



# Overview of COVID-19 Public Opinion Research

Research Results for Calgary and Alberta

July 14, 2020

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# Background

## Objective

In May 2020, The City of Calgary's Corporate Research Team prepared an overview of COVID-19 public opinion research conducted with Calgarians in order to better understand citizens' opinions, beliefs and concerns about the pandemic and moving forward. As relevant research specific to Calgarians was limited, the scope was broadened to include research at the provincial level. This report is another overview of COVID-19 public opinion research, focusing on data collected since mid-May. As with the first report, the scope of research includes provincial level research due to limited Calgary-specific research. Please note that public opinion research on the topic of COVID-19 has been less frequent in the month or so prior to the writing of this report than it was in the earlier stages of the pandemic.

## Data Sources

The surveys referenced in this report were publicly-released or shared directly with The City by the research firm that conducted the survey. All were online surveys conducted with members of online research panels either owned or subcontracted by the research firm. Comparability of results of a survey to those of any other survey is limited due to different research panels being used and variation in timing of the survey. In addition, since these surveys were conducted with online panels, a margin of error can't be assigned to the results. Details about each survey are provided in the References section.

## Timeframe

Given the quickly evolving nature of the pandemic and the large volume of information about it being shared via the news media and social media, some people's opinions, beliefs and concerns about this topic might be changing more quickly than they would about other topics. The surveys selected were conducted in May and June in order to capture as current opinions as possible at the time of writing this report. Readers should note that some citizens' opinions, beliefs and concerns about COVID-19 might have changed since the time the survey was conducted.

# Highlights at a Glance


## Opinions about Current and Future State of the Pandemic

**34%**  
of Albertans say we've  
**reached the end**  
of the first wave<sup>1</sup>

**28%**  
of Albertans say  
the **worst of the crisis**  
is behind us<sup>1</sup>

**79%**  
of Albertans think  
there will be a  
**second wave**<sup>1</sup>

**54%** of Albertans are **afraid** of  
contracting COVID-19<sup>1</sup>

 **30%** of Albertans say Canadian society  
will **never** return to normal<sup>1</sup>

**62%**  
of Albertans think a second wave  
will be **at least as strong**  
as the first<sup>4</sup>

## Face Masks and Social Distancing

 **41%**  
of Albertans **support**  
**mandatory face mask use**  
in public/confined spaces<sup>1</sup>

**68%** of Albertans want to  
maintain social distancing rule  
at **2 metres** (six feet)<sup>2</sup>



Pace of relaxing  
social distancing  
and isolation  
measures

 **35%**  
of Albertans say  
**slow** the pace<sup>1</sup>

**49%**   
of Albertans say  
**maintain** the pace<sup>1</sup>

## Financial Impacts

**39%**  
of Calgarians found it  
**difficult to meet**  
**monthly expenses**  
recently<sup>10</sup>

**49%** of Calgarians say their  
**household financial**  
**situation is worse**  
than one year ago<sup>10</sup>

 **31%**  
of Albertans applied  
and received  
**emergency funding**<sup>8</sup>

Note: Credits for icons from Noun Project are in the References section



# Executive Summary

As the COVID-19 pandemic reaches its fifth month, public opinion research on the topic has slowed somewhat; however, gathering and analyzing citizens' opinions and perceptions continues to be important as decisions are made about reopening the economy and resuming "normal" life.

Most of the recent publicly-released opinion research on COVID-19 in Canada reports provincial-level data rather than at the level of municipalities. This report includes findings of surveys conducted with Albertans and highlights results for Calgarians where they are available. As the COVID-19 situation continues to change, albeit less rapidly than in the earlier stages of the pandemic, this report focuses on the most recent research available at the time of writing the report in order to ensure as up-to-date opinions and concerns as possible. The surveys referenced were conducted in May and June.

Albertans seem to be losing optimism that the pandemic will soon be over. Belief that we'd reached the end of the first wave of COVID-19 and the worst of the crisis was behind us wavered among Albertans by the end of June. In a survey conducted between June 12 and 14, around one-half (47%) said we'd reached the end of the first wave of COVID-19<sup>3</sup> but by June 28, this proportion dropped to one-third (34%).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, during this time, Albertans' confidence that the worst of the crisis was behind us also declined, from 42% in mid-June<sup>3</sup> to 28% at the end of the month.<sup>1</sup> Between June 26 and 28, two-in-five (39%) said the worst was yet to come and one-quarter (25%) were unsure. The belief that there will be a second wave of COVID-19 dropped from four-in-five (80%) at the end of May<sup>5</sup> to 69% in mid-June<sup>3</sup> before increasing again to four-in-five (79%) at the end of the month<sup>1</sup>, further suggesting an erosion of Albertans' optimism about an end to the pandemic. These changes in opinion could be at least partly due to the fact that throughout June, new cases (ranging from 20 to 48 in a 24 hour period) continued to be confirmed in Alberta<sup>11</sup> and the number of new cases reported in the US jumped from increased from 20,315 on June 12 to 44,458 on June 28.<sup>12</sup>

In early June, the majority of Albertans (62%) thought a second wave of the pandemic will be as strong as or stronger than (23% and 39%, respectively) the first wave.<sup>4</sup> In the event that a second wave is as strong as the first, a majority of Albertans supported the closing of schools (73%) and public places (70%), although fewer supported confining people to their home (57%) and closing businesses (53%).

