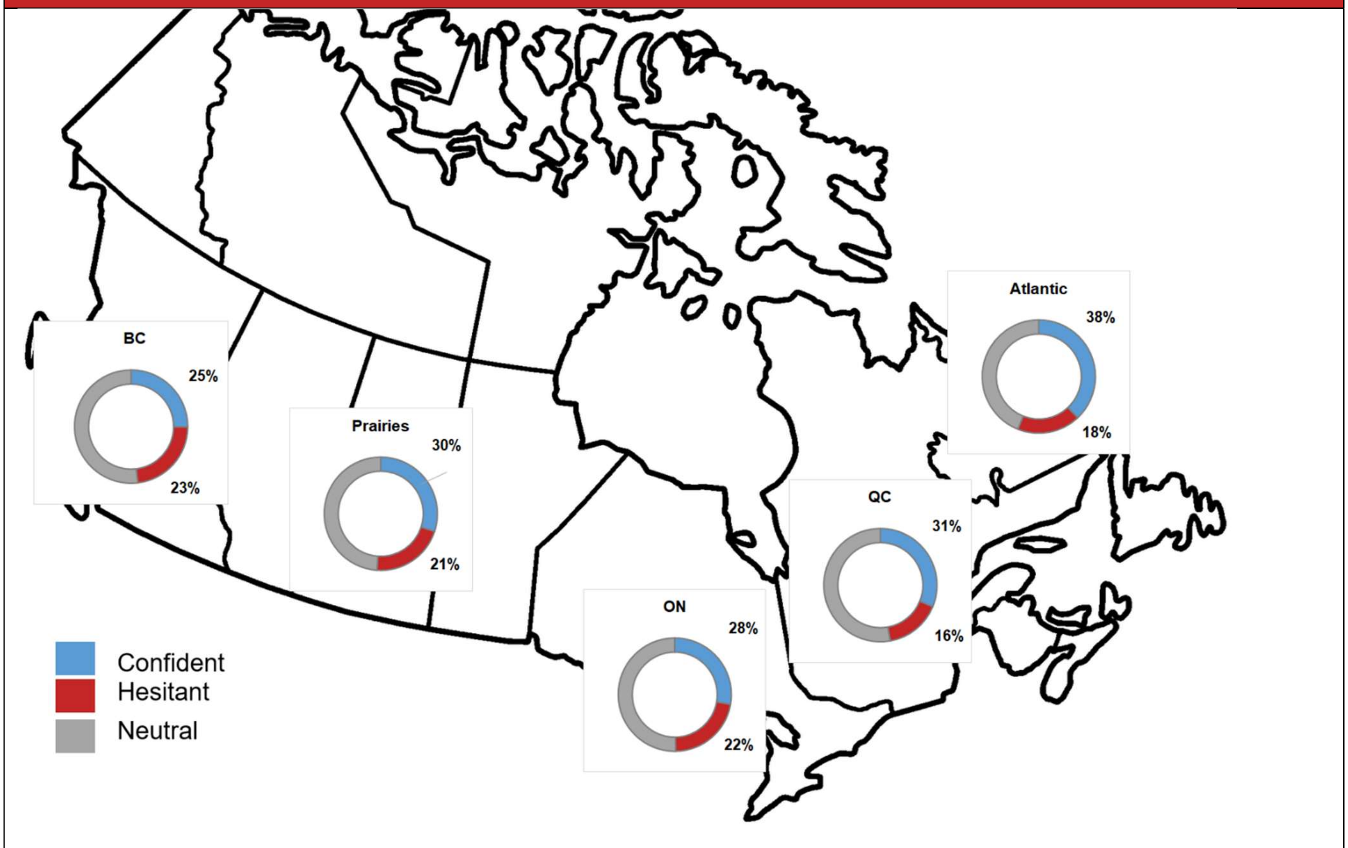
[17] Angus Reid Institute, 2022

This may be attributable in part to the cost of housing in both provinces. British Columbia (25.5%) and Ontario (24.2%) had the highest rates of unaffordable housing in 2021. Statistics Canada found that this was largely due to the higher rates of unaffordable housing "in the renter-heavy large urban centres of Toronto (30.5%) and Vancouver (29.8%)."[18]

British Columbians also experienced several climate change–related disasters in recent years, such as floods, droughts, and wildfires, that have damaged homes, crops, and infrastructure. These disasters may have negatively affected British Columbians' sense of security about the future (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Confidence in maintaining standard of living across Canada (2022)

Question: How confident are you at being able to maintain your desired standard of living in retirement? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



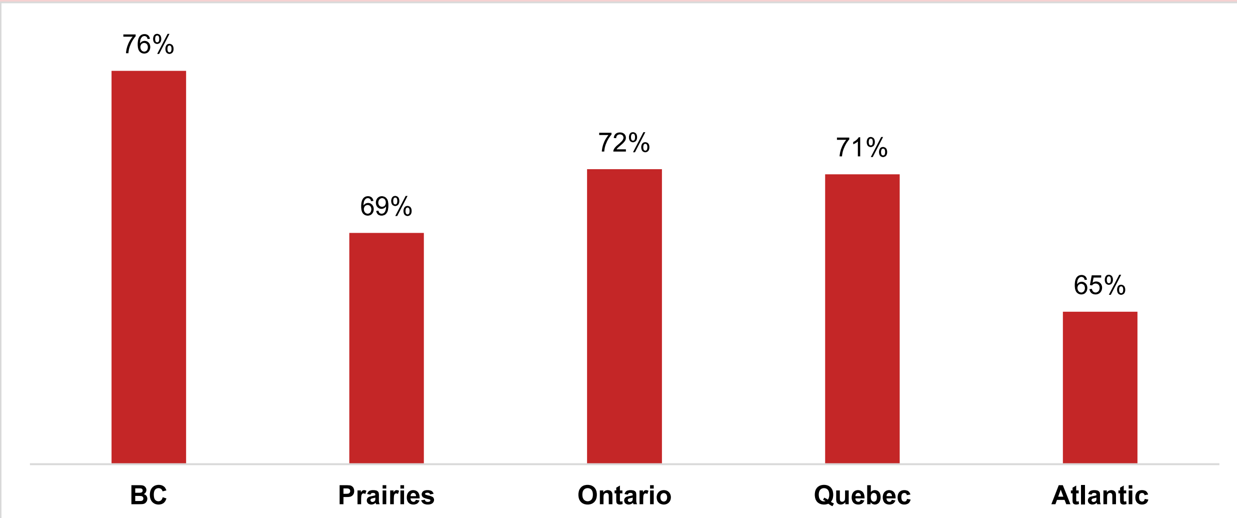
Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

[18] Statistics Canada, 2022

Canadians believe that climate change will impact their expenses

The 2022 survey included new questions to gauge how Canadians are factoring climate change into their financial planning. Most respondents (71%) reported that they believed that climate change would increase their day-to-day expenses. Seventeen percent reported that they did not know how climate change would affect their future expenses, and 12% reported that it will either have no impact (7%) or that it will decrease their expenses (5%).

Figure 9. Canadians believe that climate change will increase future expenses (2022)



British Columbians were most likely (76%) to believe that climate change would impact their expenses. As discussed above, they have recently experienced the effects of climate change.[19] British Columbians' higher concerns about climate change, coupled with the rise in inflation and housing costs, may explain why they reported the lowest confidence about maintaining their standards of living in retirement.

