

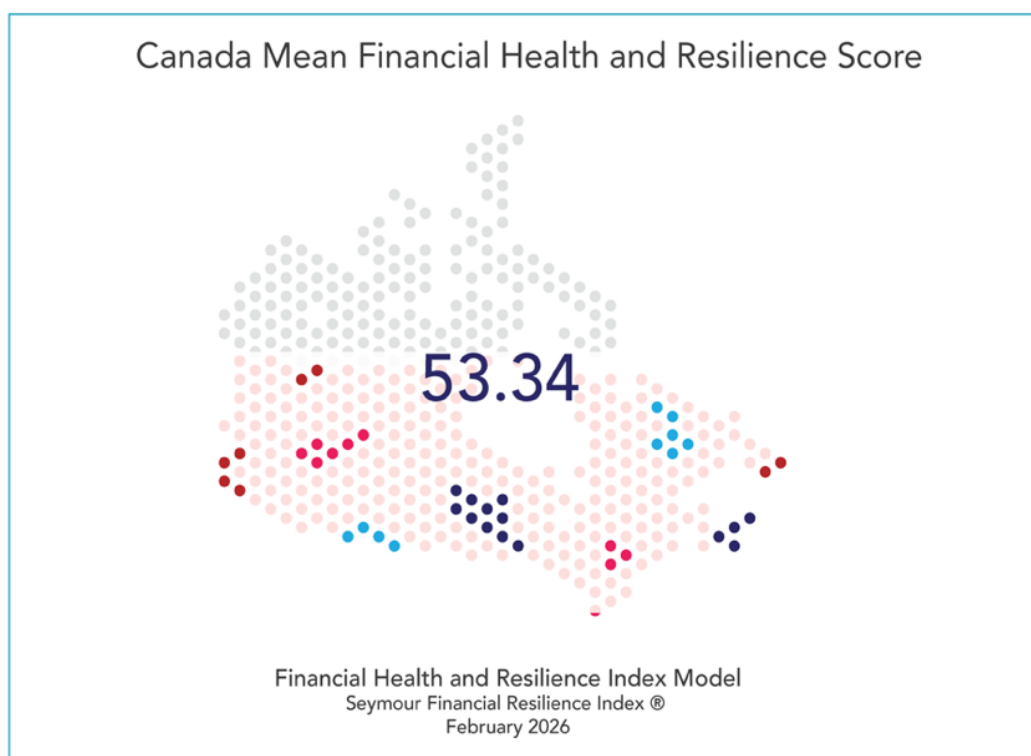
The Canada Mean Financial Health and Resilience Score of 53.34 Highlights Increased Household Financial Vulnerability for Middle-Income Families with Children

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The Financial Resilience Institute's sixteenth Financial Health and Resilience Index provides a comprehensive view into the financial health and resilience of Canadian individuals and households. The world-leading Index measures the financial health and resilience of individuals and households at multiple levels, with tracking currently completed three times a year by our non-profit, a leading independent authority on financial resilience and financial well-being in Canada and globally. Based on the peer-reviewed Index, the Canada Mean Financial Health and Resilience Score is 53.34 as of February 2026.

This Index Release Report is accompanied by a complementary report with trended data, 'The Financial Health and Resilience of Canadian Individuals and Households' (May 5, 2026), published [here](#).

The Index measures and tracks the financial health and resilience of individuals and households across nine behavioural, sentiment and resilience indicators at the national, provincial and individual household levels in Canada, with applications in other countries. It is the first and most robust Index of its kind, with a pre-pandemic baseline of February 2020, and is currently being used by many organizations. It was recently presented at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Financial Health (UNSGSA) conference in Basel Switzerland in November 2025: upon invitation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), BIS and UNSGSA.



Financial resilience is defined and measured as a household's *ability to withstand financial hardship, stressors, and shocks as a result of unplanned life events*. This is measured across nine behavioural (financial health), financial resilience and sentiment (financial stress) [indicators](#) at the national, provincial, segment and individual household levels in Canada, with application for other countries [1,2].

