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Privy Council Office Continuous Qualitative Data Collection of Canadians' Views – Fourth Round of Focus Groups

FINAL REPORT
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Political Neutrality Statement

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Ipsos that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

1. Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The Privy Council Office (PCO) is the hub of non-partisan, public service support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet and its decision-making structures. Led by the Clerk of the Privy Council, PCO helps the Government implement its vision and respond effectively and quickly to issues facing the government and the country.

As an advisor to the Prime Minister, PCO brings together quality, objective policy advice and information to support the Prime Minister and Cabinet, including information on the priorities of Canadians. To this end, the Communications and Consultation Secretariat within PCO supports the Prime Minister’s Office in coordinating government communications and setting broad government communications themes and messages, in accordance with government priorities, as determined by the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Cabinet committees and the Clerk of the Privy Council. The Secretariat also works with PCO policy secretariats to advise and support Cabinet and its committees.

In fulfilling its mandate, PCO required an ongoing cycle of qualitative data collection to ensure that it has up-to-date representations of Canadians’ opinions on macro-level issues that are of interest to the government, such as their views on what should be the priorities of the government. Additionally, such research increases the Government of Canada’s understanding of emerging trends, and measures Canadians’ views on key national issues and policy initiatives.

Through the use of an ongoing cycle of focus groups, PCO is gaining a solid understanding of Canadians’ views as they relate to the most important issues facing the country; their perceptions of how the federal government can best address these issues; expectations of actions related to government priorities; and perspectives on how the government can most effectively convey its efforts in dealing with emerging issues. This research helps inform the development of communications messages, products and dissemination tactics to respond to priority issues. Additionally, the research allows the Government of Canada to develop and refine communications activities to meet the specific needs of Canadians with timely, up-to-date, easily understood information based on the current perceptions of Canadians in the requisite areas.

This fourth wave of ongoing qualitative research was meant to gather feedback from Canadians on select issues and policy areas that are important to the Government of Canada. The issues discussed during focus groups differed from one location to the next. Topics covered included:

- Legalization of Marijuana
- Health care funding
- Local Challenges
- Opioids
- Skills Training
- Canada-US relations

- Canadian Food Priorities
- Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights
- Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

Overview of Methodology

This fourth wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of sixteen focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between April 5th and April 27th, 2017. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- Winnipeg – April 5th
- Victoria – April 6th
- Windsor – April 11th
- Mississauga – April 12th
- Edmonton – April 24th
- Truro -April 25th
- Quebec City - April 26th
- Joliette – April 27th

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 151 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender, ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. Additional methodological details can be found in the appendix of this report.

This second wave of research is part of a continuous qualitative research project that will include a total of 144 focus groups to be held in multiple waves over the 2017 calendar year, with the option of renewing the cycle of research for two additional years. The contracted amount for this research project for calendar year 2017 is \$916,865.05, including HST.

Key Findings

Legalization of Marijuana

Participants in Edmonton, and Truro easily identified several aspects related to proposed legislation on the legalization of marijuana. Participants were aware of the legal age of possession and amounts of possession per individual. Aspects such as an increase in availability, quality, research and combating organized crime profiting from the illegal production of marijuana were identified as potential benefits of legalization. Several concerns were also discussed including accessibility, and lack of clear regulations for marijuana use while driving or when operating heavy machinery as well as possible impacts of marijuana consumption on the workplace. Those in Joliette were resistant to marijuana legalization and only softened slightly when a participant compared legalization of marijuana to alcohol.

Health care Funding

When prompted on the topic of health care funding during a discussion on government actions, comments were brief, and focused on discussions between the federal and provincial governments. Most participants understood the role of the federal government in provide funding, and only those in Windsor mentioned a potential increase in funding for mental health services. Participants in Victoria believed that the level of health care funding that that their province received was lower than other provinces, which they felt was unfair.

Local Challenges

Local issues varied widely between Victoria, Winnipeg, and Windsor. Concerns in Windsor were mainly about a ‘shrinking middle class’ and ‘availability of jobs’. These two issues were described as interrelated but important to resolve to ensure community cohesiveness and a strong local economy. Participants in Victoria were focused on ‘cost of housing’ ‘homelessness’ and ‘poverty’. Again, these issues were found by participants to be linked. Participants in Winnipeg mentioned a wide range of local challenges including the ‘availability of healthcare services’ ‘crime’ ‘availability of childcare options’ and ‘quality of roads and bridges’. It should be noted however that among those in Winnipeg, discussions related to local challenges largely focused on healthcare services, especially in relation to wait times.

Opioids

In Edmonton, Truro, Quebec, and Joilette participants were shown 4 video treatments. **‘What is fentanyl?’**, was seen as clear, impactful, and informative on both what fentanyl is, and the risks involved with its use. This concept was effective in piquing the interest of many participants, with several stating that this concept would be effective in getting them to visit the website for more information.

‘Overcoming an opioid addiction’ was described as supportive compared to **‘Opioid overdose’** which, according to several participants, had an effective call to action. However, this latter video led participants to question what the specific signs of an opioid overdose were. Last, **‘Prescribed an Opioid?’** provided clear information and a call to action among those on prescription opioids, but participants questioned why they would not be forewarned by their prescribing physicians of the risks of taking opioids.

Skills Training

Awareness of Innovation and Skills Training initiatives as presented in the most recent federal budget was quite low in all locations. Nonetheless, participants were in favour of several of the listed initiatives, particularly those explicitly mentioning skills training. Making skills and retraining programs available to more Canadians and allowing Canadians on Employment Insurance (EI) who qualify to go back to school to learn new job skills without losing their benefits were of particular interest to participants. These initiatives were deemed to be broad enough to appeal to a wide audience regardless of life stage or career path. Participants often recognized the positive long-term effects of such initiatives such as adapting to changing job markets and obtaining a well-paying job, though some wondered about the associated costs and questioned how these initiatives would be funded (e.g. would this lead to increased taxes for Canadians)?

Canada-US relations

Overall, Canada-US relations could best be described as cordial and respectful. Participants in Windsor, Mississauga, Winnipeg and Victoria discussed this relationship in terms of trade agreements, in particular NAFTA, as well as asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border into Canada. When discussion was directed to the latter, many participants described Canada as a welcoming country, yet several voiced their concerns about the number of individuals illegally crossing the border. Some participants expressed concerns related to the financial impact associated with the influx of asylum seekers, while others spoke in terms of fairness, specifically as it related to those refugees and immigrants who had taken steps to enter Canada legally. However, overall, participants in all locations agreed with the current Safe Third Country Agreement.

Canadian Food Priorities

Participants in focus groups were first asked to identify, on an unprompted basis, what they felt were key food-related priorities for Canada. Spontaneously, the main priority to emerge across locations was the need to ensure that nutritious foods were available at reasonable prices. Proper identification of GMOs was also raised across multiple locations as a key issue. Proper labeling regarding the origin of food products and encouraging local farming and selling of local food products were also mentioned to a lesser extent. When asked to select top priorities for the Government of Canada from a list of eleven key priorities, three priorities stood out as being most important across all locations:

- Access to affordable, nutritious food;
- The need to protect water, air and soil; and
- The need to ensure the success of farmers and family farms.

When asked to evaluate a series of five possible names for a future Canadian agricultural strategy, “Growing Forward / Cultiver l’avenir” was the most popular across locations. It was seen to be forward looking and positive, while also clearly hinting that this was an agricultural strategy via the clever use of the word growing. It was also viewed as simple and easy to read and pronounce.

Participants in all four locations were asked what they felt should be the main objectives of this national agricultural strategy. They were once again provided with a series of words that could be used to

describe the objectives and asked to select which ones they believed were the most important. Results were similar across all locations.

Four objectives stood out as being the most important: produce, innovate, prosper and grow. These were all seen as positive attributes that conveyed a certain level of optimism about the future, in line with abovementioned discussions regarding the name of the future national strategy.

Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights

Participants in Edmonton and Quebec had mixed reactions when asked about how Canadian passengers are treated by airlines. Several stated that they did not feel that airlines were necessarily customer centric. Many participants were in favour of the development of a bill or rights for and responsibilities, and reacted positively to a series of possible elements that could be included in an eventual airline passenger bill of rights. The establishment of uniform compensation standards for denied boarding, overbooking and lost or damaged baggage were particularly appealing.

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

Discussed solely in Mississauga, most participants were aware of mandatory minimums, however some were not clear as to whether they existed in Canada. Opinions as to the fairness of mandatory minimums were mixed, as groups had varied opinions as to whether the context of each situation should be considered for sentencing. When presented with an alternative to mandatory minimums where offenders instead completed a treatment program, participants were apprehensive about removing the mandatory minimum all together. When provided with information as to the discretion available to judges during sentencing, most participants felt comfortable with the current situation.

Note on Interpretation of Findings

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. These results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

Focus group research on government priorities seeks to provide a deeper understanding of participants’ views, often complementing quantitative findings gathered through survey research. Discussions allow for deep probing on key issues that is not possible with quantitative research. This type of information is essential for the Privy Council Office in its role advising and supporting the Cabinet and its committees.

2. Detailed Findings

This section of the report presents the detailed findings from sixteen focus group discussions held in eight different locations across Canada. The section is organized thematically in order to best reflect the varying discussions held from one location to the next. The moderator’s guide was adapted slightly from one location to the next in order to focus on various question areas. Each iteration of the moderator’s guide can be found in the Appendices.

Themes Addressed

Government Actions

Participants were asked to relate what they had seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada recently. Some participants referenced news related to their provincial government. Items spontaneously mentioned that relate to the federal government covered a broad range of issues and included:

- Marijuana legalization and testing
- Canada-United States relations
- Health care
- Islamophobia
- The Federal Budget
- Concerns regarding government spending
- Indigenous Issues
- Canada 150
- Syria
- Parental Leave
- Veterans benefits
- Sovereignty in the north
- Environment
- Free trade agreements
- Childcare program
- Canadian Identity
- Student Grants
- Border crossings by asylum seekers
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Pipelines
- Refugees and Immigration

Designated (prompted) topics discussed in the focus groups included:

- Legalization of Marijuana
- Health care funding
- Local Challenges
- Opioids
- Innovation Skills and Training
- Canada-US
- Canadian Food Priorities
- Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights

- Justice

Legalization of Marijuana

Participants in Edmonton, Truro, Quebec City and Joliette were prompted, during their discussion on government actions, to provide more details about recent news they had heard about the legalization of marijuana. Awareness levels across all locations was very similar. Several participants in Edmonton, Truro and Quebec City were aware that legalization is intended to come into effect summer of 2018, and that individual provinces will be responsible for deciding what the legal age of possession will be within their specific jurisdiction. Several participants also referenced individual possession limits, i.e. 30 grams and 4 plants. Participants in Truro for the most part were unclear as to whether these provisions were definitive or whether they were still tentative, with many stating that to the best of their knowledge there had been no final decisions from the Government of Canada on this.

Benefits related to legalization

In all three locations, participants were able to identify several benefits of legalization with relative ease. They spoke of ease of access to marijuana for medicinal purposes, improved quality/quality control of marijuana products, taking production and distribution out of the hands of organized crime, and more research on the social and health related impacts of marijuana use. Participants in Truro and Quebec City also noted that legalization of marijuana may also alleviate strains on the justice system, as fewer cases will need to be prosecuted.

Concerns related to legalization

Concerns regarding the legalization of marijuana in all three markets centered around two things: regulations and accessibility (primarily to youth). Several participants expressed concerns related to the use of marijuana while operating a motor vehicle. These participants wondered specifically about what procedures would be put in place to test for impaired driving as a result of marijuana use. In addition, many participants were concerned about how impairment in the workplace would be dealt with, particularly as it relates to the operation of heavy machinery.

Those in Quebec City also worried about how legalization could eventually lead to normalization and the likely impacts of this on youth over time. They compared this to smoking among youth and wondered how, despite their best intentions, governments would prevent access to those not of legal age. In addition, participants in both Edmonton and Quebec City expressed concerns related to what the eventual legal age for purchasing marijuana would be in their respective provinces.

Participants in Edmonton, Truro and Quebec City expressed concerns related to whether the Government of Canada, as well as its provincial counterparts, were adequately prepared for the legalization of marijuana in the proposed timeline. Many felt that there were still a lot of unanswered questions regarding the effects of the use of marijuana on individuals and its impact on public safety. Participants in Joliette tended to be strongly opposed to the legalization and only softened slightly when marijuana legalization was compared, by a participant, to alcohol.

Health Care Funding

During the discussion on government actions, participants in Windsor, Mississauga, Winnipeg, and Victoria were asked if they had heard anything about health care funding from the federal government. The discussion of health care funding was brief, as most participants had low awareness of specific federal government health care funding initiatives. Rather, many tended to take the opportunity to share personal anecdotes of their experiences with the health care system. Some participants in Windsor noted the increased federal government funding for mental health services and programs. The discussion among Mississauga participants focused on meetings between the provincial and federal government to discuss health care funding.

For the most part, participants in all four markets were generally aware that their provincial government had a frontline role when it came to health care delivery, while the role of the federal governments was to provide funding to the provinces.

Participants in Victoria expressed some concern with the level of health care funding received in British Columbia compared to other provinces such as Ontario, and felt they were not receiving an equal, adequate amount of money.

Local Challenges

Windsor, Victoria and Winnipeg participants were presented with a list of local issues and asked to highlight those they felt were the most concerning in their community. Responses varied greatly by location.

A ‘shrinking middle class’ and ‘availability of jobs’ were selected most often by participants in Windsor. Some commented that these two issues were linked as they felt a lack of good paying jobs in their community was contributing to a shrinking middle class. According to these participants, the disappearance of the middle class would have negative impacts both on community cohesiveness as well as on the local economy. Other issues of concern for Windsor participants included the aging population and the availability of health care services. When Windsor participants were asked if they felt any issues were missing from the list, several participants noted international relations with the United States and topics such as border policies and security, as well as taxes.

In Victoria, participants tended to focus on the ‘cost of housing’, ‘homelessness’, and ‘poverty’. A number of participants spoke of the challenges of being able to afford rent, while others worried about the longer-term prospects of affordable housing for their children. Many saw a direct relationship between the local cost of living, housing concerns, and increased poverty and homelessness.

More specifically, when discussing concerns regarding homelessness, participants noted how the number of homeless individuals in their community seems to have increased in recent years. Participants in Victoria also noted the increase in the incidence of drug overdoses which a few described as a local epidemic. Finally, several participants expressed concern with the aging population in Victoria and more specifically the lack of support for senior care and seniors’ health services. Those with young children spoke of the challenges of locating affordable childcare and the availability of good paying jobs.

When the list of issues was presented in Winnipeg the top issues were ‘availability of health care services’, ‘crime’, ‘availability of childcare options’, and the ‘quality of roads and bridges’. Participants felt that an investment in childcare would not only be beneficial for families but would act as a valuable investment in future generations. The availability of health care services was often discussed in the context of wait times in emergency rooms as well as wait times for other long-term treatments such as seeing a specialist. A perceived lack of timely investments in local infrastructure was the main reason for concerns about quality of roads and bridges. Other issues of concern included ‘an aging population’, ‘homelessness’, ‘cost of housing’, ‘poverty’, ‘drug overdoses’, ‘availability of jobs’ and ‘integrating immigrants into the community’.

When asked if there were any issues that were missing from the list participants suggested the anticipated impacts of upcoming marijuana legalization on their community, and racism - specifically islamophobia and racism against indigenous peoples.