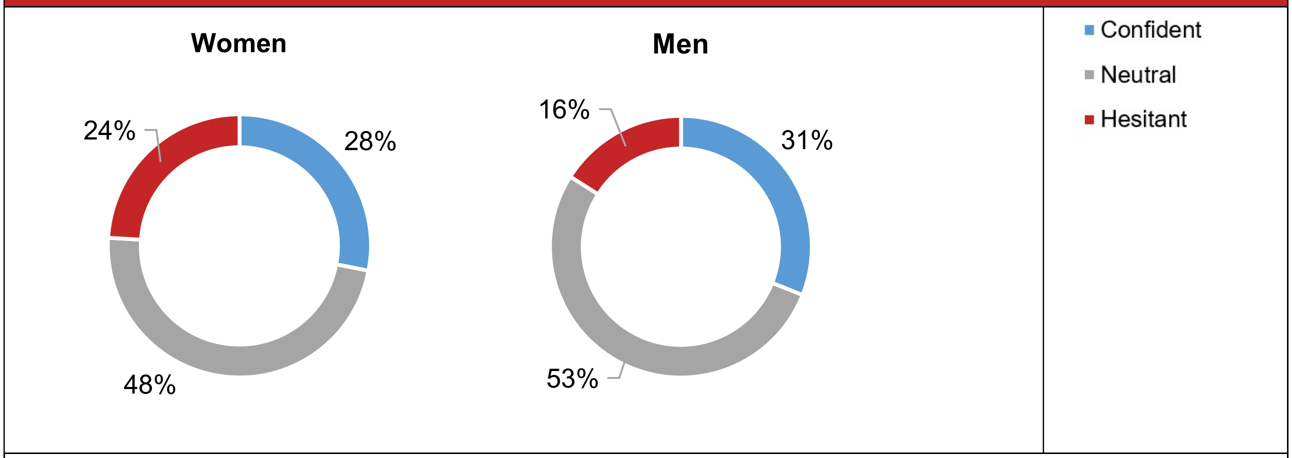
[19] Council of Canadian Academies, 2022

More women express lower confidence about maintaining their standards of living in retirement

While women ranked the importance of maintaining their standard of living higher than men, they were more likely to express hesitation about achieving this key objective. However, about half of men and women reported that they were neutral in their outlook (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Gender difference in confidence about maintaining standard of living in retirement (2022)

Question: How confident are you of being able to maintain your desired standard of living in retirement? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

Canadians with access to workplace plans continue to show higher confidence

In both surveys, respondents with access to workplace plans were more confident about their abilities to maintain their standards of living and retire at their desired age than those without access to such plans—despite an overall decline in confidence.

Confidence declined overall from 2016 to 2002 (Table 8). In 2016, 42% of respondents with access to pension plans were confident that they would maintain their standards of living in retirement. This dropped by 9% in the 2022 survey. There was a 20% decline in their confidence that they would retire at their desired age. Over half (54%) of the respondents in 2016 who had access to a workplace plan were confident they would retire at their desired age—compared with only 34% in 2022.

The declines in confidence were not as dramatic for those without access to workplace plans, but confidence started at a lower level in 2016. Those without access to workplace plans reported a 3% decline in confidence about maintaining their standard of living, and a 14% decline in confidence about retiring at their desired age.

Table 8. Confidence declined overall since 2016

	Workplace Plan		No Workplace Plan	
	2022	2016	2022	2016
Maintain standard of living	33%	42%	21%	24%
Retire at desired age	34%	54%	19%	33%

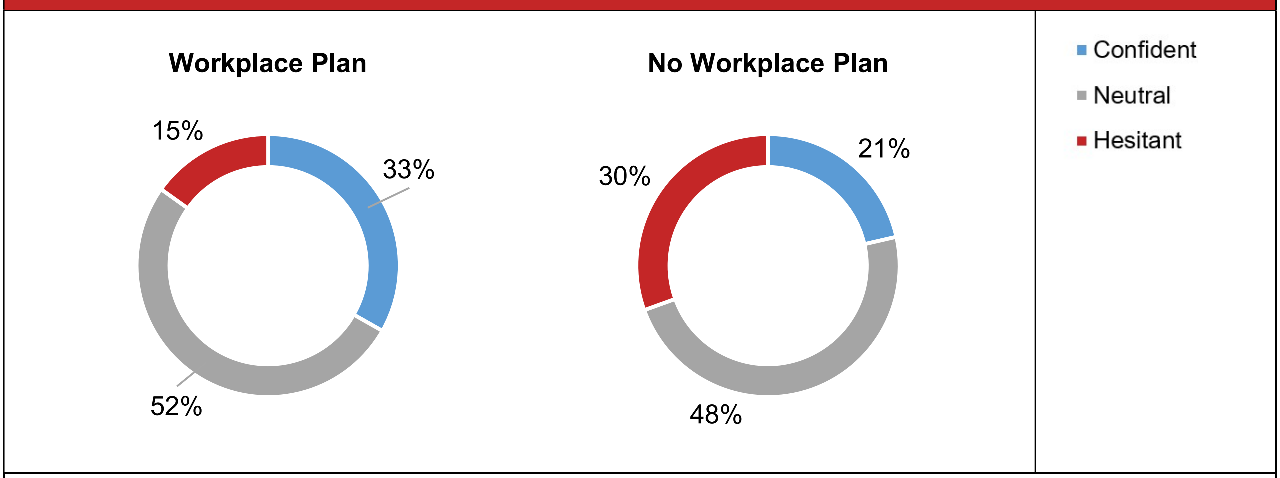
Proportion of respondents that rated confidence as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely confident and 1 is not confident at all.

In 2022, 30% of respondents who did not have access to a workplace plan reported that they were hesitant about retiring at their desired age and maintaining their standard of living in retirement. About half as many respondents with access to workplace plans shared this hesitation (Figure 11).

Around one in five respondents who did not have access to a workplace plan were confident about retiring at their desired age and maintaining their standard of living in retirement. In comparison, one in three respondents who had access to a workplace plan were confident about the same goals.

Figure 11a. Canadians who have access to a workplace plan have more confidence in meeting their financial objectives (2022)

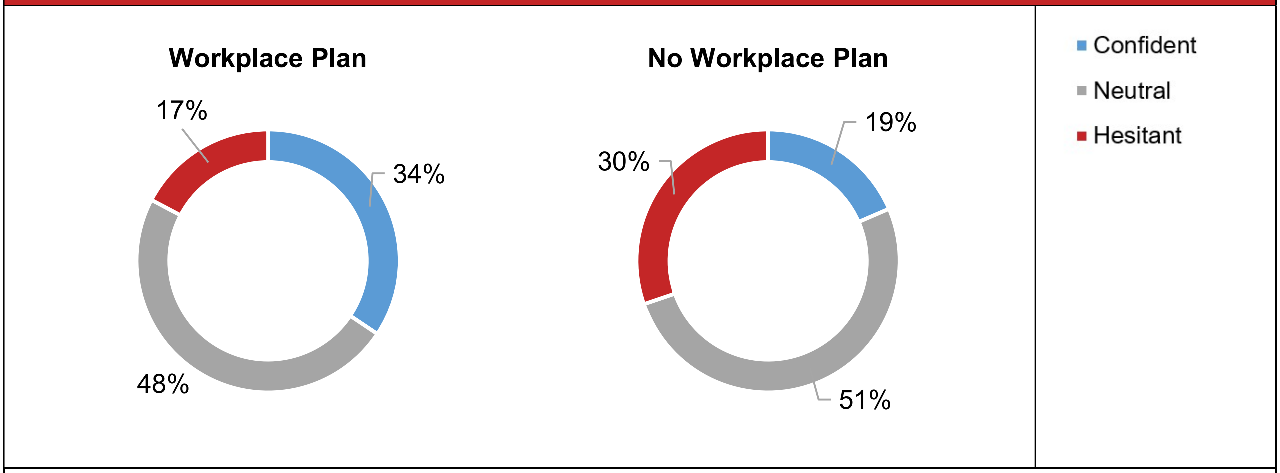
Question: How confident are you at being able to maintain your desired standard of living in retirement? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

