



Canadians want stability- Co-ops deliver it

Canadian Politics

Housing



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In 2019, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped daily life, Abacus Data partnered with Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada (CMC) to conduct a large-scale national study on how Canadians viewed co-operatives and what role they played in the country's social and economic fabric.

Six years later, in late 2025, CMC, along with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada), returned to the field to ask many of the same questions again.

The context could not have been more different. A global pandemic. Persistent inflation. A deepening housing crisis. Growing economic uncertainty. For many Canadians, institutions that once promised predictability and security now feel strained or unreliable.

And yet, amid all this change, one thing stood out clearly: **Canadians' belief in the co-operative model has remained remarkably strong.**

More than that, in a moment defined by instability and loss of control, co-operatives increasingly stand out as institutions that still offer what many Canadians say they are searching for most right now: **stability, fairness, and a meaningful say in the decisions that shape their lives.**

The findings below are from a survey conducted with on behalf of CMC and CHF Canada with n=5,012 adults in Canada from Sample size: 5,012 Canadians from November 5 to



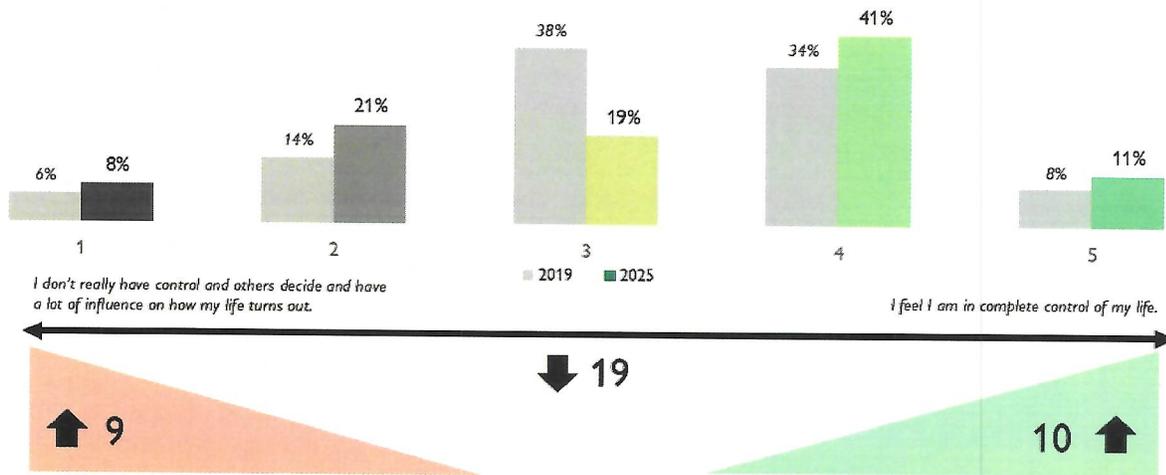
Across Canada, a growing number of people feel that life is being shaped by forces beyond their control – rising prices, housing pressures, and decisions made far away from the communities they affect.

In our broader research at the end of 2025, **nearly half of Canadians said life feels more unpredictable than it used to.** That sense of unpredictability is not abstract. It shows up in concerns about paying bills, finding stable housing, planning for retirement, and trusting institutions to act in their best interest.

In updating the research from 2019 we found a fundamental shift- the last 5 years have pushed Canadians into two sides of the control continuum- both those with and without a sense of control have risen sharply.

Thinking about your life and your ability to decide on its direction and outcome. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much control do you feel you have in your life? 1 means you don't really have control and others decide and have a lot of influence on how your life turns out. 5 means you feel you are in complete control of your life.

The pandemic pushed Canadians to opposite ends of the control continuum.



Base: All respondents (n=5,012)

This erosion of control matters. When people feel powerless, trust declines and optimism about the future weakens.

Co-operatives fundamentally challenge that dynamic.

Unlike traditional corporate models, co-ops are built around shared ownership and participation. Members have a voice. Decisions are made with community needs in



needs, which shows that many Canadians are now focused on meeting their most basic needs (affordability, housing security, and economic stability) before they can think about anything else.

What do Canadians say they are focused on?

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Co-operatives help restore a sense of agency at exactly this level. By allowing Canadians to actively participate in institutions that provide housing, services, and financial stability, co-ops help people regain a feeling of control even as broader systems feel increasingly out of reach.

Key Finding #2: Canadians Need Stability. Co-ops Deliver It.

Economic pressure is no longer confined to specific groups. Canadians across regions, ages, and income levels describe a shared experience of **lack of control**.

Essentials like housing and food feel harder to secure. Costs rise faster than incomes. Long-standing institutions no longer feel dependable in the way they once did.