Opioids

Edmonton, Truro, Quebec City, and Joliette participants were presented with a series of video concepts that might be used by the Government of Canada as part of an education campaign focused on opioid usage. Each group was shown two of the four videos; the two videos shown and the order in which these were presented was randomized from one session to the next. In each case participants were presented each concept twice; they were then asked to complete a short questionnaire for each concept viewed prior to discussing their views.

Overcoming an opioid addiction

Main Message: Know and understand the risks and dangers of opioid addiction and how to help.

Participants’ reactions to this video were mixed. While some identified with the dots and found that they effectively portrayed the unsettling or negative nature of addiction, others disliked the visuals, which led them to find the video ineffective overall, particularly for those in Truro. Participants in all sessions noted that this concept made no clear reference to fentanyl specifically; rather, it discussed opiates in general. As such, it did not create a sense of urgency among viewers and consequently did not convey a strong call to action. Some were confused as to what the main message was, since the concept did not clearly speak to the risks associated with opioid use. Only a few participants suggested that this concept would encourage them to visit the website for more information.

What is fentanyl?

Main message: Know and understand what fentanyl is and why it’s a serious issue in Canada.

The intended message of this concept was very clear to participants, who noted it was very serious, with strong, direct and clear messaging of the dangers associated with fentanyl use. Participants also felt the concept was effective in presenting important information related to fentanyl use including what fentanyl was and who was at risk. The visual representation of two grains of salt was very effective in conveying how miniscule amounts of fentanyl can lead of dire outcomes. Nearly all respondents said this concept would encourage them to visit the website for more information. Some participants noted that they perceived its target audience to be young people, and its sole focus was fentanyl, not the opioid crisis overall.

Opioid overdose

Main message: Know how to recognize and deal with an opioid overdose. Stay, don’t turn away.

Participants felt this concept was intended for those who do not use opioids, and was intended to inform them of what to do in the case of an opioid overdose. Participants felt the concept was simple and effective in communicating what to do if someone experienced an opioid overdose; they also felt that it did not stigmatize those who used opiates. Participants however noted that the video did not provide any information on how to distinguish the signs between someone experiencing an overdose and some other physical distress. Participants in Edmonton wondered if the concept would be more effective if it suggested actions specific to encountering someone experiencing an opioid overdose. Participants did not feel motivated to visit the website for more information though the primary message to call 911 in the face of an overdose was well understood.

Prescribed an Opioid?

Main message: Get the facts and take action to protect yourself from a possible opioid addiction.

The message participants understood from this concept was one of personal responsibility, specifically that you need to ask questions when being prescribed medication by health care professionals. To participants, this meant playing an active role in one’s own health care treatment, through personal research or asking questions of your doctor. Participants did not feel that this concept was targeted to themselves specifically, which made it unreliable for several. Fewer than half said they would visit the website .

Participants in Winnipeg, Victoria, Edmonton, Truro, Quebec, and Joliette were asked about their understanding of opioids, who is most affected and what the federal government can do in response.

When asked what they had heard about opiate use, participants were quick to mention fentanyl, overdose deaths, and an increase in opioid drug use both from legal prescriptions such as OxyContin and illicit drugs such as fentanyl and carfentanyl. There was widespread acknowledgment in all locations that this issue affects a wide range of people including those using prescribed opioids for pain management, unsuspecting youth and adults experimenting with recreational drugs, those with lower economic attainment, as well as those who are homeless. When asked to characterize the current situation as it relates to opioids, participants in all locations were quick to describe it as a crisis across Canada, though more prevalent in the West.

Those in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Victoria suggested the issue was due to an increase in the availability illegal drugs sold on the street, via social media, or distributed at parties, as well as physician prescribed opioids.

Some also noted the increase in opioid use could be linked to pharmaceutical companies advocating for increased prescription of opioids by physicians regardless of the potential long-term effects—most notably addiction. Others suggested that the primary responsibility for the current situation was individuals making poor decisions and subsequently becoming addicted.

Participants in all locations felt the most important role for the Government of Canada in dealing with this problem is public education. According to participants, education efforts should be two pronged:

firstly they should be targeted to the general public and should include specific education campaigns aimed at youth. Secondly, there is a need for increased education among health care professionals, i.e. those prescribing opioids, on the potential associated risks. Those in Winnipeg noted that this education needs to be candid even if it means messaging could be graphic.

Several participants also said current regulations related to opioid use in Canada needed to be reviewed and likely strengthened. Many felt this would help with limiting the over-prescription of opioids, as well as allow for a better control of the perceived influx of illicit drugs entering the country. In addition to strengthening the current regulator framework, participants also noted the need for an increase in treatment programs for those already affected, as well as more support targeted to mental health services as a preventative measure.

Innovation and Skills Training

Awareness of Recently Announced Measures

Participants in all locations were asked to discuss whether they had heard of any measures related to innovation and skills training that were announced in the most recent federal government budget, and if so, their opinions of these investments. Awareness was low in all locations; however, once presented with a list of initiatives, participants’ reactions were for the most part positive.

Participants in all locations responded particularly well to initiatives that referenced skills training explicitly. More specifically, participants felt that making skills and re-training programs available to more Canadians and allowing Canadians on Employment Insurance (EI) who qualify to go back to school to learn new job skills without losing their benefits were good ideas and would be effective in assisting those transitioning to another profession. Participants in Truro noted that a focus on skills training would have far reaching benefits for the workforce as a whole, not simply those that required post-secondary education.

Participants in Windsor, Edmonton, and Victoria noted investments in skills would be beneficial for both those entering the workforce as well as those transitioning to a new job or career. Those in Winnipeg felt that providing individuals on EI with the ability to go back to school while being financially supported would indeed allow them to upgrade their skills so they could be more successful when re-entering the workforce. In addition, those in Mississauga noted that providing individuals with the ability to gain new skills while on EI could potentially allow them to bypass typical lower paying re-entry jobs, in favour of securing higher paying jobs that would make it worthwhile to re-enter the workforce.

Participants in all locations also noted that such programs would have or could potentially be of use to them should they ever need to transition to a new career.

Reactions to the proposal to make post-secondary education more affordable as well as giving post-secondary students the work-ready skills employers need through ‘Work Integrated Learning’ were positive and seen as relevant. Some spoke of struggling to find a job related to their field of study upon entering the job market. Participants also noted that their lack of training in ‘soft’ and job applicable

skills could be a hindrance to securing stable employment. In addition, many noted that the costs associated with obtaining a post-secondary education were increasingly prohibitive and often resulted in unmanageable debt loads upon graduation. For these participants this, coupled with the inability to find a job, had the potential to act as a limiting factor in recent graduates’ upward mobility.

When participants were asked if they saw any drawbacks associated with the Innovation and Skills Training Initiatives presented, many questioned whether the country could afford the associated costs. Most assumed that implementing such initiatives would necessarily mean an increase in taxes, particularly those attending Winnipeg, Mississauga and Windsor sessions. In addition, those in Mississauga also were concerned with not wanting to burden future generations of tax payers with the costs of these initiatives.

Some further wondered whether the focus should in fact be on skills and the lack thereof, or if the problem was not simply a matter of lack of jobs. For these individuals, providing support for skills training would be ineffective without corresponding job opportunities.

Reasons to Invest in Innovation and Skills Training

After this initial discussion participants were asked to reflect on what they saw as the most compelling reasons to invest in innovation and skills training. Participants in all locations were presented with a list of potential reasons for these investments and asked to select those they felt were the strongest arguments. Statements presented were as follows:

- *So you have the training and skills to improve your career prospects while balancing family responsibilities*
- *Providing new skills and training to find and keep good, well-paying jobs*
- *Helping Canadians at all stages of their careers to adapt to the changing job market*
- *Unlocking our potential by upgrading our skills*
- *To make sure your next job is a better job*
- *Encouraging a culture of lifelong learning*

Again, statements that included references to ‘skills’ and ‘training’ tended to resonate more among focus group participants.