__Figure 11b. Canadians who have access to a workplace plan have more confidence in meeting their financial objectives (2022)__

Question: How confident are you that you will be able to retire at your desired retirement age? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

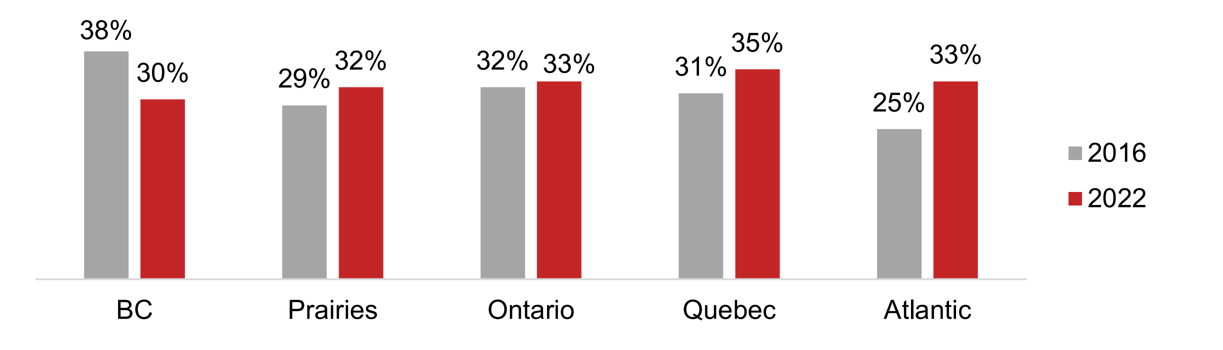
Canadians consistently report low confidence in their ability to manage retirement savings themselves

Respondents consistently reported low confidence in their ability to manage retirement savings on their own. In 2016, 32% indicated that they felt confident in managing their retirement savings themselves and in 2022 33% indicated that they felt similarly confident.

In 2022, respondents across Canada showed similar levels of uncertainty about managing their retirement savings themselves (Figure 12). There were no statistically significant differences across regions but there were some changes compared to 2016. In 2016, British Columbians reported the highest confidence in their ability to manage their finances. However, they also showed a marked decline in confidence in 2022. Canadians from the Atlantic regions, on the other hand, showed a marked increase in their confidence to manage their retirement savings themselves.

Figure 12. Canadians show low confidence in managing their retirement savings themselves (2016–2022)

Question: How confident do you feel managing retirement savings on your own? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



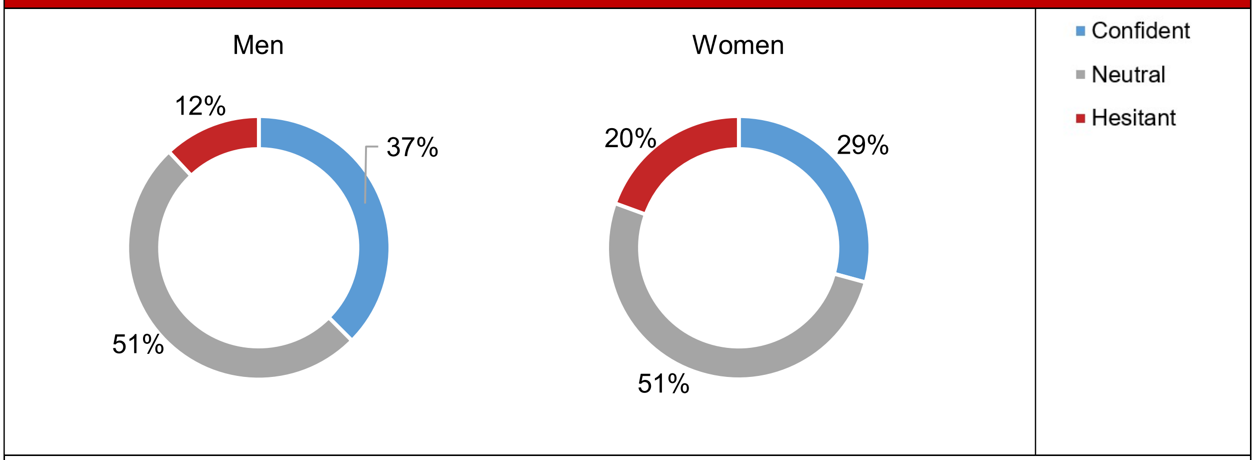
Proportion of respondents that rated confidence as 8 to 10.

Women report more uncertainty about managing retirement savings themselves

Women were less likely to report confidence in their ability to manage their retirement savings themselves and more likely to report hesitation about their capacity to do so (Figure 13). Once again, men and women reported similarly neutral outlooks.

Figure 13. Women show less certainty about managing their retirement savings themselves (2022)

Question: How confident do you feel managing retirement savings on your own? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



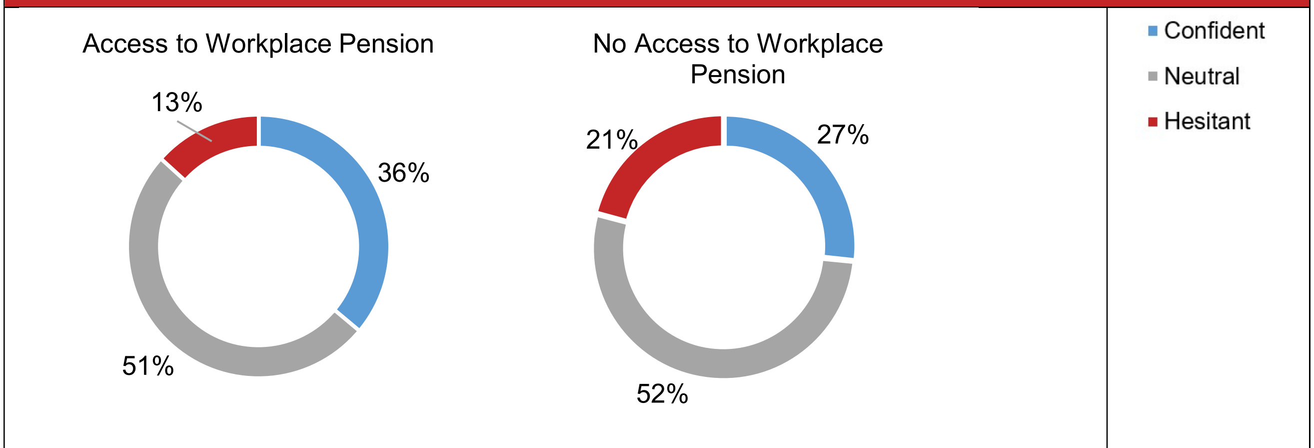
Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

Respondents without access to workplace plans are less certain about managing retirement savings themselves

Respondents without access to workplace plans were 9% less likely to report confidence in managing retirement savings on their own, and they were 8% more likely to indicate hesitation, than those with access to workplace plans (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Canadians without access to workplace plans show less certainty about managing their retirement savings themselves (2022)

Question: How confident do you feel managing retirement savings on your own? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident.