Despite the state of Alberta's economy, by the end of June, only a minority of Albertans (15%) were in favour of accelerating the pace at which governments were relaxing social distancing and isolation measures.<sup>1</sup> One-half (49%) preferred governments maintain the pace and the remaining 35% wanted to see the pace slowed down. When it comes to reopening businesses (specifically restaurants, bars/pubs, hotels, gyms/fitness facilities, and concert halls/theatres) in their area, by early June Albertans were somewhat comfortable with this as long as there were restrictions in place.<sup>4</sup> When it came to concert halls/theatres, gyms/fitness facilities, and bars/pubs, some Albertans (36%, 28% and 20%, respectively) preferred they didn't reopen yet.

Perhaps as a result of Albertans recognizing that COVID-19 is still a serious issue and we're still in the midst of the pandemic, as of the end of June, Albertans were not predicting a quick "return to normal" for Canadian society following the end of the pandemic. Only around one-in-ten (12%) predicted that Canadian society will soon return to normal.<sup>1</sup> Slightly more than one-half (56%) anticipated it would take some time and three-in-ten (30%) said we'd never return to normal.

After a drop from 53% at the end of May<sup>5</sup> to 42% one week later<sup>4</sup>, fear (very or somewhat afraid) of personally contracting COVID-19 had risen to 54% at the end of June.<sup>1</sup> Slightly more than one-half (55%) of Albertans were also afraid of an immediate family member contracting the virus.<sup>4</sup>

Despite a slight majority of Albertans being afraid of themselves and/or an immediate family member contracting COVID-19, one-half (49%) opposed making it mandatory to wear a face mask in public and confined spaces.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, a substantial proportion of Albertans admitted to less often engaging in some preventative behaviours at the end of May through the beginning of June.<sup>7</sup> These behaviours included staying away from public spaces (68% doing this a little or a lot less often), social distancing (61% less often), and not shaking hands or hugging people (34% less often). The less frequent social distancing and staying away from public spaces is interesting in light of the fact that in late May, three-quarters (76%) of Albertans agreed that social distancing prevents someone from becoming infected with COVID-19.<sup>5</sup>

Further on the topic of social distancing, Albertans generally don't support reducing Canada's current recommendation of two metres (six feet). Around seven-in-ten (68%) preferred it be kept at two metres, 14% opted for it to be reduced to one and one-half metres (four feet) like in many European countries, and only 4% said it should be reduced to the World Health Organization's minimum recommendation of one metre (three feet).<sup>2</sup> Even if the social distancing recommendation was changed to one metre in Canada, nearly one-half (46%) said they'd be comfortable dining in a restaurant. Fewer would be comfortable in places where they would likely be seated or standing closer to strangers and it could be difficult to avoid others: a movie theatre/show venue (28%), a gym/fitness facility (23%), or a bar/lounge/nightclub/pub (21%).

In mid-May, a minority (13%) of Albertans supported prohibiting all non-residents from entering the province (i.e. total travel restrictions), preferring either travel guidance, meaning asking non-residents to avoid the province (54%), or no travel restrictions at all (33%).<sup>6</sup> However, while total travel restrictions were of little interest to Albertans, prior to the original Canada-US border reopening date of June 21 (later changed to July 21 and then to August 21), a minority (37%) said the border should be reopened as scheduled. Overall, in mid-May, Albertans weren't in a hurry to travel to the US, with the majority (75%) saying that if the border reopened on June 21, they wouldn't take a day trip to the US nor would they take a longer trip, staying over at least one night (70% wouldn't).

By early June, Albertans continued to experience job loss and negative financial impacts because of the pandemic. Two-in-five (38%) reported they'd taken a financial loss on their investments and one-third (35%) had been laid off or lost hours at their job.<sup>8</sup> Among Calgarians, two-in-five (39%) were finding it difficult to meet their monthly expenses in recent months and one-half (49%) reported that their household financial situation at the end of May was worse than one year prior.<sup>10</sup>

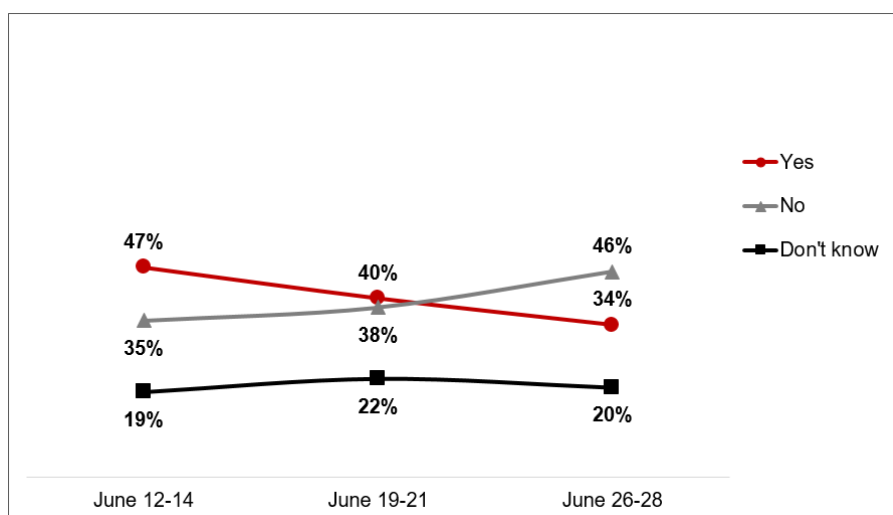
Given the financial impacts experienced by Albertans, it's understandable that by early June, three-in-ten (31%) had applied for and received funds from Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) or other emergency funding programs available from the federal government or the Province of Alberta.<sup>8</sup> When it comes to the CERB, a majority of Albertans (80%) said they supported it; however, when asked about the future of this program, only two-in-five (39%) thought it should be maintained as is while 15% said the dollar amount should be reduced, 31% thought it should be stopped completely, and 15% were unsure.