‘So you have the training and skills to improve your career prospects while balancing family responsibilities’. Participants reacted positively to the juxtaposition of the potential to improve one’s career prospects while maintaining a work-life balance. They felt skills training was relevant and applicable in today’s economy, and as mentioned above, relevant to individuals in various locations and stages of their career. Furthermore, the reference to balancing family responsibilities was appealing to most as it suggested that this initiative would be accessible to all, i.e. young families, working parents or those trying to re-enter the workforce.

‘Providing new skills and training to find and keep good, well-paying jobs’. For many participants, this statement was in keeping with the realities of today’s constantly evolving job market, whether it be because of the ever-changing nature of jobs, continual technological advancements or more broadly, changing markets.

‘Helping Canadians at all stages of their career to adapt to the changing job market’. Participants often said they could relate to this statement. In their opinion, today’s workforce is having to change due to technological changes, automation, and changes in required skills; consequently additional skills training would help them prepare and adapt to these changes.

‘Unlocking our potential by upgrading our skills’. Reactions to this statement were mixed at best.

‘To make sure you next job is a better job’, and ‘Encouraging a culture of lifelong learning’. These statements were less well-received; they were seen as too simplistic in the case of the former and not sufficiently grounded, in the case of the case of the latter.

Canada-US Relations

Top of mind issues

The following discussion took place in Windsor, Mississauga, Winnipeg, and Victoria. First, participants were asked if they had heard anything recently about Canada-US relations. Conversation in all locations focused on similar topics;

- Trade;
- The working relationship between the leaders of each country; and
- The recent news of asylum seekers crossing Canada-US border into Canada.

In Victoria, the discussion around trade largely focused on Canadian softwood lumber exports and to a lesser extent on exports of Canadian resources more generally to the US. Those in Winnipeg mainly discussed trade agreements such as NAFTA, as well as shared defence interests in the context of NATO.

When asked specifically to characterize Canada’s trade relationship with the US, participants in Victoria and Mississauga were more likely to say that it could and should be improved upon to the benefit of Canadians; however, these participants also felt that it was likely unrealistic to expect any significant changes. Participants in all locations were cognizant of the interdependency of Canada/US trade and the relative benefits for each of our respective economies.

Most participants felt that the Government of Canada struck the right balance between respectful diplomacy and advocating on behalf of Canadian interests when it came to dealing with the US. When asked if Canada should change its approach, respondents did not feel any change was necessary. Instead, they appreciated how things had been handled thus far and viewed it as a good business approach overall. Participants often said that trade, border security, and the environment represented the best opportunities for Canada/US collaboration. Participants in all sessions emphasized the need for Government of Canada to protect our natural resources.

Asylum Seekers and the Safe Third Countries Agreement

Participants were then asked to discuss the recent asylum seekers crossing into Canada from the US. Awareness of this issue was high in all sessions, with a number of participants referencing asylum seekers crossing the Canada/US border either in Quebec or Manitoba. Most participants believed that this phenomenon was the result of immigrants currently residing in the US becoming fearful of being deported to their homeland and therefore fleeing to Canada to claim refugee status.

When asked, what happens once they cross the border, most participants were unaware of the specific details, but assumed the asylum seekers were granted nearly instant access to Canadian services upon entry. Many viewed Canada as a welcoming place and were hesitant to state they supported the prevention of entry. Some however did express concerns about the perceived influx of people. Some participants, particularly those in Winnipeg, Windsor, and Victoria, wondered whether the government should be prioritizing aid for Canadians instead, and should focus on those following proper processes and entering legally, as well as those fleeing countries that were more dangerous than the United States.

Participants in all sessions also wondered about the numbers of those crossing illegally, as well as the potential cost for the federal government.

When provided with information on the Safe Third Countries Agreement between Canada and the United States, most participants stated they supported the agreement in principle, and a number felt that the agreement should also apply to those entering Canada illegally. These individuals expressed concern that the current approach was unfair to those who were following proper procedures and going through the appropriate legal processes, and appeared to favour those entering Canada illegally. This viewpoint was more pronounced among participants in Windsor, Winnipeg and Victoria.

Canadian Food Priorities

This topic was discussed in Windsor, Mississauga, Truro and Joliette. Participants in focus groups were first asked to identify, on an unprompted basis, what they felt were key food-related priorities for Canada. Spontaneously, the main priority to emerge across locations was the need to ensure that nutritious foods were available at reasonable prices. Many participants felt that unhealthy foods were often easier to find, and at cheaper prices, than healthier options. Fruits and vegetables were often used as examples by participants who felt that products labeled as “bio” were much more expensive than products without the designation. It made them worry that they had to consume food that may be harmful to them because they could not afford the healthier options. Aside from the price gap between bio and non-bio products, others also mentioned that packaged food or other unhealthy products were often cheaper than fresh options without high sugar, sodium or fat contents.

Proper identification of GMOs was also raised across multiple locations as a key issue. Many participants felt that it was important to know if the food they ingested had been modified in any way. Participants also looked for the government to ensure that genetically modified foods were healthy for Canadians and control the quantity and quality of GMOs in Canadian grocery stores.

Proper labeling regarding the origin of food products was also spontaneously mentioned as an important priority by some participants. Once mentioned, this need received unanimous support from other participants. Those who raised this issue mentioned that they did not always trust packaging information, which they believed often failed to specify the origin of a food item, or worse, was not truthful about it. They would like to see the Canadian government impose tough standards on companies packaging or selling food products and enforce these standards to the full extent of the law.

Encouraging local farming and selling of local food products was also mentioned as a key priority by a few participants. They felt it was important to help local producers stay afloat in what they viewed as a very difficult business environment due to international competition, while also believing that local products tended to be healthier.

Participants in all four cities were provided with a series of eleven key priorities and asked to select up to three items that they believed should be the top priorities for the Government of Canada. The eleven priorities are presented below, in order of preference expressed by participants across locations:

Top Tier	Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food in Canada
	Protecting water, air, and soil to ensure that Canada can produce safe and healthy food in the future
	Ensuring the success of farmers and family farms
Second Tier	Supporting innovation in the agriculture and food sector, including the adoption of new technology
	Reducing food fraud (e.g. misrepresentation of food/ingredients)
	Encouraging healthy eating habits
	Reducing food loss and waste
Third Tier	Helping to combat hunger in countries around the world where there is a need
	Strengthening the resilience of Canada’s food supply (to protect against weather, pests, and market downturns)
	Increasing food safety
	Increasing northern and indigenous food security, including access to affordable, nutritious food

Three priorities stood out as being most important across all locations. In line with the spontaneous answers described above, access to affordable, nutritious food was a top mention across all locations. The need to protect water, air and soil was a key priority across locations as well, with participants who chose it saying that this was the foundation upon which all other priorities rested. They believed that without clean water, air and soil, all other elements became impossible to achieve. Once again related to spontaneous discussions regarding government priorities, the need to ensure the success of farmers and family farms also ranked as a high priority for many participants. These participants spontaneously compared local farms to what they viewed as large commercial operations, often in other countries, that used industrial processes to produce foods of lower quality and that they believed did not contribute to the local economy.

Leading a second tier of priorities was support for innovation in the agriculture and food sector. Innovation was seen as a positive thing by most participants, who viewed it as a way to improve on current practices and help local producers increase crop yields at lower costs, while creating local jobs and benefits. Some participants felt that innovation should be aimed at making agricultural production more environmentally-friendly and not strictly at increasing production. Reducing food fraud was another priority raised by a few participants across locations. Discussions showed that “food fraud” was not a terminology commonly used by participants. They more readily talked about misleading or untruthful packaging than about food fraud per se. As discussed above, this issue was important for the vast majority of participants even if they did not always raise it on a top-of-mind basis. Encouraging healthy eating habits and trying to reduce food loss and waste were also part of this second tier of priorities.