Respondents were asked to rate their confidence on a 10-point scale. Those who rated their confidence as 8 to 10 were categorized as confident, those who rated their confidence as 4 to 7 were categorized as neutral, and those who rated their confidence as 1 to 3 were categorized as hesitant.

The 2022 survey also found that respondents without access to workplace plans were less likely to know how much money they need to save:

- Fifty-six percent reported not knowing how much they need to save (9% more than those with a workplace plan).
- Forty-eight percent reported that they had no retirement planning strategy (27% more than those with access to workplace plans).

Observation #4: Canadians are less confident they will be debt-free in retirement and continue to report low knowledge of retirement income sources

This section examines Canadians' expectations about carrying debt into retirement and their self-reported knowledge of different sources of retirement income to understand whether Canadians feel equipped to self-manage their retirement savings.

Confidence about retiring debt-free declines

Rising expectations for carrying debt into retirement may be a factor in Canadians' lower confidence about managing their retirement savings or reaching their financial objectives. Respondents in 2022 were much less confident that they would be able to pay off their debts before retirement (Table 9). There was a 16% decrease in Canadians' reporting that they expect to retire debt-free. This decline in confidence was consistent across genders.

Table 9. Decline in expectations to be debt-free by retirement (2022)

Amount of debt	2022	2016
How much total debt (e.g., balance outstanding on loans, credit cards, mortgages, or lines of credit), do you expect to have when you retire?		
Less than $20,000	25%	19%
$20,000 to $39,999	7%	5%
$40,000 to $59,999	4%	4%
$60,000 to $79,999	4%	3%
$80,000 to $99,999	4%	2%
$100,000 or more	6%	4%
I will be debt-free	35%	51%
I do not know / Not sure	15%	11%

These results align with recent findings that more Canadians say that their debt is holding them back from retirement.[20] A higher interest rate environment will make it even harder for Canadians with debt to reach their financial goals for retirement.

Canadians from all regions are less likely to expect to retire debt-free

There was also a marked decrease in the number of respondents indicating that they expect to retire debt-free across all regions in Canada (Figure 15). Respondents from the Prairies reported the

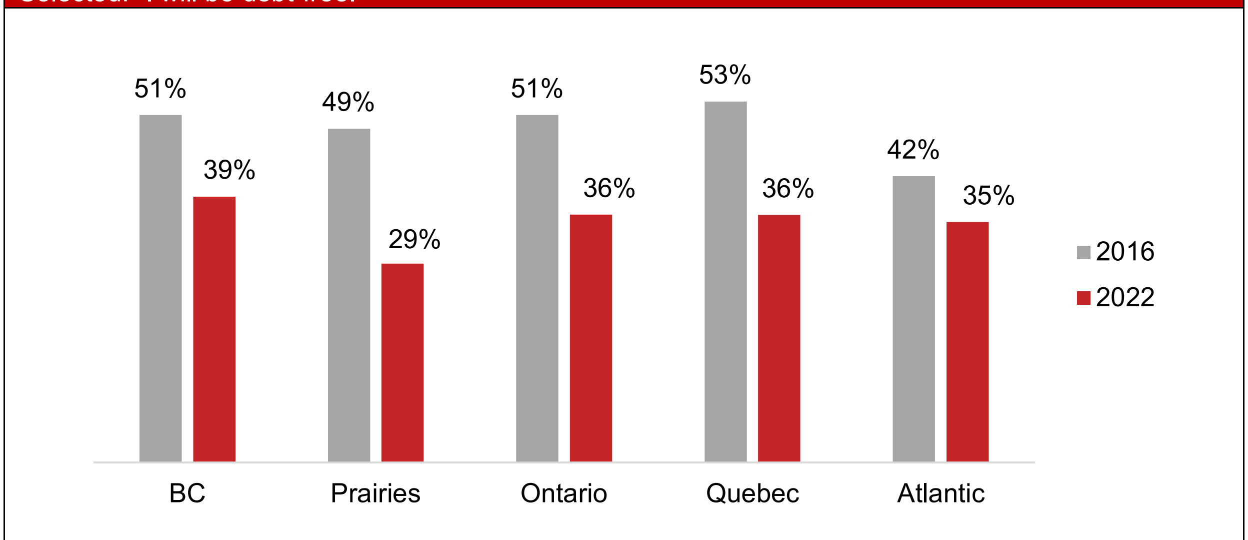
[20] Bowen & Munro, 2022

sharpest decline in confidence, with 20% fewer respondents indicating that they will be debt-free at retirement compared with 2016. They were also the least likely to say that they will be debt-free at retirement compared with all other regions in 2022. Previously, the Atlantic provinces had reported the lowest confidence in their ability to retire debt-free.

This may reflect the economic impact of the pandemic on Alberta. A 2020 report from the Credit Counselling Society found that four in ten Albertans were having a hard time paying their debts (compared with 31% nationwide).[21] They were also more likely to say that their finances made them anxious. Further, 61% of Albertans said they were cutting back on non-essential spending because of the pandemic.

Figure 15. Canadians across all regions are less likely to expect to be debt-free in retirement (2022)

Question: How much total debt do you expect to have when you retire?
Selected: "I will be debt-free."



Canadians without workplace plans are less likely to expect to retire debt-free

Respondents without access to workplace plans reported lower confidence that they will be debt-free during retirement (Figure 16). They were also less likely to have a retirement plan and more likely to express hesitation about their ability to achieve their retirement goals.

[21] CBC News, 2022

Figure 16. Canadians with access to workplace plans are more likely to expect to be debt-free during retirement

Question: How much total debt do you expect to have when you retire?
Selected: "I will be debt-free."

Only about 30% of Canadians feel knowledgeable about their sources of retirement income

In both surveys, about 30% of respondents reported that they were knowledgeable about their sources of retirement income (Table 10).[22] The most understood sources of retirement income were RRSPs and TFSAs under the personal savings pillar. Still, less than half the respondents reported high levels of knowledge of these two saving plans.