As of February 2026, the nine Index indicators within the regression model account for 66% of the variance in the financial resilience construct. The Index has shown significant stability over many years with its multiple releases and model validation.

Financial Health and Resilience Index Model

Seymour Financial Resilience Index®

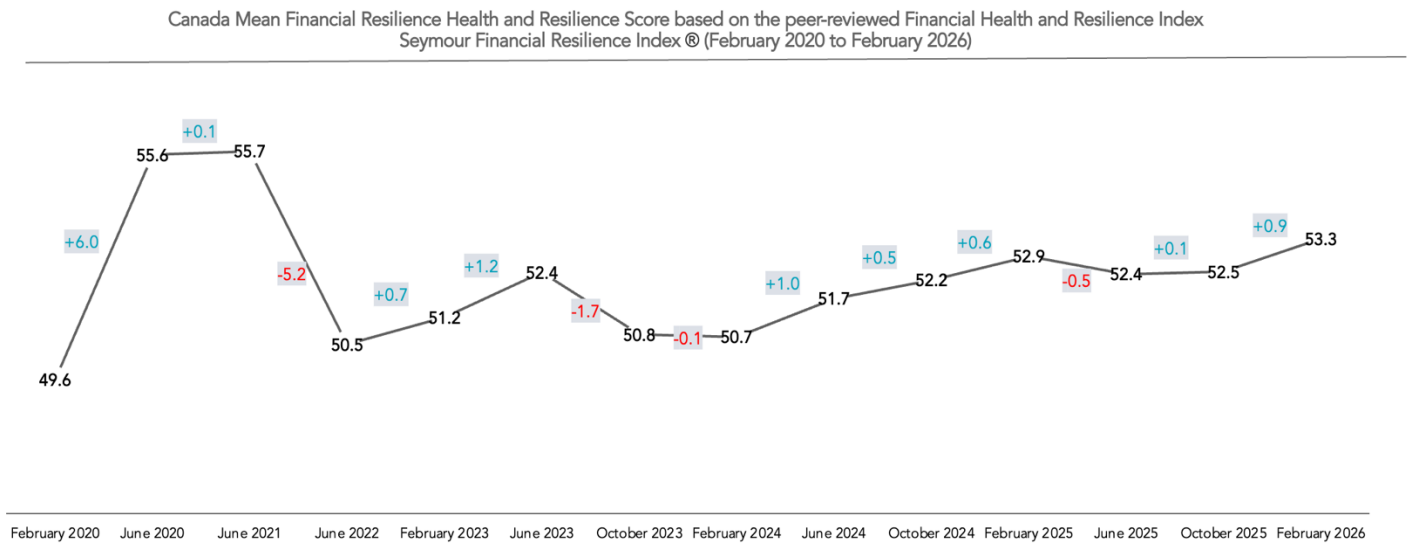


[1] The Institute's peer-reviewed [Financial Health and Resilience Index Model](#) complements the Institute's national Financial Well-Being Studies Instrument (2017-2026) with a robust [Index development methodology](#) and validation. The Financial Well-Being Studies were conducted three times a year from February 2020 to date and going forward will be conducted once or twice annually with 5000 primary and joint financial decision makers from a representative sample of the population by household income, age province and gender.

[2] 'Extremely Vulnerable' households have a financial resilience score of 0 to 30; 'Financially Vulnerable' households a score of 30.01 to 50; 'Approaching Resilience' households a score of 50.01 to 70, and 'Financially Resilient' households a score of 70.01 to 100.



The Index shows no significant improvements or changes for Canadians at the national level, with February 2026 Index data collection four days before the Middle East War started as a global shock



The Canada Mean Financial Health and Resilience Score is 0.47 Index points higher compared to a year ago; 2.77 Index points lower compared to June 2021 and 3.8 Index points higher than the pre-pandemic baseline of February 2020.