## Opinions about a Potential Second Wave of COVID-19

**Albertans' optimism that we'd reached the end of the first wave of COVID-19 and that the worst of the crisis was behind us declined in a two week period between the middle and end of June.**

Between June 12 and 28, the proportion of Albertans who thought we'd reached the end of the first wave of the pandemic dropped from 47% to 34%.<sup>1,2,3</sup> This decline was due to an increase in the proportion of people saying we haven't yet reached the end of the first wave, from 35% to 46% at the end of June, as opposed to those who responded "don't know" (holding steady at around one-in-five Albertans). It's not surprising, then, that during this timeframe, there was a drop in Albertans' belief that the worst of the crisis was behind us, from 42% to 28%.<sup>1,3</sup> At the end of June, one-in-ten (8%) thought we were in the worst of the crisis at the time while two-in-five (39%) said the worst was yet to come and one-quarter (25%) were unsure.

**Figure 1: Belief That We've Reached the End of the First Wave of COVID-19**

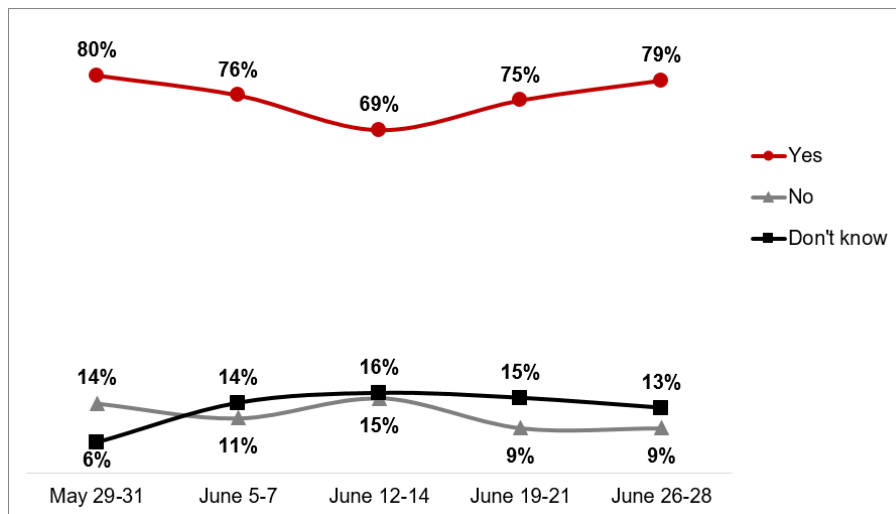


Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker (June 15, June 22, and June 29)<sup>1,2,3</sup>

**The majority of Albertans foresee a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and think Canadians individually (as opposed to governments) are responsible for taking measures to avoid it, although Albertans are split on whether or not it can be avoided.**

As of the end of June, the majority (79%) of Albertans thought there will be a second wave of the pandemic one-in-ten (9%) said they don't believe there will be a second wave and 13% didn't know.<sup>1</sup> In the span of four weeks, this number dropped from 80% (end of May) to a low of 69% (mid-June) before climbing to 79% at the end of June.<sup>3,5</sup>

**Figure 2: Belief That There will be a Second Wave of COVID-19**



Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker (June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29)<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

At the end of May, Albertans were split on whether or not a second wave of the pandemic can be avoided, with two-in-five (41%) thinking it was possible to avoid, one-half (51%) saying it wasn't, and one-in-ten (8%) being unsure.<sup>5</sup> When asked to decide between Canadians individually and governments with regard to taking adequate measures to try to avoid a second wave, three-quarters (77%) said that responsibility lies with each Canadian individually.<sup>4</sup>

**Many Albertans predict that a second wave of the pandemic will be as strong if not stronger than the first and think that if it is at least as strong, governments should close schools and public places again.**

In early June, two-in-five Albertans (39%) said that a second wave will be stronger than the first while one-quarter (23%) said it will be as strong as and around as many (27%) said it will be weaker.<sup>4</sup> Again, there was a minority of people (11%) who weren't sure. At the end of May, three-quarters (73%) of Albertans said that if a second wave is as strong as the first, governments should close schools and around as many (70%) thought public places should be closed in that situation.<sup>5</sup> Fewer were in favour of confining people to their home (57%) or closing businesses (53%).

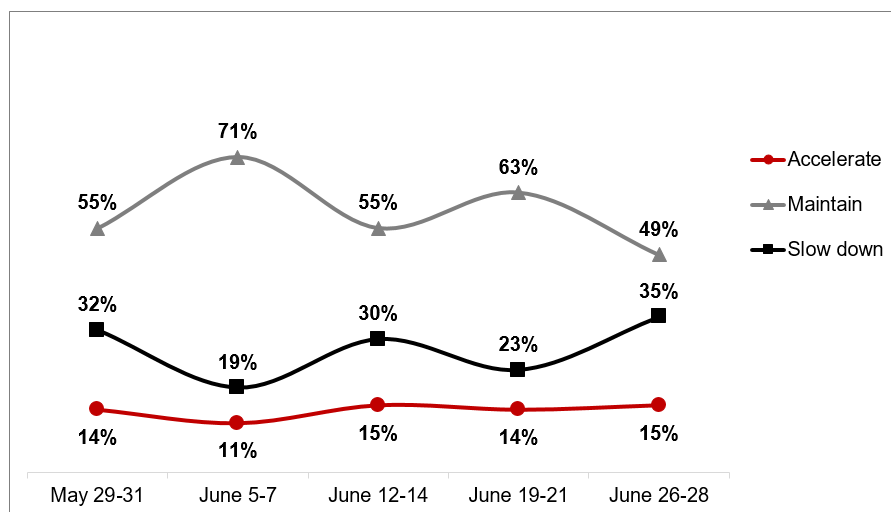


## Perspectives on Reopening the Economy and Returning to Normal

Throughout the month of June, Albertans wavered in their opinions about whether governments should slow down, maintain or accelerate the pace of relaxing social distancing/isolation measures, although only a minority said it should be accelerated.