Finally, four other actions ranked as lower priorities for the government. They included helping to combat hunger in other countries, strengthening the resilience of Canada’s food supply, increasing food safety and increasing northern and indigenous food security. Their lower ranking was not the result of outright opposition to any of the measures, although a handful of negative points were raised concerning helping other countries. A handful of participants thus mentioned that they wanted the government to focus on needs at home before those of people abroad. Despite these few negative comments, all four measures were mostly seen as being important, although not as important as the key priorities identified above.

Name of a National Agricultural Strategy

As part of the discussion on food and agricultural issues, focus group participants were asked to evaluate a series of possible names for a future Canadian agricultural strategy. They were provided with a series of five names and asked to choose which name appeared best suited for this national strategy. The five names tested were as follows:

- Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre canadien pour l’agriculture
- Canadian Agricultural Partnership / Partenariat canadien pour l’agriculture
- Growing Forward / Cultiver l’avenir
- Farm Futures / Agro-Avenir
- Pan-Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre pancanadien pour l’agriculture

The name “Growing Forward / Cultiver l’avenir” was the most popular choice across locations. It was seen to be forward-looking and positive, while also clearly hinting that this was an agricultural strategy via the clever use of the word “growing”. It was also viewed as simple and easy to read and pronounce.

The “Canadian Agricultural Partnership / Partenariat canadien pour l’agriculture” scored well in Windsor, Truro, and Mississauga, but received mixed reviews in Joliette. The word “partnership” was key for all participants who chose this name. It conveyed a positive message of collaboration between the government and other stakeholders involved in agriculture, starting with producers. Some felt that it displayed openness on the part of the Canadian government to work with its partners across Canada. A few participants in Joliette expressed negative views regarding this name because they felt it sounded like Canada was imposing its policies on Quebec. They expressed similar thoughts on other names that included the words “Canadien” or “pancanadien”.

The names “Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre canadien pour l’agriculture” and “Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre canadien pour l’agriculture” generated mixed reviews. They did not trigger a lot of enthusiasm, but were not rejected either. They were mostly seen as somewhat long and bland.

Finally, the name “Farm Futures / Agro-Avenir” received very different marks in English and in French. It fared much better in Joliette, where participants viewed it as upbeat and forward looking, with a clear indication that this was about agriculture at large because of the “agro” component. However, it did

not fare very well in English locations because it was readily associated with the stock market by many participants. They felt that a national agricultural strategy should not be associated with the stock market in any way. It made them feel like the policy or strategy was about competing on the stock market or “betting” on the future of the industry, both of which they viewed as wrong.

Objectives of a National Agricultural Strategy

Finally, participants in all four locations were asked what they felt should be the main objectives of this national agricultural strategy. They were once again provided with a series of words that could be used to describe the objectives and asked to select which ones they believed were the most important. Results were similar across all locations.

Four objectives stood out as being the most important: produce, innovate, prosper and grow. These were all seen as positive attributes that conveyed a certain level of optimism about the future, in line with abovementioned discussions regarding the name of the future national strategy.

A fifth word, connect, generated mostly muted reactions. It wasn’t viewed negatively, but it did not garner positive comments either, mostly because participants did not instinctively see the link between connecting and agricultural production. Finally, the idea that the national strategy should be about “competing” was not well-received overall. Many participants mentioned that they did not want to think about Canadian agricultural producers trying to compete against producers from other countries. Their instinctive reaction was to demand that local producers be sheltered from competition rather than being put into competition with others. They mostly wanted to protect the Canadian agricultural industry from what they viewed as unfair competition from abroad.

Airline Passenger Bill of Rights

The following discussion took place in Edmonton and Quebec City. First, participants were asked to broadly describe the treatment of airline passengers by Canadian airlines. Responses were mixed, ranging from inadequate to neutral. Those that felt the treatment was inadequate often equated their experiences to feeling expendable, not well respected, and taken for granted.

Participants were then presented with the idea of a bill of rights of airlines passengers and responsibilities of airlines from the Government of Canada. Overall participants reacted positively to this idea and said they would be in favour of such a bill. When asked about topics to be included in the bill, suggestions focused first and foremost on **the rights of airline passengers** rather than airline responsibilities. Participants offered a range of suggestions such as price caps or providing the actual price of the flight at the outset, compensation for flight delays and lost luggage, as well as measures to prevent over-booking. Other suggestions include regulations on animal treatment, clothing conditions and facial coverings in relation to verification of passengers. Participants felt the bill of rights should also cover off various aspects related to operations of airline companies such as transparency, and ensuring competition.

Elements of an eventual Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights

Participants were presented with a list of items which could be included in an eventual Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights. Participants were asked to note which items they felt were a good or bad idea as well as items they felt were the most important to address. From the list provided, items most often selected by participants included:

- *Provide clear information in plain language about terms and conditions*
- *Establish uniform compensation standards for denied boarding, overbooking, lost or damaged baggage*

Other items noted as important included:

- *Publish data about overbookings, on-time performance, number of complaints, etc.*
- *Establish consistent guidelines for the treatment of travelers during delays within the airlines control*
- *Clarify travelers’ rights to deplane to take another flight as a result of delays within an airline’s control*
- *Clarify the airline’s policy regarding events not in its control’ and ‘make policies surrounding minors (14 years and under) clear, and take efforts to seat them near their parents*

Name for an Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights

Participants were then asked to briefly discuss their preference for a name for such a bill of rights. Those in Edmonton overwhelmingly favoured the ‘**Airlines Passenger Bill of Rights**’, which they felt accurately described the subject and contents of the bill. Conversely, the use of the word ‘regime’ in “Airlines Passenger Rights Regime” sounded too militaristic. Most Quebec City participants felt the use of ‘Charte’ was appropriate, though a few offered other suggestions such as ‘politique des droits’, ‘règlementations’, ‘règles’ and ‘directives’. ‘Régime’ was not well received as an alternative to ‘Charte’.

Justice

Mandatory Minimum Penalties

The following topic was discussed in Mississauga. When asked about awareness of mandatory minimum penalties, most participants had heard of them, which they described as a minimum penalty for certain crimes, with the minimum penalty dependent on the type of crime. When asked if Canada has mandatory minimum penalties, a number were unsure, but some surmised that these existed for major crimes such as aggravated sexual assault and murder.

A short description of mandatory minimum penalties was then read to participants, and participants were asked for their reactions. Opinions as to whether mandatory minimum penalties made the criminal justice system more or less fair was somewhat split. Those who felt it rendered the system fairer, liked that the same penalty would be applied to individuals who committed the same crime, regardless of socio-economic background. In contrast, those who felt that mandatory minimum penalties are less fair commented that each individual situation would not be taken into consideration, and that this approach would result in lesser sentences. Regardless of perceptions of fairness, however, many participants felt that mandatory minimum penalties should not be repealed, especially for repeat offenders.

The moderator then provided information on an alternative to mandatory minimum penalties, which the court can impose if the offender completed a treatment program. Participants felt that this should depend on the severity of the crime - the more severe, the stronger the enforced mandatory minimum. Because they lacked information on alternatives or treatment programs, a number were reticent to offer an opinion. Some felt that mandatory minimum penalties should not be eliminated in these circumstances, but that the penalty could be reduced for those who completed a treatment program.

Participants were also informed of some instances where the Supreme Court has ruled that a mandatory minimum penalty violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because the penalties could apply to less serious conduct. Participants felt that mandatory minimum penalties should not apply for less serious crimes, though many suggested increasing the mandatory minimums for more serious crimes. Overall, participants felt serious crimes required a clear deterrent, and mandatory minimum penalties are an effective means of achieving this.

When presented with the possibility of repealing some mandatory minimum penalties, but also increasing maximum sentences allowed for certain serious crimes, most felt that this would be fairer, and thought that this would give judges more discretion in sentences. Participants were reticent to comment on what impact this approach would have on sentencing, but did not feel judges would interpret increasing the maximum as a sign they should hand out longer sentences. Overall, trust in judges was high, and the general sense was that judges would apply the law fairly based on the evidence presented in each case. Participants were not aware that the appellate courts have the ability to overturn sentences imposed by lower courts.