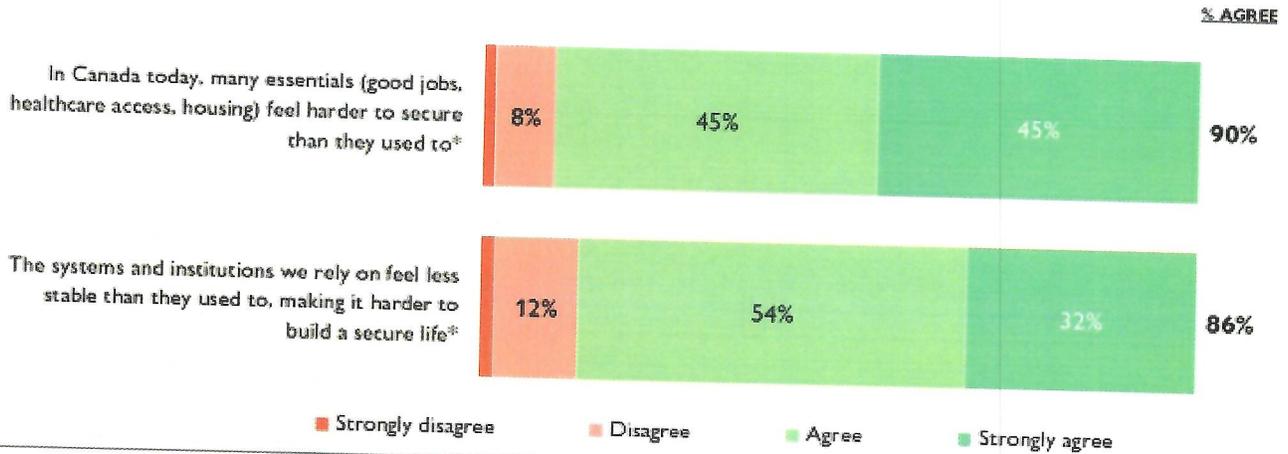
Directly from our survey with CMC/CHF:

- 90% of Canadians agree many essentials, including housing, feel harder to secure than they used to.



Do you agree or disagree with the following?

The majority of Canadians lack the of feeling of stability in their lives.



Base: All respondents (n=5,012)

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In this environment, Canadians are not necessarily looking for disruption or transformation. Instead, they are seeking something much simpler – stability they can rely on.

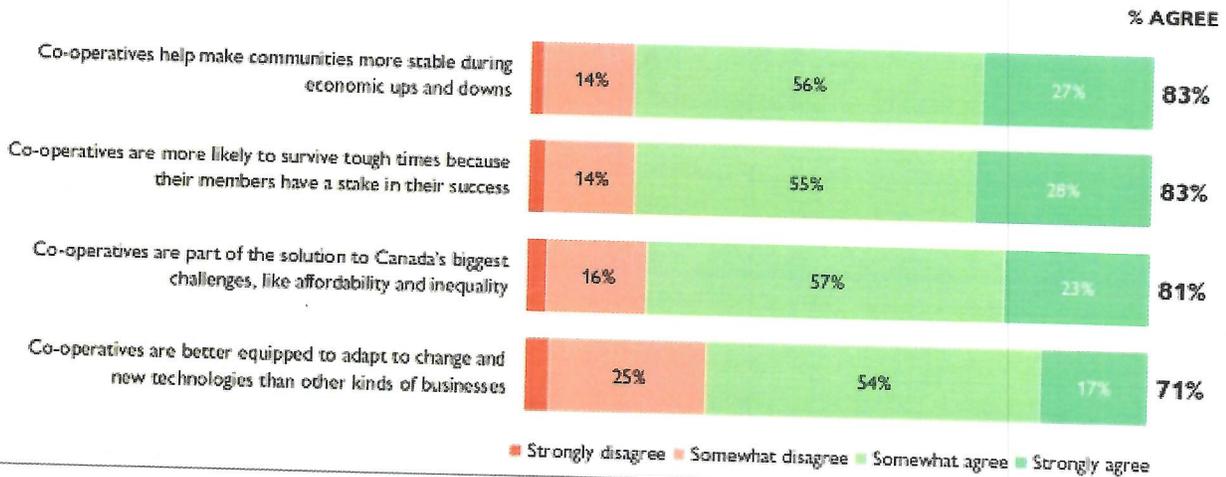
This is where co-operatives stand apart. Canadians consistently see co-operatives as a stable path forward, even in uncertain times.

Across multiple measures, large majorities of Canadians agree that co-operatives provide stability where other models often fall short. More than eight in ten Canadians (83%) agree that co-operatives help make communities more stable during economic ups and downs, and the same proportion believe co-operatives are more likely to survive tough times precisely because members have a direct stake in their success.