Table 10. Canadians' knowledge about sources of retirement income (2022)

Retirement Income Pillars	Proportion Rating Themselves Knowledgeable
Government plans (Pillar 1)	27%
Workplace plans (Pillar 2)	27%
Personal savings (Pillar 3)	29%

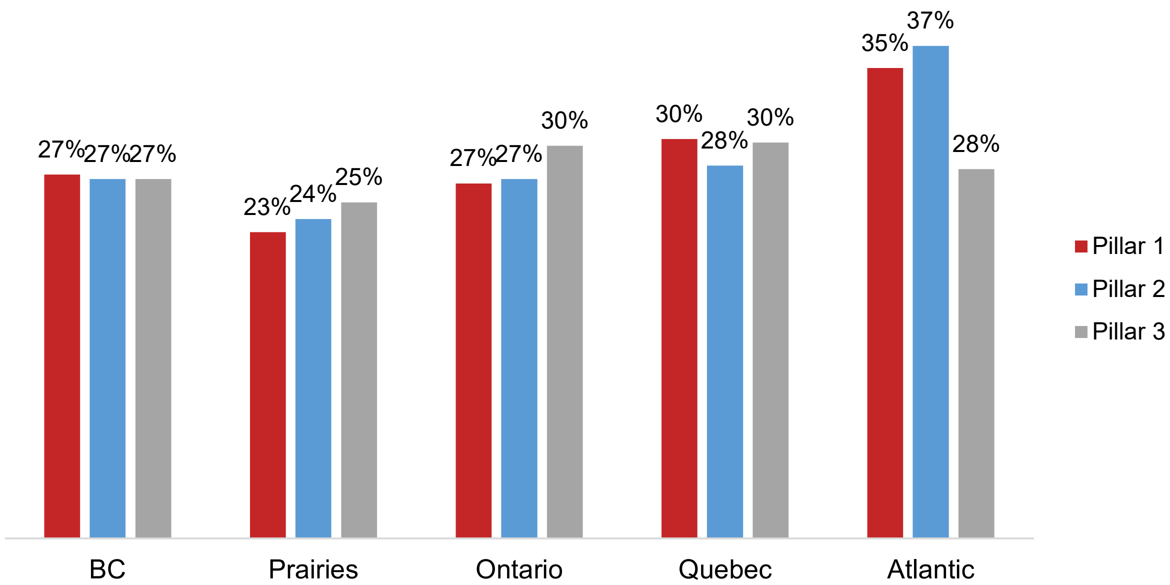
Proportion of respondents that rated knowledge as 8 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is extremely knowledgeable and 1 is not knowledgeable at all. The values under the second column are the average percentage across the corresponding retirement income sources.

On average, respondents from Atlantic Canada reported the most knowledge of retirement income sources, while those from the Prairies reported the least knowledge (Figure 17).[23] Despite Atlantic Canada's high knowledge of retirement income sources, respondents from Quebec and Ontario reported the most knowledge about personal savings.

[22] See Appendix A, Table A.3 for the comparison with 2016 and the breakdown of plan types.
[23] See also Appendix A, Table A.4.

Figure 17. Knowledge of retirement income sources across regions (2022).

Question: Using a 10-point scale, please rate your level of knowledge where 1 means very limited knowledge and 10 means very knowledgeable. How would you assess your knowledge of the following possible sources of retirement income?



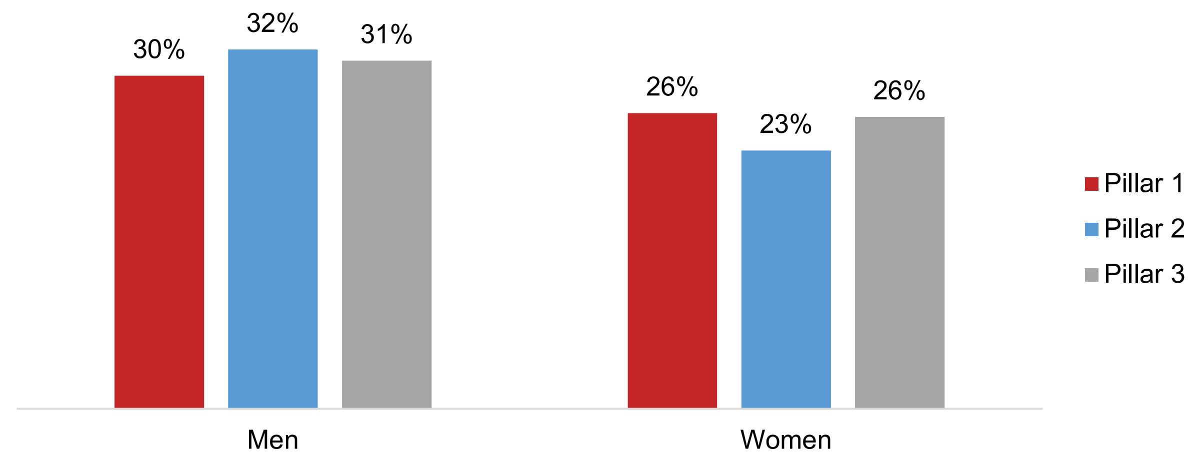
Proportion of respondents that rated knowledge as 8 to 10. Pillar 1 is government plans, Pillar 2 is workplace plans, and Pillar 3 is personal savings.

Women were less likely to indicate that they were knowledgeable of retirement income resources compared to men (Figure 18).[24] The biggest discrepancy was in knowledge of workplace plans, which had a 9% difference.

[24] See Appendix A, Table A.5.

Figure 18. Women reported less knowledge about retirement income sources (2022)

Question: Using a 10-point scale, please rate your level of knowledge where 1 means very limited knowledge and 10 means very knowledgeable.



Proportion of respondents that rated knowledge as 8 to 10. Pillar 1 is government plans, Pillar 2 is workplace plans, and Pillar 3 is personal savings.

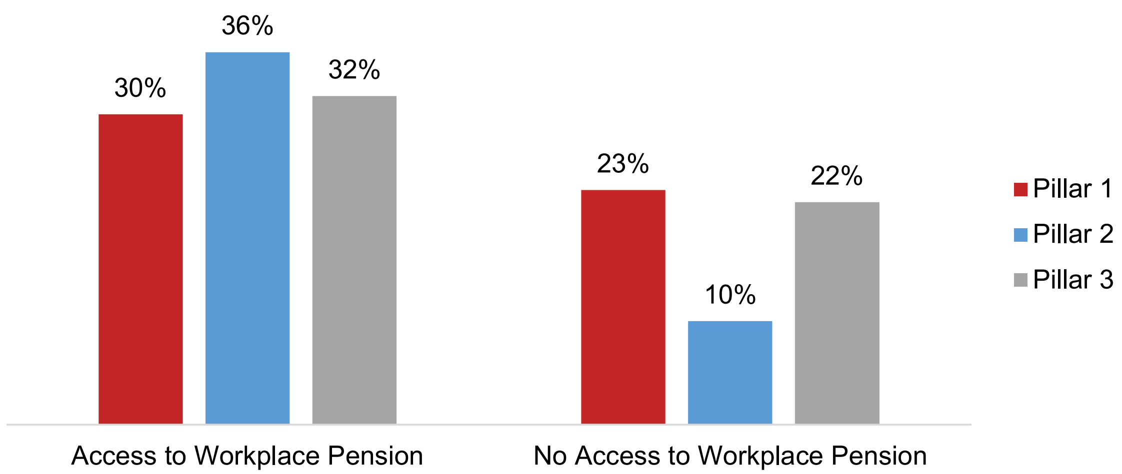
Finally, while all Canadians reported low levels of knowledge about their sources of retirement income, those without access to workplace plans reported even lower knowledge than those with access to such plans (Figure 19).[25] As expected, respondents with access to workplace plans reported higher knowledge of those plans. They also reported higher knowledge of government plans and personal savings.