3. Appendix

Appendix A. Detailed Research Methodology

This wave of qualitative research is part of a continuous qualitative research project that will include a total of 144 focus groups to be held in multiple waves (up to 18 separate waves) over the 2017 calendar year, with the option of renewing the yearly cycle of research for two additional years.

This fourth wave was comprised of a series of sixteen focus groups, held between April 5th 2017 and April 27th, 2017. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- Winnipeg- April 5th
- Victoria- April 6th
- Windsor- April 11th
- Mississauga- April 12th
- Edmonton- April 24th
- Truro- April 25th
- Quebec- April 26th
- Joliette- April 27th

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 151 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities.

Group participants were meant to be representative of the Canadian population aged 20 years and above in all locations. They were recruited using a formal recruitment screening questionnaire administered via a telephone interview. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender (half men and half women in all groups), ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. The fully-detailed recruiting questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

The recruitment screener was devised by Ipsos in collaboration with PCO and in accordance with the specifications of the project authority, the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research (<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rechqual-qualres-eng.html>) and following all Market Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) standards and guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research. All groups were moderated by an Ipsos research professional.

In accordance with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research, and the MRIA guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research, Ipsos informed participants of their rights under Privacy Law. Ipsos provided participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups, and obtained their consent for audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence

of observers, explained the purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality including the fact that tapes will be destroyed according to MRIA guidelines, and that participation was voluntary.

As is standard with qualitative research done on behalf of the Government of Canada, the following conditions were also applied for all participants recruited for this study:

- They had not participated in a discussion group within the last six months;
- They had not attended, in the past two years, a focus group discussion or in-depth interview on issues related to the topic at hand;
- They had not attended five or more focus groups or in-depth interviews in the past five years;
- At least one third of the participants recruited for each group must never have attended a group discussion or in-depth interview before;
- They had a sufficient command of English (or French for the Drummondville groups) to fully participate in the focus group sessions; and,
- They or their family are not employed in any of the following:
 - A research firm
 - A magazine or newspaper
 - An advertising agency or graphic design firm
 - A political party
 - A radio or television station
 - A public relations company
 - Federal or provincial government

As with all research conducted by Ipsos, contact information was kept entirely confidential and all information that could allow for the identification of participants was removed from the data, in accordance with the *Privacy Act* of Canada.

Appendix B. Recruitment Guide

**Recruitment Screener
Government of Canada**

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Ipsos, a national public opinion research firm. On behalf of the Government of Canada we're organizing a series of discussion groups with Canadians to explore current issues of importance to the country. A variety of topics will be discussed and we are interested in hearing your opinions.

EXPLAIN FOCUS GROUPS. About ten people like you will be taking part, all of them randomly recruited just like you. For their time, participants will receive an honorarium of \$75. But before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix and variety of people. May I ask you a few questions?

- Yes **CONTINUE**
- No **THANK AND TERMINATE**

Participation is voluntary. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a “round table” discussion lead by a research professional. All opinions expressed will remain anonymous and views will be grouped together to ensure no particular individual can be identified.

S1) Do you or any member of your household work in or has retired from:

	YES	NO
Market Research or Marketing	1	2
Public Relations or Media (TV, Print)	1	2
Advertising and communications	1	2
An employee of a political party	1	2
An employee of a government department or agency, whether federal or provincial	1	2

IF “YES” TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THANK AND TERMINATE

S2) Are you a Canadian citizen at least 20 years old who normally resides in the [INSERT LOCATION] area?

- Yes 1 **CONTINUE**
- No 2 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

S3) How long have you lived in [CITY]? _____

TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 2 YEARS

S4) Are you the head or co-head of your household?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND TERMINATE

S5) Have you ever attended a consumer group discussion, an interview or survey which was arranged in advance and for which you received a sum of money?

Yes	1	MAX. 1/3 PER GROUP
No	2	GO TO Q1

S6) How long ago was it? _____

TERMINATE IF IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

S7) How many consumer discussion groups have you attended in the past 5 years?

TERMINATE IF MORE THAN 4 DISCUSSION GROUPS

ASK ALL

Q1) Could you please tell me what age category you fall in to? Are you...

Under 20	0	THANK AND TERMINATE
20-24 years	1	} ENSURE GOOD MIX PER GROUP
25-34 years	2	
35-44 years	3	
45-54 years	4	
55-64 years	5	
65+ years	6	
Refuse	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2) Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in the house with you?
[RECRUIT MIX]

Yes	1
No	2

Q8) DO NOT ASK – NOTE GENDER

Male	1	} ENSURE 50-50 SPLIT
Female	2	

Q9) If you won a million dollars what would be the first two things you would do with the money? (MUST HAVE TWO RESPONSES TO ACCEPT. TERMINATE IF FLIPPANT, COMBATIVE OR EXHIBITS DIFFICULTY IN RESPONDING)

TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT OFFERS ANY REASON SUCH AS SIGHT OR HEARING PROBLEM, A WRITTEN OR VERBAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, A CONCERN WITH NOT BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.

During the discussion, you will be audio- and videotaped. This taping is being done to assist us with our report writing. Also, in this room there is a one-way mirror. Sitting behind the mirror may be Government of Canada staff, including members of the staff from the department that sponsored this research, and by staff members from Ipsos. This is standard focus group procedure to get a first-hand look at the research process and to hear first-hand your impressions and views on the research topic.

Do you agree to be observed for research purposes only?

Yes	1	THANK & GO TO INVITATION
No	2	THANK & TERMINATE

******(IN EACH LOCATION, PLEASE ENSURE TWELVE (12) PARTICIPANTS ARE RECRUITED FOR 8-10 TO SHOW)******

[Read to Stand-by Respondents]

Thank you for answering my questions. Unfortunately, at this time, the group you qualify for is full. We would like to place you on our stand-by list. This means that if there is an opening in the group, we would then call you back and see if you are available to attend the discussion. May I please have a daytime contact number, an evening contact number and an email address, if you have one, so that we can contact you as soon as possible if an opening becomes available?

[RECORD CONTACT INFO]

[Read to Screened in Respondents]

Wonderful, you qualify to participate in one of these group discussions which will take place on, (DATE) @ (TIME) for no more than 2 hours. The Government of Canada is sponsoring this research. All those who participate will receive a **\$75** honorarium as a thank you for their time.

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held? It will be held at:

Location	Time	Date
April 5 th Winnipeg NRG Research Suite 804-213 Notre Dame Avenue	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 5 th , 2017
April 6 th Victoria R.A. Malatest 858 Pandora Avenue	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 6 th , 2017
April 11 th Windsor St. Clair Centre for the Arts 201 Riverside Drive West Erie and Huron Rooms	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 11 th , 2017
April 12 th : Mississauga Infoquest Research 6655 Kitimat Road Unit 12	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 12 th , 2017
April 24 th Edmonton Trend Research 10147-104 Street NW	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 24 th , 2017
April 25 th : Truro Holiday Inn Truro 437 Princess Street Birch Room (participants), Aspen (client)	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 25 th , 2017
April 26 th Quebec SOM Recherche 3340, rue de LaPerade 3 rd Floor	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 26 th , 2017
April 27 th : Joliette Château Joliette 450 St-Thomas, Joliette QC J6E 3R1 450-752-2525 Salon Bach: Participants Salon Chopin: Observateurs	Group 1 – 5:30pm Group 2 – 7:30pm	April 27 th , 2017

We ask that you arrive at least 20 minutes early to be sure you locate the facility and have time to check-in with the hosts. Prior to being admitted into the focus group room you will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement, failure to do so will result in you being denied participation in the focus group session for which you have been selected. Payment of the incentive is contingent on participation in the focus group sessions.