At the end of June, only a minority (15%) of Albertans said governments should accelerate the pace at which social distancing and social isolation measures were being relaxed.<sup>1</sup> This measure has remained consistent since the end of May while the proportions saying the pace should be maintained or slowed have varied throughout June. Although one-half (49%) said at the end of June that the pace should be maintained, 71% thought so just three weeks prior. Similarly, one-third (35%) most recently said the pace should slow down, up from one-in-five (19%) in early June.<sup>1,4</sup>

**Figure 3: Preference for Pace of Relaxing Social Distancing/Isolation Measures**



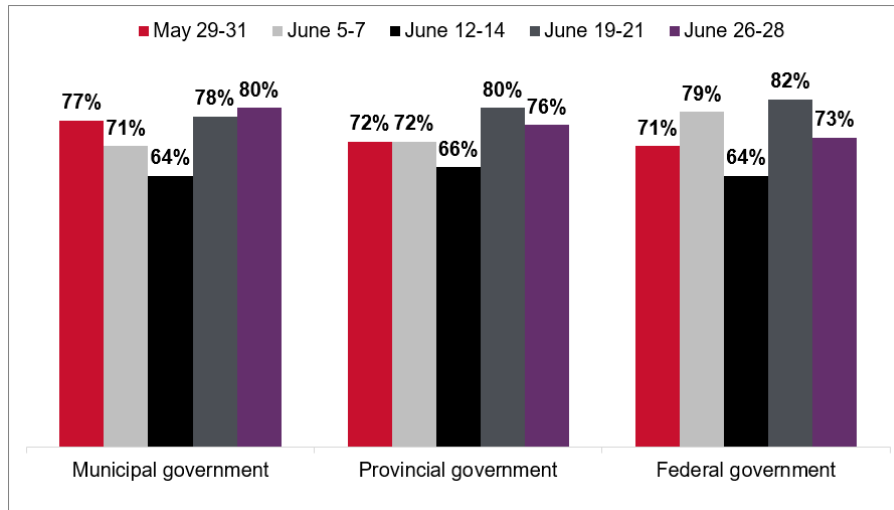
Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker (June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29)<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

In a survey conducted May 19 to 24, around one-quarter (28%) of Albertans thought the process of opening up activities and businesses was happening too quickly while nearly as many (24%) said it was going too slowly and one-half (48%) thought the pace was just right.<sup>9</sup>

**Albertans' satisfaction with each of the three levels of government in terms of the measures put in place to fight COVID-19 dipped in mid-June but rebounded by the end of the month.**

By mid-June, around two-thirds of Albertans were satisfied with each of level of government in terms of the measures put in place to fight COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> This increased the following week to around four-in-five being satisfied.<sup>2</sup> Although satisfaction with the provincial and federal governments appears to have declined from the third to the fourth week in June,<sup>1</sup> the differences are not statistically significant.

**Figure 4: Satisfied (very or somewhat) with Measures Put in Place by Government to Fight COVID-19**



Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker (June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29)<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

### **Albertans tend to be somewhat comfortable with businesses reopening as long as there are restrictions in place.**

When it comes to specific types of businesses reopening in their area, in early June Albertans tended to support reopening but with restrictions (as opposed to reopening without any restrictions or not reopening at all).<sup>4</sup> Only around one-in-ten were comfortable with restaurants, bars/pubs, hotels, gyms/fitness facilities, and concert halls/theatres reopening without any restrictions. For these types of business, with the exception of bars/pubs, the majority supported reopening with restrictions in place. Of note, three-in-ten Albertans (29%) reported that restaurants had already reopened in their area and one-in-five (21%) said bars/pubs had reopened. Concert halls/theatres, gyms/fitness facilities, and bars/pubs had the highest proportions of Albertans saying they shouldn't be reopened yet (36%, 28% and 20%, respectively).

**Figure 5: Comfortable with Businesses Reopening in their Area**



Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker – June 8<sup>4</sup>

**Survey data suggests the majority of Albertans are not optimistic that life in Canada will return to normal soon, if ever, and that they think it will take months to more than a year from now before they personally feel like they're back to normal.**