Respondents with access to workplace plans are more likely to have stable employment and therefore have more capacity to save for retirement. It is also possible that they are more likely to receive financial literacy training as members of a workplace plan. Such plans usually provide members with resources about their pensions and how they interact with other retirement income sources.

[25] See Appendix A, Table A.6.

Figure 19. Canadians' low levels of retirement income knowledge decrease further for those without a workplace plan (2022)

Question: Using a 10-point scale, please rate your level of knowledge where 1 means very limited knowledge and 10 means very knowledgeable. How would you assess your knowledge of the following possible sources of retirement income?



Proportion of respondents that rated knowledge as 8 to 10. Pillar 1 is government plans, Pillar 2 is workplace plans, and Pillar 3 is voluntary personal retirement savings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report examines the features Canadians want from their retirement savings plans, what financial objectives they are aiming to achieve, and whether they have the resources, confidence, and knowledge to get what they want.

The 2022 survey results are consistent with the main findings of the 2016 survey, in that Canadians have the same aspirations for retirement:

- They remained focused on maintaining their standard of living in retirement.
- They continued to want retirement plan features that support this financial objective (namely, a pension that is monthly and predictable, lasts for their whole lives, and keeps up with inflation).
- They continued to report that the stress from planning for retirement permeates many areas of their lives, including their well-being, personal relationships, and work.

However, their confidence in being able to reach their aspirations declined since 2016. Canadians reported:

- Lower confidence about maintaining their desired standard of living in retirement (a 3% decrease)
- Lower confidence about retiring at their desired age (a 15% decrease)
- Lower confidence that they will retire debt-free (a 16% decrease)

Results have broad implications for plan administrators, employers, and policymakers

Canada's retirement income system was designed to comprise three pillars of retirement savings programs: government plans, workplace plans, and personal savings. However, 60% of working Canadians are not covered by a workplace pension plan.[26] This adds pressure on government programs (Pillar 1) and personal savings (Pillar 3), which has broad implications for pension administrators, employers, and policymakers.

The surveys underscore the importance Canadians place on Essential Pension Features, namely a retirement income that is predictable, is paid for life, and keeps up with inflation. Plan administrators would do well to ensure that the features of their plans are relevant for Canadians.

The impact of financial stress on productivity (for example through absenteeism) is well documented. The surveys report that some of that financial stress is specifically attributable to retirement planning. Further, the 2022 survey found that employees expect to work an average of six years longer than they desire due to their perceived financial inability to retire. That also has workforce planning implications for employers.

The survey results indicate that many Canadians are not confident in their abilities to manage personal savings on their own. If more Canadians exit the workforce without sufficient retirement savings, more pressure could be placed on publicly funded programs such as GIS and OAS. This raises issues of intergenerational equity, as GIS and OAS are funded through general tax revenues, which means

[26] Statistics Canada, 2022

working taxpayers may be required to pay more in taxes to support a growing number of retirees who rely on GIS and OAS for subsistence living.

Recommendations

Given these aligned interests in a properly functioning retirement income system, what can stakeholders do to help Canadians reach their retirement aspirations?

1. *Expand retirement income coverage in Canada*

The second pillar of Canada's retirement income system needs reinforcement so the system can function as intended. The system also needs innovation so it can remain relevant in a fast-changing world. Expanding access to workplace pension plans that provide lifetime income would mitigate Canadians' stress about running out of money in retirement.

a. Increase access to collective plans

Canadians want retirement income that is monthly and predictable, lasts for their entire lifetime, and keeps pace with inflation. These goals are not easily achieved independently. A collective approach to retirement savings is one efficient and cost-effective way forward.

A collective pension fund pools contributions from multiple employers and their employees, which allows pension plans to leverage economies of scale and lower their average investment and operating costs.[27] Larger pooled funds also have access to a more diverse range of capital than individual investors—such as private equity, real estate, and infrastructure.

Canada is home to world-renowned collective pension plans—and their pension investment and administration expertise—in the form of its robust public sector pension plan system. These collective pension plans owe much of their success to independent governance, shared risk funding models, internal investment expertise, and strategic investment diversification. The public pension system also helps all Canadians through the economic activity it generates. A 2021 study by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, commissioned by the CPPLC, found that the broader Canadian economy benefited from the public pension system. Every $10 of pension paid to a retired member generated $16.72 in economic activity.[28]

Policymakers can leverage this homegrown expertise to increase participation in workplace pension plans.[29] This approach has already received support through legislation that enables the growth of sector-based and broader-based public sector plans. In 2021, for example, Simon Fraser University joined the BC College Pension Plan, bringing 1,200 new members from a single-employer pension plan into a collective plan. In a similar initiative, in 2015, Nova Scotia's Public Service Superannuation Plan started engaging with stand-alone pension plans in the university and municipal sectors. It aims to consolidate as many stand-alone pension plans as possible to create either a full "plan merger" to administer defined benefit plans or to start a new basis for defined contribution plans. This initiative has added more than 20 new employers and more than 3,500 new members, and is approaching $500 million in new assets.

In Ontario, OPTrust Select has been available to non-profit employers across Ontario since 2019. Over 50 employers have joined the plan since the option was introduced. Also in Ontario, the University Pension Plan was founded in July 2021 to amalgamate three separate university pension plans (a fourth university plan joined shortly after). Across Canada, the CAAT Pension Plan permits employers

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27 Whale, 2022 and Ambachtsheer, 2023
28 Smetanin and Stiff, 2021
29 Whale, 2022

from all sectors to join. It now has participating employers from 15 industries. There is evidently strong demand for collective pension solutions.

b. Make it easier to provide pension plans for every Canadian

Canada's retirement income system compares favourably to other countries, and it often ranks in the top third of global pension rankings.[30] However, its comparative dearth of workplace pension coverage is holding the country back from reaching the very top of the rankings. As Keith Ambachtsheer recently noted, the Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index rates Canada at 11 out of 44 global pension systems. To "catch up with, or even surpass," the top countries on the list, Canada will need to expand its occupational pension system.[31] The authors of the Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index 2022 suggested that Canada's overall score could be improved by "increasing the coverage of employees in occupational pension schemes through the development of an attractive product for those without an employer-sponsored scheme."[32]

Other countries have had success increasing participation in workplace pension plans. Canada can look to them to see whether any lessons can be applied here. In the United Kingdom, for example, legislation came into effect in 2012 that required employers to offer workplace pension plans and automatically enroll all eligible employees. Employees had the option of opting out after one month of enrollment. As a result, the United Kingdom saw notable increases in workplace pension participation, increasing from 55% in 2012 to 87% in 2018.[33] Participation in the private sector rose by 43%.

Policymakers can also look to existing solutions to improve coverage. Pooled registered pension plans (PRPPs), introduced in 2012, have the potential to support Canadian workers without workplace pension plans. In 2022, the Association of Canadian Pension Management (ACPM) called for policymakers to "resuscitate" PRPPs in part by reducing the administrative burden and costs associated with them.[34] The ACPM contends that legislative changes to PRPPs would allow Canadians to participate in a pension plan, aggregate their tax-deferred retirement savings, and access well-managed retirement income options.