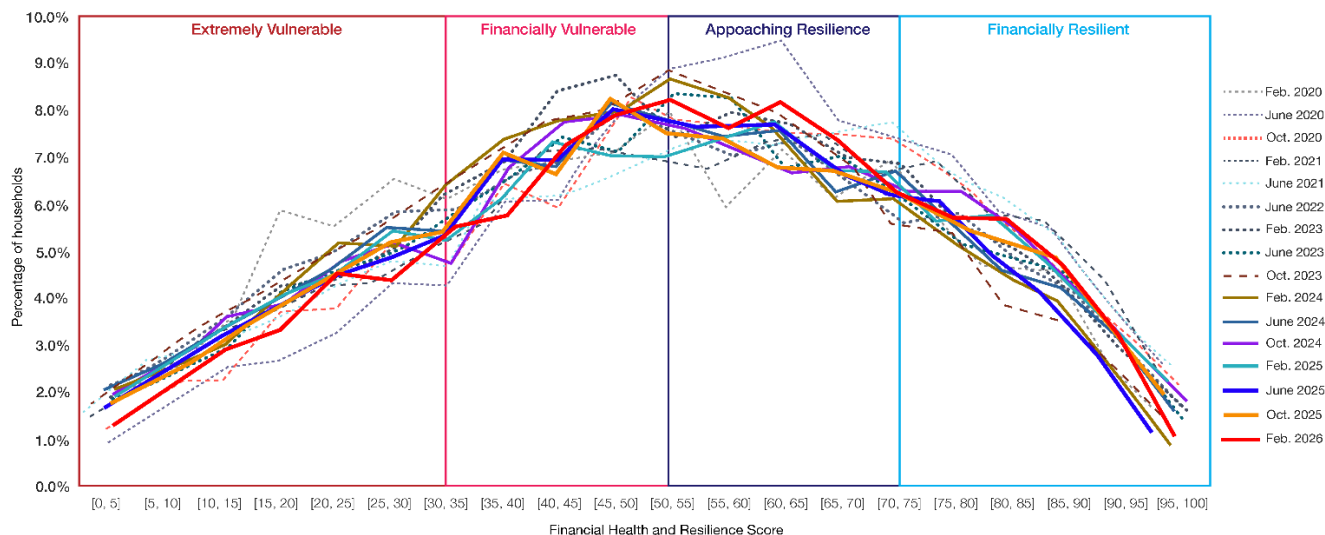
Canadians are now more financially vulnerable compared to during the pandemic, when swift and significant COVID-19 financial relief was provided by the government and significantly changed consumer and financial behaviours amid lockdowns.

Trended Index data and analytics are available on the [financial resilience and financial well-being of Canadians during the COVID-19](#) pandemic through the report published with Statistics Canada in September 2021 and other published [reports](#).

Financial Health and Resilience Index Model Distribution: February 2020 to February 2026

Canada Mean Financial Health and Resilience Score: 53.34

Financial Health and Resilience Index Model
Seymour Financial Resilience Index ®
February 2026



Building a more Resilient Canada: The Need for a National Financial Health and Resilience Strategy

The Financial Health and Resilience Index Model data and independent reports published by our organization since 2017 highlight that there has not been significant improvements or changes for Canadians at the national level.

As economic and social challenges become increasingly complex, Canada has an opportunity to lead through a National Financial Health and Resilience Strategy that strengthens the resilience, well-being and prosperity of individuals, families, businesses and communities over the medium to long term. By focusing on middle-income working families, women, younger Canadians, future generations and more vulnerable populations facing barriers, such a strategy can help improve financial outcomes while advancing broader economic, social and environmental goals. In doing so, it can support a more resilient, equitable, inclusive and sustainable Canada - one that is better equipped to withstand shocks, seize opportunities and thrive in an increasingly uncertain world.