This confidence extends beyond resilience alone. A strong majority of Canadians (81%) see co-operatives as part of the solution to some of Canada’s biggest challenges, including affordability and inequality. Even when it comes to change and innovation, areas where traditional businesses often claim an advantage, seven in ten Canadians (71%) agree that co-operatives are better equipped to adapt to change and new technologies.

NEW To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Canadians consistently see co-operatives as a stable path forward.



Base: All respondents (n=5,012)

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For many, co-operatives feel like institutions designed to endure not just survive the next quarter.

Key Finding #3: Canadians Want More Co-operatives – and Want In

Support for co-operatives is not passive. Canadians are clear: they want more of them and they want to participate.

Seven in ten Canadians (71%) say they would like to see more co-operatives operating in Canada.

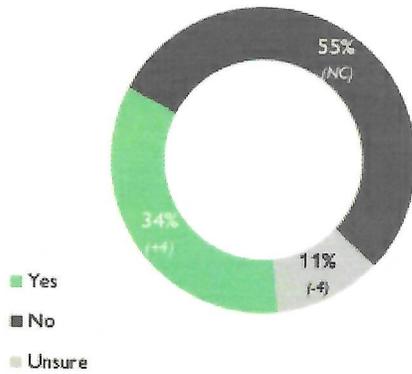
Today, **one-third of Canadians – more than 14 million people – are already members of a co-operative**, including approximately **250,000 Canadians living in housing co-ops**. Just as notably, **another third say they are interested in joining one**.

Taken together, this means **70% of Canadians sit within the co-operative universe** either as members or potential members. In a country experiencing growing polarization, that breadth of appeal is rare.



7 in 10 Canadians are currently or interested in becoming a member of a co-op

Are you a member of a co-operative business?



Among those who are not currently members
65% are interested in joining a co-op
meaning...

70% of Canadians sit within the co-operative universe.

Base: All respondents (n=5,012) | Note: results in brackets represent change from 2019

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Co-operatives cut across age, geography, and ideology in ways few other models do. They are seen not as partisan or niche, but as practical solutions to shared challenges.

Key Finding #4: Co-operatives Strengthen Communities: And That's What Canadians Value Most

Canadians consistently point to the same reasons why co-operatives are appealing as businesses and institutions.

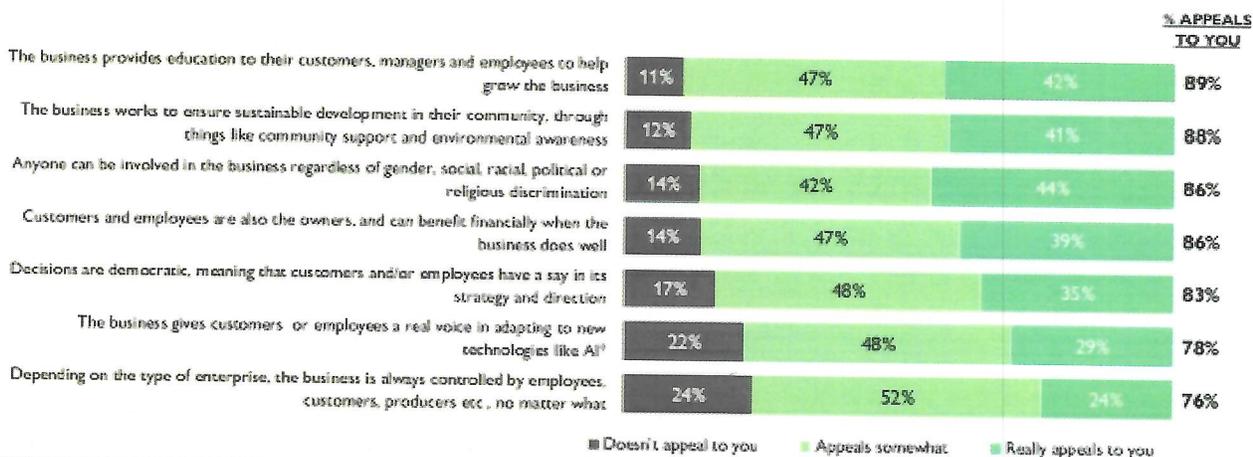
They keep money local.

They reinvest in members.

They provide services, like housing, that reflect real community needs.



Canadians find a number of co-operative attributes are appealing, namely the focus on building community.



Base: All respondents (n=5,012)

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In a moment of national fragmentation, co-operatives are widely viewed as connectors rather than dividers. Young and old, rural and urban, left and right, Canadians across the spectrum recognize co-ops as organizations designed to help communities look after themselves.

This community-rooted nature is not a “nice to have.” It is central to why co-operatives continue to earn trust at a time when many institutions struggle to do so.

Bigger Than Any Single Finding: Co-operatives as a Solution to Instability

Beyond any individual data point, this research tells a larger story.