Founded in 1986, the Saskatchewan Pension Plan (SPP) is another homegrown option available to all Canadians. SPP allows its members to consolidate their RRSP savings in a managed pooled fund. Upon retirement, members can elect to turn all or part of their savings into a lifetime income stream by purchasing annuities.

Finally, many workers in the "gig economy" (freelancers and self-employed workers) do not participate in workplace pension plans, which leaves them especially vulnerable to retirement insecurity. Any efforts to expand coverage should include options for those without traditional employment relationships.

c. Empower innovation to improve access to lifetime income

Improving access to workplace pension plans will help reinforce Canada's second pillar, but many Canadians are nearing retirement without a workplace pension. As the surveys show, few Canadians are confident about managing their retirement savings themselves, yet many will need to decide how to invest and spend so their savings last their whole life.

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[30] See for example the 2022 Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index and the Allianz Global Pension Report 2023.

[31] Ambachtsheer, 2023

[32] Mercer, CFA Institute, and Monash University, 2022

[33] Department for Work & Pensions, 2019

[34] The Association of Canadian Pension Management, 2022

The National Institute on Ageing and the Global Risk Institute details the issues faced by Canadians today:

> *As Canadians contemplate how to turn their savings into income, they are trapped between two extreme and inadequate decumulation options: buy a life annuity from an insurance company or move their accumulated savings into a personal retirement income fund … where they must individually manage the fund's investment and drawdown*.[35]

Dynamic pension pools are one potential solution to this predicament.[36] These vehicles operate on similar risk-sharing principles as collective pension plans—leveraging economies of scale to provide a cost-effective lifetime income solution by sharing investment and mortality experience. Crucially, participants are protected against outliving their savings.

Policymakers can support the implementation of innovative new products like dynamic pension pools. Canada needs more products that provide Canadians with simple and cost-effective options for turning their personal savings into a lifetime income stream in retirement. Any such options should be available for all retirement savings, whether defined contribution plans, RRSPs, or TFSAs, so that all Canadians can access the predictable lifetime income they desire.

2. *Continue investing in financial literacy programs*

In both surveys, less than half of Canadians indicated that they were knowledgeable about any of the sources of retirement income available to them. This underscores the need for more investment in unbiased financial literacy programs.

Financial literacy programs are more effective when they are tailored to their audience. The findings from the 2022 survey could be used to tailor financial literacy programs based on geography and gender. That said, it is important to note that this report does not capture the full spectrum of gender experiences. More research is needed to understand how transgender and non-binary people fare in retirement planning. This is especially important since research indicates that they tend to be paid less than other employees and are more likely to face workplace discrimination.[37]

The 2022 survey showed that those with access to workplace plans consistently reported higher knowledge of sources of retirement income.[38] Plan administrators should continue providing financial literacy on how their plans fit into Canada's broader retirement income system. That said, basic improvements are also required. Only 36% of those with access to workplace plans indicated that they were well versed about their plans.

Employers could consider investing in financial literacy programs even if they do not offer a workplace plan. Canadians without workplace plans tended to report lower confidence in their financial goals and more stress about running out of money. They were also less knowledgeable about the various sources of retirement income. Reducing the stress of planning for retirement is a worthy investment in productivity.

Education about managing debt is necessary, as the surveys found that more Canadians expect to retire with debt. Policymakers can also support free debt counselling initiatives through non-profit organizations or government agencies.

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[35] MacDonald, 2021

[36] Dynamic pension pools are also known as variable payment life annuities.

[37] See, for example: Medina and Mahowald, 2023 and Rummler, 2022.

[38] See Appendix A, Table A.6.

Many Canadians have spent their entire working careers in a low inflationary environment and have ignored the impact of inflation on their future cost of living. It is time to relearn why inflation needs to be incorporated into retirement planning. Financial literacy programs can be adapted to help Canadians understand inflation as a key retirement risk, how to plan for it when setting a retirement income goal, and how to mitigate it when it happens.

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

This appendix provides additional tables to supplement the main findings.

Table A.1 Desirable pension plan features 2016–2022

Pension Plan Features	2022	2016
	Desirable (8–10)	Desirable (8–10)
Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all desirable and 10 is extremely desirable, please rate the desirability of the following features of a pension plan or retirement savings plan.		
Having a retirement income that keeps pace with inflation	74%	71%
Having a retirement income that is guaranteed to last for my entire lifetime.	74%	74%
Having a retirement income that is monthly and predictable	73%	73%
Having a pension plan that will provide income if forced to retire earlier than planned	61%	62%
Having your employer match your pension and retirement saving contributions	60%	62%
Having retirement savings that can be converted to a regular stream of payments in retirement	56%	N/A
Having retirement income that does not fluctuate with movements in the investment market	55%	60%
Having pension and retirement savings contributions automatically saved with every pay cheque	55%	52%
Having pension and retirement savings managed at a low cost	55%	61%
Having a pension and retirement plan that provides benefits for my survivor after I die.	45%	N/A
Having pension and retirement savings managed by an investment professional aligned to your goals.	39%	44%
Having a pension and retirement savings where I can direct or manage the investments myself.	39%	N/A

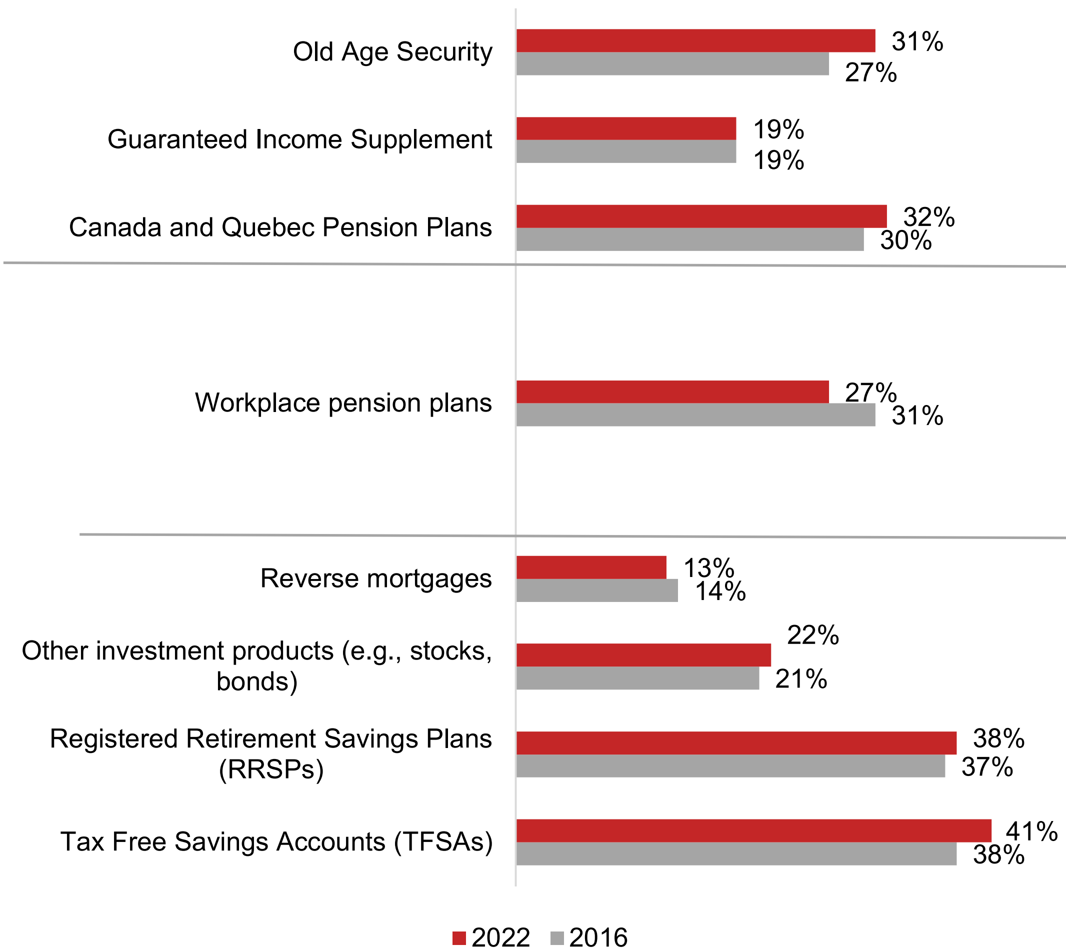
Table A.2 Desirable pension plan features among Canadians with and without access to a workplace plan