In addition, we will be checking your identification prior to the group, so please be sure to bring two pieces of government issued photo identification with you (i.e. driver’s license, health card or other). Also, if you require glasses for reading, please bring them with you.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. We have invited you to participate based on the questions we went through a moment ago, so we ask that you do not send a representative on your behalf should you be unable to participate. **IF FOR SOME REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL SO THAT WE MAY GET SOMEONE TO REPLACE YOU.** You can reach us at 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx at our office. Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the discussion.

What would be a good time to reach you?

And at what telephone numbers?

May I please get your name? ON FRONT PAGE

Thank you very much for your help!

Appendix C. Discussion Guides

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS (5 minutes)

- What have you seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada lately?
 - PROBE: Have you heard anything about health care funding?
 - PROBE: Have you heard anything about the **legalization of marijuana**?
 - Pretend I’ve been away from the country for a while. Explain to me in your own words what the government is proposing to do.
 - What do you think the impact of legalization will be? (*Go to white board and write down POSITIVE outcomes on one paper, NEGATIVE on another, and UNSURE on things people think will happen but they don’t know if it will be good or bad*)
 - There are obviously a lot of details to be worked out when it comes to legalization. Is there one thing you could hear in terms of new rules or procedures that would make you feel better about legalization?

Local Challenges (20 minutes) (Windsor, Victoria and Winnipeg)

HANDOUT:

- I’ve got a handout with various items. I’d like you to put a check mark beside each one that you think is a major concern in your community:

NOTE: IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER HERE FOR EASE OF REFERENCE; DOES NOT NEED TO BE PRESENTED THIS WAY TO PARTICIPANTS

- A shrinking middle class
- Ability of local businesses and industries to succeed
- An aging population
- Availability of affordable childcare options
- Availability of healthcare services
- Availability of jobs
- Availability of public transit
- Availability of services
- Cost of housing
- Crime
- Drug overdoses
- Homelessness
- Integrating immigrants into the community
- Level of Employment Insurance benefits for those who can’t find work
- Low high school graduation rates
- Poverty
- Preserving a clean environment
- Quality of roads and bridges
- Traffic congestion
- Young people leaving for opportunities elsewhere

Now I’d like you to circle the top 2 or 3 that you worry about the most

- Was there anything missing from that list? Something else

TIME PERMITTING - DISCUSS A FEW ISSUES THAT WERE CIRCLED:

- What *specifically* is the problem? *Why* is it a problem?
- Is this something that has been getting worse in recent years or has it always been a problem?

SKILLS (30 minutes)

- Has anyone heard anything about the federal budget?

If YES PROBE IN-DEPTH:

- What did you hear?
 - What initiatives are in it?
 - Did you hear anything about Skills Training in the Budget?
- I’m going to read some of the Skills Training initiatives the federal government announced in the Budget:

Make skills and retraining programs available to more Canadians

Allow Canadians on Employment Insurance (EI) to go back to school to learn new job skills without losing their EI benefits

Provide more Student Loans and Grants to Canadians to help them return to school to learn new job skills

Fund new work-integrated placements and co-ops each year to give young Canadians relevant work experience

- What do you see as the benefits of these types of investments?
- Do you see any drawbacks to these types of investments?

HANDOUT

- I’m going to give you a handout that provides short statements about why investing in skills training is important. In the first column, I want you to put a check mark next to the statement that catches your attention the most. In the second column, I want you to put a check mark next to the one that is the most relevant to you. And in the third column, put a check mark next to the statement that you feel is the strongest argument in favour of why it is important to invest in skills training:
- (AS NECESSARY: The one you select can be the same each time, or it can be different)

	Catches my attention the most	The most relevant to me	The strongest argument
To make sure your next job is a better job			
So you have the training and skills to improve your career prospects while balancing family responsibilities			
Providing new skills and training to find and keep good, well-paying jobs			
Encouraging a culture of lifelong learning			
Unlocking our potential by upgrading our skills			
Helping Canadians at all stages of their careers to adapt to the changing job market			

- Let’s go through these:
 - Which one catches your attention the most? How so?
 - Which one is the most relevant to you? How so?
 - Which one is the strongest argument? Why did you have that reaction to it?
- Did any of these rub you the wrong way and cause a negative reaction? How so?

OPIOIDS (25 minutes)

- Has anyone heard anything about opioids in the news? Can you explain to me what is going on in your own words?
 - Can you name any opioids?(PROBE on familiarity with “Fentanyl” if no one mentions it)
- What type of people do you think are most affected by this?
 - If vague answers, PROBE them to rank who they think most falls victim to overdoses on opioids – seniors vs. middle age vs. teenagers, homeless vs. low income vs. middle income vs. high income, drug addicts versus people who don’t use many illegal drugs

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

Opioids are drugs that include prescribed pain relievers and illegal drugs such as heroin and fentanyl. Misuse may lead to addiction, overdose and death. Recently, the emergence of fentanyl and other powerful illicit opioid drugs has led to an unprecedented number of deaths.

- What do you think has led to the current problem with opioids? Who or what is to blame?
 - *Do exercise where they rank the top 3 on this list they think are most responsible for the current problem (even if they don’t know much about the problem, ask them to try exercise based on their perceptions): drug companies making unsafe products, doctors not prescribing properly, gangs, poor border control, lack of policing, people making poor decisions*

- What should federal government do in response?
- *Do exercise where they rank top 3 courses of government action they think would be most effective:*
 - Education campaigns to inform public about the risks
 - Better regulation of harmful substances
 - More money for policing
 - Tighter rules around doctors
 - Better border controls
 - More treatment programs
 - Invest more in low income housing
 - Conduct research and collect better data about the problem
 - Allow more safe injection sites, to prevent overdoses

AD TESTING PORTION (Edmonton, Truro, Quebec City, and Joliette):

TEST 2 OF THE 4 VIDEOS IN EACH GROUP.

I’m going to show you two videos that could be used by the Government of Canada as part of an education campaign about opioids. I’m going to play the first video twice, and I ask that you don’t make any comments and then fill out the worksheet before we discuss it.

WORKSHEET:

- What was the main message of this video?
- RATE 1-to-5 scale strongly disagree to strongly agree + DK
 - This video catches my attention
 - This video is relevant to me
 - This video provides new information
 - This video motivates me to want to search/learn more
 - This video motivates me to talk with my family/friends about the dangers of opioids
- The message of this video is meant to be [MESSAGE]. Was the message of this video clear?

MESSAGES

Title: Overcoming an opioid addiction

Main message: Know and understand the risks and dangers of opioid addiction and how to get help

Title: What is fentanyl?

Main message: Know and understand what fentanyl is and why it's a serious issue in Canada

Title: Opioid overdose

Main message: Know how to recognize and deal with an opioid overdose. Stay don't turn away.

Title: Prescribed an Opioid?

Main message: Get the facts and take action to protect yourself from a possible opioid addiction

Overarching objective for all videos: To reduce the stigma that exists regarding opioid overdoses, that it only affects street people that "chose this lifestyle" or "are addicts"

- Did this video change the way you think about opioids?
- What are the strengths of this video, if any?
- What are the weaknesses, if any?
- Is there additional information you would be looking for?/would like to receive?
- After seeing this video, what is the likelihood that you would go to the website to learn more?

TEST SECOND AD AND REPEAT

- (IF NOT RAISED IN VIDEO DISCUSSION) Has anyone heard anything about opioids in the news? Can you explain to me what is going on in your own words?
 - Can you name any opioids? (PROBE on familiarity with “Fentanyl”)
- What type of people/Who do you think are most affected by this?
 - If vague answers, PROBE them to rank who they think most falls victim to overdoses on opioids – seniors vs. middle age vs. teenagers, homeless vs. low income vs. middle income vs. high income, drug addicts versus people who don’t use many illegal drugs [Goal: understanding the stigma related to opioid use, addiction and related deaths].

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

Opioids are drugs that include prescribed pain relievers and illegal drugs such as heroin and illegal fentanyl. Misuse may lead to addiction, overdose and death. Recently, the emergence of illegal fentanyl and other powerful illicit opioid drugs has led to an unprecedented number of deaths.