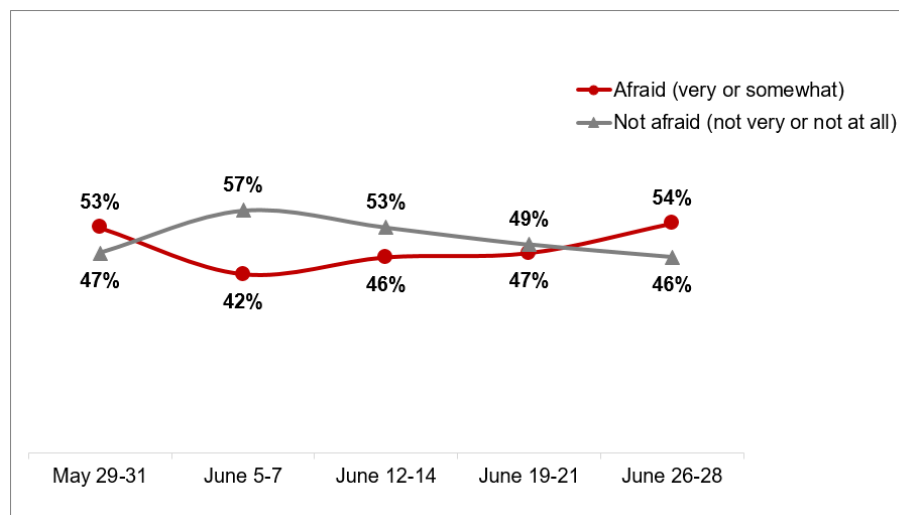
At the end of June, only a minority (12%) of Albertans said they think that in the post-pandemic world, life in Canadian society will soon return to normal.<sup>1</sup> Slightly more than one-half (56%) said it will take some time while three-in-ten (30%) answered that it will never return to normal. This has remained consistent since it was first asked in the survey in mid-June.<sup>2,3</sup> Another survey, conducted June 8 to 10, found that one-in-ten Albertans (12%) anticipated things will be back to normal in Canada within a month or two, one-quarter (26%) said it would take three to six months, and two-in-five (39%) thought it would take six months to a year.<sup>7</sup> One-quarter (23%) anticipated we won't be back to normal until after the end of 2021. Interestingly, among this same group of respondents, one-in-five (18%) said that personally they already feel like they're back to normal. Just as many (17%) said they thought it would take up to a month or two before they will feel this way, while one-in-five (22%) predicted it will take around three to six months and three-in-ten (30%) said six months to a year. A minority (13%) anticipated that they won't feel like they're back to normal until after the end of 2021.

## COVID-19 Concerns, Social Distancing and Other Preventative Behaviours

**Albertans' fear of personally contracting COVID-19 declined in early June but rose again by the end of the month, ending with slightly more than one-half being afraid of this possibility.**

As of the end of June, around one-half (54%) of Albertans were afraid of contracting COVID-19<sup>1</sup>, on par with results one month prior (53%)<sup>5</sup> but up from 42% in early June.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, the proportion of Albertans reporting that they weren't afraid of contracting the virus trended down from early June to the end of the month (57% to 46%).<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

**Figure 6: Fear of Personally Contracting COVID-19**



Data sources: Leger Weekly Pandemic Tracker (June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22, and June 29)<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

In early June, around one-half (55%) of Albertans were concerned about an immediate family member contracting COVID-19.<sup>4</sup> In a survey conducted June 8 to 10, around one-third (36%) of Albertans said they were concerned about personally becoming sick from the virus, just over one-half (55%) were concerned about friends or family becoming sick, and roughly one-half (47%) had this concern about people in their community.<sup>7</sup>

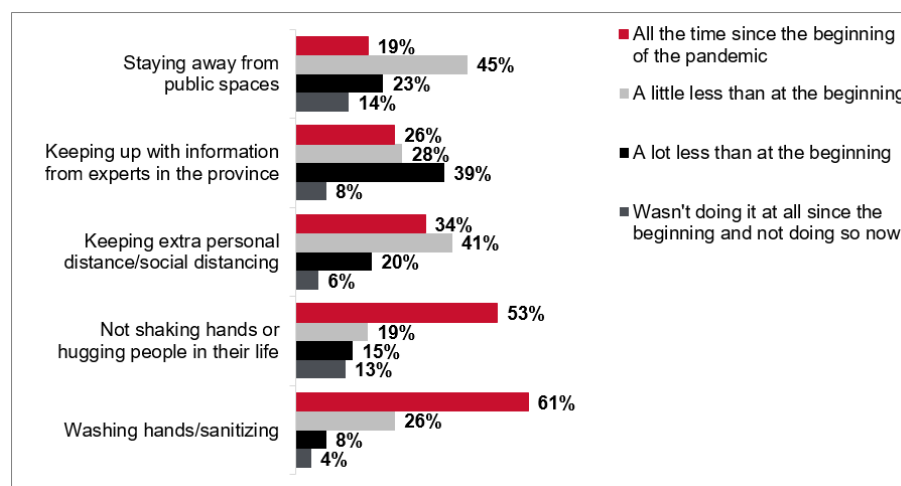
**Despite fears of oneself or a friend or family member contracting COVID-19, fewer than one-half of Albertans are in support of making the use of protective masks mandatory in public and confined spaces.**

Fewer than one-half (41%) of Albertans said at the end of June that they thought the use of protective masks in public and confined spaces should be mandatory while one-half (49%) did not think so and the remaining one-in-ten (10%) were unsure.<sup>1</sup>

## Albertans admit to engaging in preventative measures less frequently in late May/early June, in particular – avoiding public spaces and social distancing.

In the survey conducted June 8 to 10, respondents were asked how often they'd been doing certain preventative measures during the previous two weeks.<sup>7</sup> The results suggest that social distancing and related precautions are becoming less of a priority for Albertans. A majority (68%) said that they had been avoiding public spaces a little or a lot less often, nearly as many (61%) had been social distancing less often in the previous two weeks, and one-third (34%) were less frequently avoiding shaking hands and hugging people (despite the fact that in late May, 76% of Albertans agreed that social distancing prevents transmission of COVID-19<sup>5</sup>). This survey also found that two-thirds (67%) of Albertans were keeping up with information from experts in their province less often and one-third (34%) admitted to washing their hands/sanitizing less frequently in the previous two weeks.

**Figure 7: Frequency of Preventative Measures in Late May to Early June**



Data source: Angus Reid Institute survey data tables, June 15<sup>7</sup>

## The majority of Albertans do not support the social distancing recommendation being reduced to less than the current two metres (six feet) and agree that social distancing will prevent people from becoming infected with COVID-19.