Pension Plan Features	Access to workplace plan	No access to workplace plan
	Desirable (8–10)	Desirable (8–10)
Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all desirable and 10 is extremely desirable, please rate the desirability of the following features of a pension plan or retirement savings plan.		
Having a retirement income that keeps pace with inflation	77%	67%
Having a retirement income that is guaranteed to last for my entire lifetime.	77%	68%
Having a retirement income that is monthly and predictable	76%	67%
Having a pension plan that will provide income if forced to retire earlier than planned	64%	54%
Having your employer match your pension and retirement saving contributions	66%	48%
Having retirement savings that can be converted to a regular stream of payments in retirement	59%	51%
Having retirement income that does not fluctuate with movements in the investment market	57%	50%
Having pension and retirement savings contributions automatically saved with every pay cheque	60%	44%
Having pension and retirement savings managed at a low cost	57%	51%
Having a pension and retirement plan that provides benefits for my survivor after I die.	48%	39%
Having pension and retirement savings managed by an investment professional aligned to your goals.	42%	34%
Having a pension and retirement savings where I can direct or manage the investments myself.	39%	39%

Table A.3 Knowledge of sources of retirement income by retirement income pillar

Using a 10-point scale, please rate your level of knowledge where 1 means very limited knowledge and 10 means very knowledgeable. How would you assess your knowledge of the following possible sources of retirement income?

Retirement Income Sources | **Retirement Income Pillars**



Government plans (Pillar 1)

2022:27%

2016:25%

Workplace plans (Pillar 2)

2022:27%

2016:31%

Voluntary personal savings (Pillar 3)

2022:29%

2016:28%

Proportion of respondents that rated knowledge as 8 to 10. The values under the Retirement Income Pillars column are the average percentage across the corresponding retirement income sources.

Table A.4 Knowledge of retirement sources across regions in 2022

Retirement sources	BC		Prairies		Ontario		Quebec		Atlantic	
	Know	Do not know	Know	Do not know	Know	Do not know	Know	Do not know	Know	Do not know
Old Age Security	33%	26%	25%	25%	30%	27%	35%	26%	42%	21%
Guaranteed Income Supplement	17%	35%	16%	41%	18%	39%	20%	38%	25%	31%
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	32%	24%	28%	27%	32%	25%	35%	22%	39%	19%
Workplace pension plans	27%	27%	24%	26%	27%	26%	28%	30%	37%	18%
Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs)	36%	20%	35%	19%	38%	19%	42%	17%	35%	18%
Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs)	39%	16%	37%	18%	41%	18%	45%	18%	41%	15%
Reverse mortgages	13%	45%	11%	47%	14%	44%	12%	54%	14%	41%
Other investment products	20%	32%	18%	33%	25%	32%	20%	37%	21%	30%

"Know" represents a knowledge rating of 8 to 10, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not knowledgeable at all and 10 is very knowledgeable. "Do not know," represents a knowledge rating of 1 to 3.

Table A.5 Women report less knowledge about retirement sources compared to men in 2022

Retirement sources	Men		Women	
	Know	Do not know	Know	Do not know
Old Age Security	33%	21%	31%	30%
Guaranteed Income Supplement	21%	31%	17%	44%
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	35%	20%	31%	28%
Workplace pension plans	32%	21%	23%	31%
Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs)	41%	15%	36%	21%
Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs)	42%	16%	40%	19%
Reverse mortgages	15%	41%	11%	53%
Other investment products	26%	25%	17%	40%

"Know" represents a knowledge rating of 8 to 10, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not knowledgeable at all and 10 is very knowledgeable. "Do not know," represents a knowledge rating of 1 to 3.

Table A.6 Canadians with access to a workplace plan report more knowledge about retirement sources compared to Canadians without access

Retirement sources	Workplace Plan		No Workplace Plan	
	Know	**Do not know**	**Know**	**Do not know**
Old Age Security	35%	21%	25%	35%
Guaranteed Income Supplement	18%	36%	19%	41%
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	37%	19%	24%	34%
Workplace pension plans	36%	17%	10%	44%
Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs)	43%	12%	28%	32%
Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs)	46%	12%	30%	28%
Reverse mortgages	14%	45%	11%	50%
Other investment products	24%	28%	17%	42%

"Know" represents a knowledge rating of 8 to 10, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not knowledgeable at all and 10 is very knowledgeable. "Do not know," represents a knowledge rating of 1 to 3.

Appendix B: Methodology

In August 2016, the CPPLC commissioned an online survey conducted by Ipsos Reid. It asked 1,006 Canadians about their expectations, desires, and strategies for retirement. The results were analyzed by Bob Baldwin in *The Pensions Canadians Want: The Results of a National Survey* (2017).

In 2022, the CPPLC commissioned an online survey, which was conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights (active between September 12 and 18, 2022). A randomly selected and demographically representative sample of 2,001 Canadians participated in the survey. The sample size was weighted to represent ages, genders, and regions across Canada. As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of ± 2.2%. Table B1 provides a breakdown of the samples across provinces and territories in 2016 and 2022.

The 2022 survey contained many of the same questions as the 2016 survey to permit comparative analyses. New questions were added to understand how economic challenges stemming from the pandemic have affected Canadians' view of retirement.

Table B.1. Total number of respondents across Canada

	2022	2016
British Columbia	265	201
Prairies	352	201
Ontario	771	203
Quebec	477	201
Atlantic	136	200
Total	**2001**	**1006**

Table B.2 Gender of respondents

	2022	2016
Men	48%	47%
Women	51%	53%
Other gender identity*	1%	N/A
* This option was new to the 2022 survey. The 2016 survey only asked respondents whether they identified as men or women.		

Statistical analyses were conducted only on men and women when examining gender (Table B2). This is because there was an insufficient sample size within the "other gender identity" respondents to conduct valid statistical analyses.

Table B.3 Household access to any kind of pension

	2022
Yes	66%
No	34%

For this report, household access to “any kind of pension” is broad, and includes respondents participating in a workplace pension, respondents with service in a pension plan from a prior employer, and respondents whose spouses have a pension plan (Table B3). Due to this change in definition since the 2016 survey, comparisons with the previous survey were not possible.

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