- What do you think has led to the current problem with opioids? Who or what is to blame?
- Is opioid misuse (and addiction and related deaths) an issue of concern to you? Why?
- What should federal government do in response?

CANADA-US (20 minutes)

- Has anyone heard anything about Canada-US relations lately? What specifically?
- Does Canada need to change the way it deals with the United States? If so, how?
- What are the most important issues for Canada and the US to work on together?

- Has anyone heard anything about asylum seekers crossing into Canada from the US? What have you heard?
 - As far as you know, what happens to these individuals after they cross the border?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:

If an individual comes into Canada through a designated port of entry at a land border and makes an asylum claim, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) assesses whether they can enter Canada.

If an individual illegally crosses into Canada (e.g. walks across a field into Canada), once they are in Canada, they are arrested by the RCMP and transferred to CBSA for an immigration examination. The individual can make an asylum claim.

- What do you think about the Government of Canada’s approach to dealing with these individuals? Does it need to change its approach? How?
 - PROBE: Better border security? Accept more asylum claims?
- Has anyone heard of the Safe Third Countries Agreement? Can you explain what it is?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

The Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the United States (U.S.) is part of the U.S.–Canada Smart Border Action Plan. Under the Agreement, refugee claimants are required to request refugee protection in the first safe country they arrive in, unless they qualify for an exception to the Agreement.

Since the 1980s, countries around the world have been using safe third country-type agreements as a way to address pressures on domestic asylum systems from the continued growth of global migration. In the mid-1990s, the United Nations Refugee Agency expressed support for these types of agreements.

- Some analysts say that if this agreement were repealed, there would most likely be an increase of individuals arriving from the United States making an asylum claim in Canada. Based on what you know, how do you feel about this agreement?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:

The Safe Third Country Agreement does not apply for individuals who illegally cross into Canada (e.g. walk across a field into Canada, rather than through a designated port of entry). These individuals cannot be returned to the US.

If individuals are eligible to make an asylum claim:

- most are released pending an Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada hearing
- they are able to access support/interim health services

A successful claim leads to protected person status and individuals can apply for permanent resident status.

FOOD (25 minutes) (Windsor, Mississauga, Truro and Joliette)

- What are the largest “food” challenges facing Canada?
- What role can the federal government play when it comes to food in Canada?

HANDOUT:

- I’m going to give you a handout that has several issues related to food. I want you to circle the three you feel should be the highest priority issues for the federal government.

Encouraging health food habits

Ensuring the success of farmers and family farms

Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food in Canada

Reducing food fraud (e.g. misrepresentation of food/ingredients)

Reducing food loss and waste

Increasing food safety

Helping to combat hunger in countries around the world where there is a need

Supporting innovation in the agriculture and food sector, including the adoption of new technology

Increasing northern and indigenous food security, including access to affordable, nutritious food

Protecting water, air, and soil to ensure that Canada can produce safe and healthy food in the future

Strengthening the resilience of Canada’s food supply (to protect against weather, pests, and market downturns)

Discuss a few of the more common answers. Prompt specifically on:

- What do you think of when you hear about “food fraud”?
 - Is this a problem the government needs to act on?
- What do you think of when you hear about “food safety”?
 - Do you have any concerns about the safety of food available in Canada?
 - IF YES: what are you concerned about?
 - ?
- Do you think food waste is an area the Government of Canada needs to act on?

HANDOUT:

- I’m going to give you a handout with two things on it. The first is a list of five names for an agricultural strategy the government could embark on. Cross off any names you really don’t like, and then circle the one you feel best sums up what you want to see in an agricultural strategy.

Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre canadien pour l’agriculture

Canadian Agricultural Partnership / Partenariat canadien pour l’agriculture

Growing forward / Cultiver l’avenir

Farm futures / Agro-Avenir

Pan-Canadian Agricultural Framework / Cadre pancanadien pour l’agriculture

- The second exercise lists words that could be associated with agriculture. Circle the two you feel should be the goals of a national agricultural strategy.

Compete / Competitionner
Connect / Echanger
Grow / Croître
Innovate / Innover
Produce / Produire
Prosper / Prosperer

- Why did you pick the name you did on the first list?
- What was it about the ones you crossed off which you didn’t like?

JUSTICE (20 minutes) (MISSISSAUGA ONLY)

- Are you familiar with Mandatory Minimum Penalties?
 - Can you explain to me what they are?
 - Does Canada currently have mandatory minimums? For which crimes?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

There are various offences in the Canadian Criminal Code that carry a mandatory minimum penalty. For example, some offences warrant at least a certain period of incarceration, such as certain offences involving firearms; sexual offences involving children; and impaired driving (e.g. for a second and subsequent conviction).

- Do you think mandatory minimums make the Criminal Justice system more fair or less fair?
 - PROBE: Why?
- For certain cases (e.g., drug offences), courts are able to impose something other than the MMP if the offender has instead completed a treatment program. What do you think of this approach? (Does this make the criminal justice system more fair or less fair?)
- There have been some instances where the Supreme Court has ruled that a mandatory minimum violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because the penalties could apply to less serious conduct. How should the Government of Canada respond?
- How would you feel if the Government of Canada repealed some mandatory minimums, but also increased maximum sentences allowed for certain serious crimes?
 - What do you see as the benefits of this approach?
 - What are the drawbacks?

- PROBE: This would give judges more discretion in sentencing. Do you see this as a good thing or a bad thing?
- PROBE: Do you believe that judges are able to make the right decisions concerning appropriate sentences for offenders before them?
- PROBE: Did you know that appellate courts (appeals courts) have the ability to overturn sentences imposed by lower courts in certain cases?
- In crimes where the mandatory minimum is repealed but the maximum is increased, do you think this would lead to longer or shorter sentences?
 - PROBE: Do you think judges would see increasing the maximum as a signal that they should hand out longer sentences?

AIRLINES (25 minutes) (Edmonton and Quebec City)

- Broadly speaking, how do you feel Canadian airlines treat their passengers?
- What do you think about the idea of the Government of Canada outlining the rights of airline passengers and responsibilities of airlines? Is this needed?
 - What would you want to see included in such a Bill?

HANDOUT:

- The following is a list of items which could be included in an airline Bill of Rights. Please circle thumbs up or thumbs down for each if you think it is a good idea or a bad idea. If you don’t understand the statement, circle the question mark. If you don’t feel strongly about it one way or the other, just leave it blank. Then circle up to three items listed here which you feel are the most important:
 - Establish uniform compensation standards for denied boarding, overbooking, lost or damaged baggage.
 - Provide clear information in plain language about terms and conditions (e.g. your rights and what to do if baggage lost, flight cancelled, etc).
 - Establish consistent guidelines for the treatment of travellers during delays within the airline’s control.
 - Clarify travellers’ rights to de-plane to take another flight as a result of delays within an airline’s control (e.g. plane stuck on runway for long period due to mechanical problems)
 - Publish data about overbookings, on-time performance, number of complaints, etc.
 - Make policies surrounding minors (14 years and under) clear, and take efforts to seat them near their parents.
 - Establish standards for the transportation of musical instruments.
 - Clarify the airline’s policy regarding events not in its control.

- Make a policy that only a traveller who was impacted by a carrier can file complaints to the Canadian Transportation Agency

CLARIFY AS NEEDED:

- *These rules would impact all airlines travelling to, from, and within Canada*
 - *“Events in the airlines control” would include flight delays due to mechanical problems, slow flight crew turnover, etc.*
 - *“Events not in the airline’s control” would include things like delays due to bad weather.*
-
- First, were there any things on this list you found confusing?
 - How did others interpret this statement?
 - Was there anything on this list you didn’t like? Why?
 - Of the three you circled, which one would you consider the most important? Why?
 - Which of the following names do you think better sums up the type of initiatives we talked about: “Airline Passengers Bill of Rights” or “Air Passengers Rights Regime”?
 - Would something else work better?

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)