At the end of the third week in June, survey respondents were asked whether the social distancing recommendation in Canada should remain at two metres (six feet), be reduced to one and one-half metres (four feet) like in many European countries, reduced to one metre (three feet) – the minimum recommended by the World Health Organization – or be abolished completely.<sup>2</sup> The majority (68%) of Albertans thought we should maintain the current social distancing rule of two metres while slightly more than one-in-ten (14%) said it should be reduced to one and one-half metres and only 4% thought it should be reduced to one metre. A small minority (6%) said we should get rid of the rule completely and one-in-ten (9%) were unsure.



It's not surprising that a majority said the two metre rule should remain in place, as three-quarters (76%) of Albertans agreed that social distancing will prevent someone from getting infected with COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> Despite the lack of appetite for reducing the social distancing recommendation to one metre, nearly one-half (46%) said that if it happened, they would be comfortable dining in a restaurant.<sup>2</sup> Fewer would be comfortable going to a movie theatre/show venue (28%), a gym/fitness facility (23%), or a bar/lounge/nightclub/pub (21%).

At the end of June, slightly more than one-half (57%) of Albertans said that people outside their family had gotten within two metres of them in the past week.<sup>5</sup> However, the survey didn't ask additional questions such as whether or not the violation of the social distancing rule was against the respondent's wishes/without their permission, if it was someone they know as opposed to a stranger, or if the person was wearing a mask.

## **Opinions about Travel Restrictions and Reopening the Canada-US Border**

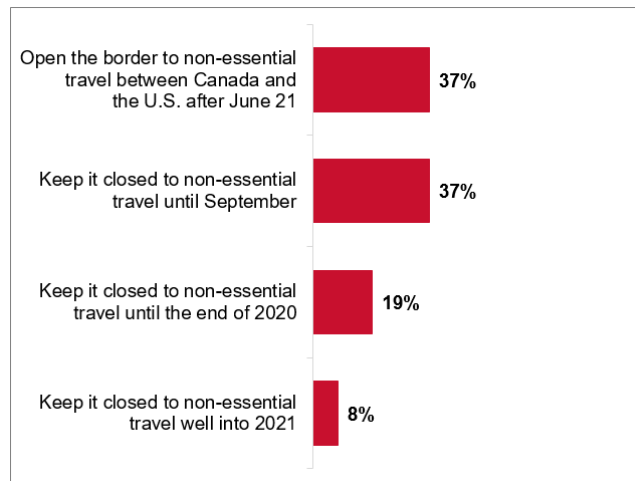
**In mid-May, only a minority of Albertans were in favour of prohibiting all non-residents from entering Alberta and around one-half (54%) preferred the Province just issue travel guidance by asking non-residents to not travel to the province.**

A survey in mid-May explored opinions about provincial travel restrictions.<sup>6</sup> Among Albertans, only around one-in-ten (13%) were in favour of their province having total travel restrictions prohibiting all non-residents from entering by air, ground, and ferry and one-third (33%) chose no travel restrictions at all. The most popular option was travel guidance, asking non-residents to avoid the province but not prohibiting them from travelling to their province (54%). It's possible that in the time since this survey was conducted, some Albertans might have changed their minds as a result of media reports of COVID-19 cases continuing to be confirmed, particularly in the United States.

**By mid-May, the majority of Albertans weren't supportive of reopening the Canada-US border as early as June 21 (the originally scheduled date), nor would they be likely to travel to the US if the border reopened on June 21.**

In the mid-May survey, conducted before the lifting of the Canada-US border closure (originally scheduled for June 21 but later changed to July 21), Albertans were evenly split about whether the border should be opened to non-essential travel between the two countries after June 21 (37%) or kept closed to non-essential travel until September (37%).<sup>6</sup> A minority (19%) thought the border should remain closed to non-essential travel until the end of 2020 and even fewer (8%) said it should be kept closed until well into 2021.

**Figure 8: Opinions about Reopening the Canada-US Border**



Data source: Angus Reid Institute – From sea to locked down sea: Most want US border to stay closed, reluctant to welcome interprovincial visitors – May 22<sup>6</sup>

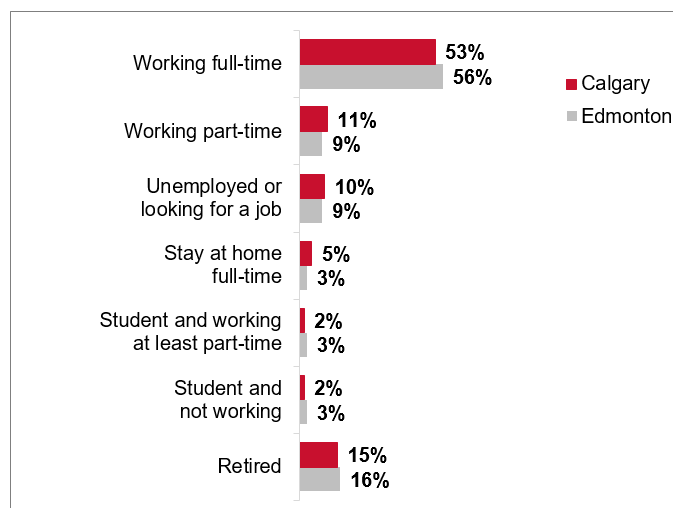
When asked about the possibility that they'd take a day trip to the US after the border closure expired on June 21, around one-in-ten Albertans (8%) said they'd definitely do this and twice as many (17%) said they probably would do so.<sup>6</sup> The majority would not take a day trip to the US if the border reopened on June 21 (23% probably not and 52% definitely not). These results excluded respondents who said they didn't live close enough to the Canada-US border to take a day trip. Albertans would be as willing to take a longer trip to the US (staying over at least one night), with one-in-ten (10%) saying they definitely would do this and one-in-five (20%) saying they probably would do so, although one-third (33%) probably wouldn't and around as many (37%) definitely wouldn't do so.