Canadians increasingly see the wider adoption of co-operative values as **necessary** to fixing systems that no longer deliver stability or fairness. As economic pressure grows and traditional models feel less reliable, co-operatives are viewed as a credible path forward not a return to the past.

92% of Canadians agree stability comes when people have a secure home in a strong community- like the housing co-operatives can provide.

84% agree stability comes when people have collective ownership or shared decision-making in the organization that affects their lives.



And in today's Canada, that combination matters more than ever.

Methodology

The survey was conducted with 5,012 Canadian adults from November 5 to 17, 2025. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the Lucid exchange platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skews in the data from a single source.

The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 1.3%, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region.

Abacus Data follows the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements that can be found here:

<https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/>

About Abacus Data

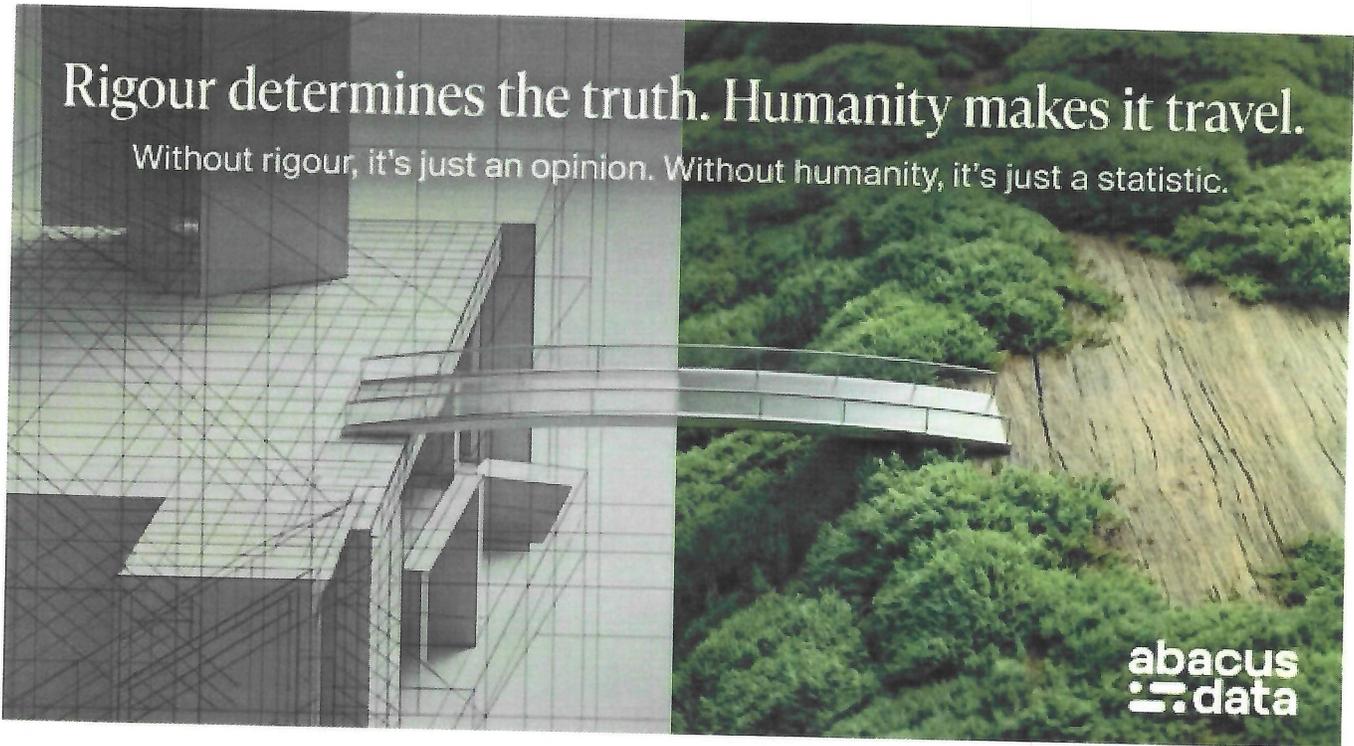
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If the following priorities were achieved, would that be a good thing or a bad thing for you personally?

Priorities Scorecard



Priority 1: Forge a new economic and security partnership with the U.S. and expand trade with reliable global allies



Priority 2: Unify Canada's economy by removing trade barriers and fast-tracking key national projects

Priority 3: Lower costs and help Canadians get ahead

Priority 4: Make housing affordable through public-private partnerships and skilled trade careers

Priority 5: Protect sovereignty by strengthening the military, border security, and law enforcement

Priority 6: Attract top global talent while keeping immigration at sustainable levels

Priority 7: Reduce government spending so Canadians can invest more in business and people to grow the strongest economy in the G7

[Base] n=2,421



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David Coletto, Oksana Kishchuk • December 2, 2025

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