



Levels of Municipal Taxation







Alberta Public Opinion Study – Fall 2011

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Methodology

-  **Population** The province of Alberta has a total population of 3,779,353 residents (Statistics Canada, July 1, 2011) approximately 77% of which are 18 years of age or older for an adult population of approximately 2,910,102.
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods and PSC150 – Local Government in the fall of 2011. Students interviewed 1,237 adult Alberta residents by telephone from October 1st to 2nd 2011 under the supervision of Canadian Studies faculty members Faron Ellis PhD and Marda Schindeler MA. Telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoCanada directories. We sincerely thank all participants who took time out of their day to respond to our inquiries. Further results from this study and results from past studies can be accessed by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl
-  **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the province of Alberta. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender and age).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data (Calgary ± 4.9 percentage points, Edmonton and immediate area ± 4.8 percentage points, North ± 6.6 percentage points, South ± 6.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20).
-  **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre and applications developed by the Open Source Learning Lab (OSLL). We thank James Manis PhD and OSLL for their efforts in working with us to establish and maintain the IB Commons Call Centre.
-  **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Alberta residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions arose out of the research interests of College students and faculty.

Alberta Opinion Structure on Municipal Government Taxation

When considering the levels of municipal taxation they pay in relation to the services they receive from their municipal governments, a majority of Albertans (49.9%) believe their municipal taxes are too high. Nearly one in every six Albertans (15.8%) thinks their taxes are far too high while 34.1% believe taxes are somewhat too high.

A significant plurality of Albertans (46.4%) believes that taxes are at about the right levels in relation to the services they receive from their municipal governments.

Only 3.7% think their taxes are too low, with 3.4% thinking they are somewhat too low and only 0.3% stating that they are far too low.

There is a remarkable consistency of opinion across all regions of the province on this issue. Unlike in 2010 when northern and southern Albertans were significantly more likely to think their taxes were too high than were their big city counterparts. Since that time, northern and southern residents' opinions have moderated towards the provincial average.

A similar consistency of opinion exists across partisan lines amongst supporters of the various federal and provincial parties. Although the patterns of support are consistent with expectations, differences are slight and most are not statistically significant.

Region	Calgary		Edmonton		North		South		Alberta	
	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010
Too high	50.0	50.9	50.7	51.6	49.7	61.3	48.7	64.9	49.9	55.2
About right	46.7	44.7	45.7	45.4	45.1	36.9	48.2	33.8	46.4	41.8
Too low	3.3	4.4	3.6	3.0	5.1	1.8	3.1	1.3	3.7	3.0
Far too high	15.9	16.8	13.6	18.1	21.0	19.6	14.7	18.2	15.8	17.9
Somewhat too high	33.9	33.9	37.2	33.6	28.7	41.7	33.9	46.8	34.1	37.2
About right	46.6	44.5	45.6	45.4	45.1	36.9	48.2	33.8	46.4	41.8
Somewhat too low	2.9	2.4	3.3	3.0	4.6	0.6	3.1	1.3	3.4	2.1
Far too low	0.6	2.4	0.3	0.0	0.5	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.0

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Alberta Opinion Structure on Municipal Government Taxation (2011) (%)

Region	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Too high	50.0	50.7	49.7	48.7	49.9
About right	46.7	45.7	45.1	48.2	46.4
Too low	3.3	3.6	5.1	3.1	3.7

Gender*	Male	Female
Too high	46.7	53.2
About right	48.8	43.9
Too low	4.5	2.9

Household Income	Under \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Too high	50.7	52.6	47.1
About right	46.2	44.8	47.9
Too low	3.1	2.5	5.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Too high	57.8	53.8	50.5	43.7
About right	39.3	45.2	45.4	51.5
Too low	2.8	1.1	4.1	4.8

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Too high	41.0	51.9	51.9	51.7
About right	55.6	44.9	44.3	43.6
Too low	3.4	3.2	3.8	4.7

Federal Vote	CPC	NDP	Liberal	Green	Undecided
Too high	52.1	44.1	48.3	50.0	45.8
About right	45.7	48.7	48.3	44.2	50.6
Too low	2.2	7.2	3.4	5.8	3.6

Provincial Vote	PC	NDP	Wildrose	Liberal	AB Party	Undecided
Too high	51.2	46.5	49.3	56.6	40.3	45.8
About right	46.8	47.2	44.5	40.7	53.3	49.2
Too low	2.1	6.3	6.2	2.7	6.7	5.0

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Alberta Opinion Structure on Municipal Government Taxation (2011) (%)

Region	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Far too high	15.9	13.6	21.0	14.7	15.8
Somewhat too high	33.9	37.2	28.7	33.9	34.1
About right	46.6	45.6	45.1	48.2	46.4
Somewhat too low	2.9	3.3	4.6	3.1	3.4
Far too low	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.3

Gender	Male	Female
Far too high	17.2	14.5
Somewhat too high	29.6	38.7
About right	48.9	43.9
Somewhat too low	4.0	2.8
Far too low	0.4	0.2

Household Income*	Under \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Far too high	21.1	14.5	13.2
Somewhat too high	29.6	38.2	34.0
About right	46.2	44.8	47.8
Somewhat too low	1.8	2.5	5.0
Far too low	1.3	0.0	0.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Far too high	24.2	18.8	13.0	12.3
Somewhat too high	33.6	34.9	37.7	31.4
About right	39.3	45.2	45.3	51.5
Somewhat too low	1.9	1.1	3.5	4.8
Far too low	0.9	0.0	0.6	0.0

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Far too high	12.3	12.0	17.5	20.9
Somewhat too high	28.4	39.9	34.4	30.8
About right	55.9	44.9	44.3	43.6
Somewhat too low	3.4	2.8	3.3	4.3
Far too low	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.5

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Area of Province (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Calgary	30.3	Male	50.5	Under \$50,000	27.1	H-School/less	19.8	18-29	20.2
Edmonton	32.0	Female	49.5	\$50-\$100,000	37.5	Some P-Sec.	17.9	30-44	24.8
North	18.0			Over \$100,000	35.3	Col-Tech-Grad	27.6	45-64	35.6
South	19.7					University Grad	34.7	65 or older	19.4
									Mean age = 47 years old

Provincial Vote (%)		Federal Vote (%)	
PC	42.0	Conservative	54.2
NDP	14.4	Liberal	11.9
Wildrose	14.2	NDP	19.7
Liberal	11.8	Green	5.6
Alberta Party	2.7	Undecided	8.5
Other Party	3.0		
Undecided	11.9		

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Question

Please tell me which of the following best represents your opinion about the level of municipal property taxes that you pay in relation to the services you receive from your local government. Would you say...?

- My taxes are much too high for the services I receive
- My taxes are somewhat too high for the services I receive
- My taxes are about right for the services I receive
- My taxes are somewhat too low for the services I receive
- My taxes are much too low for the services I receive