## Job and Financial Impacts of the Pandemic

**Job and financial impacts of the pandemic have affected a substantial minority of Albertans, making it challenging to meet monthly expenses, and a slight majority think the worst is still yet to come in terms of job losses and damage to businesses.**

At the end of May, one-half (53%) of Calgarians reported that they were working full-time while one-in-ten (11%) were working part-time and just as many (10%) said they were unemployed or looking for a job.<sup>10</sup> Results were virtually the same in Edmonton.

**Figure 9: Employment Status at the End of May**



Data source: Janet Brown Opinion Research - CBC Calgary: The Road Ahead Supporting Data for Pandemic Stress Story – June 11<sup>10</sup>

In a survey conducted June 8 to 10, around two-in-five Albertans (38%) reported they'd taken a financial loss on their investments and nearly as many (35%) had been laid off or lost hours at their job.<sup>8</sup> Of the 35% who were laid off or lost hours, more than one-in-ten (16%) were certain they'd return to their job at the same number of hours worked as before or already had, one-quarter (26%) were fairly confident they would return to it and two-in-five (43%) were doubtful. For more than one-in-ten (15%), the job loss was permanent and they'd have to find a different job. In terms of further loss of jobs and damage to businesses in Alberta due to COVID-19, two-in-five (43%) say the worst is over while just over one-half (57%) think the worst is yet to come.

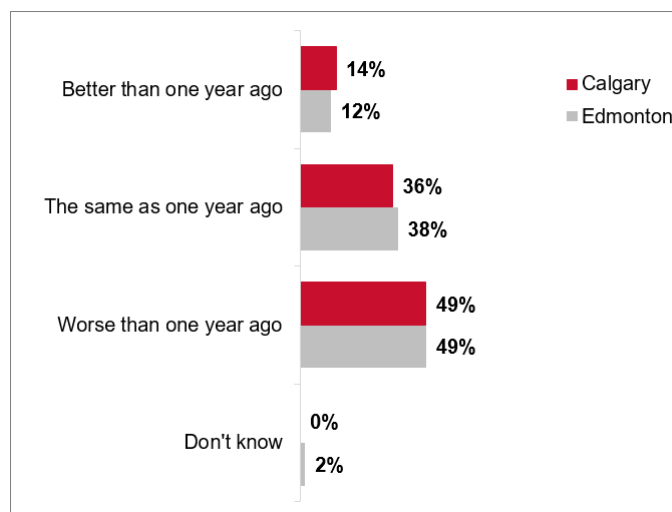
In a survey conducted at the end of May for which results were reported for Calgary and Edmonton separately, around one-third (35%) of all Calgarians surveyed (i.e. regardless of employment status pre-pandemic) said they and/or their spouse were working fewer hours as a result of the pandemic (34% in Edmonton).<sup>10</sup> Nearly one-half (46%) reported that they and/or their spouse were making less money due to the pandemic (43% in Edmonton). Among Calgarians, one-quarter (24%) said they and/or their spouse had been temporarily laid off and one-in-ten (9%) said they and/or their spouse were permanently laid off because of the pandemic (in Edmonton, it was 20% and 12%, respectively). Two-in-five (40%) of Calgarians (and 32% of Edmontonians) reported that they and/or their spouse were concerned about losing their job in the near future.

Given the employment and income challenges some Albertans have been facing because of the pandemic, it's no surprise that two-in-five Calgarians (39%) and Edmontonians (41%) were finding difficult to meet their monthly expenses in recent months leading up to the end of June when this survey was conducted.<sup>10</sup>

**One-half of Calgarians rated their current overall household financial situation as worse than it was one year ago and only one-quarter anticipate it will be better one year from now.**

A survey conducted May 25 to June 1 found that when Calgarians were asked to rate their household's current financial situation compared to what it was one year ago, one-half (49%) said it was worse now.<sup>10</sup> Around one-third (36%) reported it was the same as one year ago and slightly more than one-in-ten (14%) said it is better now. Results for Edmontonians were virtually identical.

**Figure 10: Current Household Financial Situation Compared to One Year Ago**



Data source: Janet Brown Opinion Research - CBC Calgary: The Road Ahead Supporting Data for Pandemic Stress Story – June 11<sup>10</sup>

When looking ahead one year, one-quarter of Calgarians (24%) said their household's financial situation will be better, nearly two-in-five (37%) thought it would be the same as their current situation, one-third (32%) said it would be worse and the remaining Calgarians (7%) were unsure. Again, results among Edmontonians were nearly identical (22%, 40%, 32% and 5%, respectively).

**Working from home due to the pandemic has been positive for some Albertans in terms of work productivity but a majority also say it's been only "okay" for their mental/emotional state.**

At the end of the first week in June, one-in-five (19%) Albertans said that they were working from home because of the pandemic, one-in-ten (10%) were not but had someone else in their household working from home, and another one-in-ten (9%) said they and someone else in their household were working from home due to the pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

Among respondents who were working from home, three-in-ten (30%) said it had been really great for their work productivity, just more than one-half (57%) said it was okay, and around one-in-ten (13%) said it had been awful in this regard. Impact on one's mental/emotional state was somewhat more negative, with more

than one-in-ten (16%) saying that working from home had been really great for their mental/emotional state, while the majority (70%) reported it as okay and slightly more than one-in-ten (14%) answered that it had been awful.

Of Albertans working from home due to the pandemic, one-third (32%) thought that after the pandemic, they'll likely go back to their place of work, around one-quarter (23%) anticipated they'd continue to work from home and nearly one-half (45%) predicted it would be a mix of both.

**A minority of Albertans had received some type of emergency funding by early June and a majority of these people said it helped at least a little.**

By early June, three-in-ten Albertans (31%) had applied for and received funds from Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) or other emergency funding programs available from the federal government or the Province of Alberta while the remaining Albertans had not applied.<sup>8</sup> Of the 31% who had applied, one-quarter (26%) said these programs are vital (a total lifeline for them and their household), three-in-ten (31%) said they help a lot, nearly as many (28%) reported they help but just a little, and one-in-ten (11%) said they aren't of any help at all.

In another survey conducted at the end of May, one-third (32%) of Calgarians said they or their spouse qualified to receive any of the federal government COVID-19 relief programs, including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), or the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA), while in Edmonton it was 28%.<sup>10</sup>

**A majority of Albertans supported the CERB in mid-June, although when asked, only around one-half thought it should continue, either as is or with a reduced payment amount.**

In mid-June, a survey found that four-in-five Albertans (80%) supported the CERB (described to respondents as a taxable benefit of \$2,000 every four weeks for up to sixteen weeks to eligible workers), with 36% strongly and 44% somewhat supporting it.<sup>3</sup> While around one-in-five (18%) opposed it, only a small minority (6%) were strongly opposed. Among this same group of respondents, two-in-five (39%) said the CERB should be maintained as is, 15% thought it should be maintained but the dollar amount reduced, three-in-ten (31%) said it should be stopped completely and the remaining respondents (15%) were unsure. This survey also found that more than one-in-ten Albertans (16%) said they knew someone who defrauded the CERB program or received the benefit but shouldn't have had access to it.



# References

<sup>1</sup>Leger survey report: Leger's Weekly Survey, June 29, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/legers-weekly-survey-june-30-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 26 – 28, 2020
- Sample size = 1,524 Canadians (including 126 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>2</sup>Leger survey report: Weekly Pandemic Tracker, June 22, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/legers-weekly-survey-june-23-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 19 – 21, 2020
- Sample size = 1,521 Canadians (including 110 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>3</sup>Leger survey report: Weekly Pandemic Tracker, June 15, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/legers-weekly-survey-june-16-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 12 – 14, 2020
- Sample size = 1,527 Canadians (including 128 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>4</sup>Leger survey report: Weekly Pandemic Tracker, June 8, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/weekly-covid-19-pandemic-tracker-june-9-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 5 – 7, 2020
- Sample size = 1,536 Canadians (including 103 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>5</sup>Leger survey report: Weekly Pandemic Tracker, June 1, 2020 (available via: <https://leger360.com/surveys/weekly-covid-19-pandemic-tracker-june-2-2020/>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with Leger's LEO online research panelists, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted May 29 – 31, 2020
- Sample size = 1,536 Canadians (including 125 Albertans)
- Data weighted to reflect gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household

<sup>6</sup>Angus Reid Institute release data tables: From sea to locked down sea: Most want US border to stay closed, reluctant to welcome interprovincial visitors, May 22, 2020 (available at: [http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020.05.22\\_border\\_release\\_tables.pdf](http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020.05.22_border_release_tables.pdf))

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted May 18 – 19, 2020
- Sample size = 1,777 Canadians (including 161 Albertans)

<sup>7</sup>Angus Reid Institute release data tables: Three months after COVID-19 pandemic declared, Canadians express 'fatigue', are social distancing less, June 15, 2020 (available at: [http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.14\\_COVIDBehaviourReleaseTables.pdf](http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.14_COVIDBehaviourReleaseTables.pdf))

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 8 – 10, 2020
- Sample size = 1,510 Canadians (including 149 Albertans)

<sup>8</sup>Angus Reid Institute release data tables: So long, office space? Two-thirds of Canadians who work from home expect it to continue after pandemic, June 11, 2020 (available at: [http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.10\\_COVID\\_Econ.pdf](http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.10_COVID_Econ.pdf))

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted June 8 – 10, 2020
- Sample size = 1,510 Canadians (including 149 Albertans)

<sup>9</sup>Angus Reid Institute release data tables: Provincial Spotlight: COVID-19 creates comfort zone for incumbent governments coast to coast, June 8, 2020 (available at: [http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.05\\_ProvincialOutlookReleaseTables.pdf](http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.06.05_ProvincialOutlookReleaseTables.pdf))

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Angus Reid Forum, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted May 19 – 24, 2020
- Sample size = 5,001 Canadians (including 621 Albertans)

<sup>10</sup>Janet Brown Opinion Research: CBC Calgary, The Road Ahead: Supporting Data for Pandemic Stress Story by Robson Fletcher, June 11, 2020 (available at: <http://planetjanet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-11-Supporting-data-Dor-Pandemic-Stress-Story.pdf>)

Survey methodology:

- Online survey with members of the Trend Research Online panel, aged 18 years or older
- Conducted May 25 – June 1, 2020
- Sample size = 900 Albertans (including 300 Calgarians and 300 Edmontonians)

<sup>11</sup>Chief medical officer updates – transcripts dated June 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, and 25, 2020 (available at: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx#statement>)

<sup>12</sup>Statista.com: Number of new cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States from January 22 to July 8, 2020, by day (available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102816/coronavirus-covid19-cases-number-us-americans-by-day/>)

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