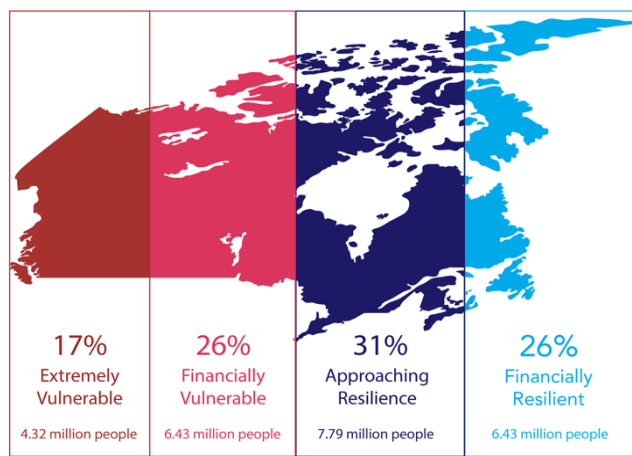
The Middle East War May Add Pressure to Household Financial Resilience

Data collection for the February 2026 Financial Well-Being Study was from February 9th to February 24th, 2026, with the Middle East War officially starting just four days later on February 28, 2026. The war is contributing to rising gas prices and is being felt within the Canadian economy and other economies around the world. As published in the article by Jeremy Kronick, President and CEO, C.D. Howe Institute in the *Globe and Mail*, '[with war, trade woes and a shrinking population, Bank of Canada was right to hold rates](#)' (April 29, 2026), amid supply chain disruptions resulting from the war, weak domestic demand, trade uncertainty and slowing population growth. As outlined in the article, this means the Bank of Canada was right to hold its policy rates constant in April 2026, despite the upward blip in inflation to 2.4 per cent in March, up from 1.8 per cent in February 2026. The external macro-economic shock of the Middle East War has certainly created a macro-economic shock, and constrained supply by disrupting oil and fertilizer flows, raising input costs and intensifying inflationary pressures.



These developments have put additional pressure on food and gas prices for households, which were already rising fast, with the high cost of living causing strain for households overall, and in particular those with moderate or lower incomes. Supply chain disruptions can increase energy costs and uncertainty. Weakening demand seen in declining manufacturing output, softer housing markets and falling core employment for people aged 25 to 54 years old by 50,000 also point toward slower growth and put cause financial stresses and challenges for households. Compounding this, preliminary estimates from Statistics Canada show that Canada's population decreased from January 2025 to January 2026: the first yearly drop in population since Confederation, with a slowing population affecting the demand and supply side of the economy. While the long-term economic impacts remain uncertain, leading economic commentary suggests the conflict could contribute to higher energy costs, inflationary pressures, supply-chain disruptions and economic uncertainty, with the potential to increase financial vulnerability for some households in Canada and globally.

Financial Resilience Segment Distribution as of February 2026



26% of Canadian households are 'Financially Resilient' (with a financial health and resilience score of 70.01-100), representing approximately 6.43 million people. Meanwhile, 31% are 'Approaching Resilience', 26% are 'Financially Vulnerable,' and 17% are 'Extremely Vulnerable,' with there being a slight decrease in 'Extremely Vulnerable' and 'Financially Vulnerable' households combined in the past year – with a slight increase in 'Approaching Resilience' households [1].

As of February 2026, 34% of households have a negative or zero savings rate and 54% of households have a liquid savings buffer of 3 months or more: significantly lower than 64% of households reporting the same in June 2017.

Affordability and cost-of-living challenges are causing strain for some households, with 53% of households overall living paycheck to paycheck as of February 2026. As of February 2026, 80% of households report that the increase in the cost of living has outpaced any income growth they have seen in their household in the past year.

With some households challenged in terms of their household income and income volatility relative to their need to pay for more costly everyday expenses, some are struggling with their debt manageability, with some increasing their borrowing in the past year or drawing down on savings to pay for everyday expenses. As of February 2026, 24% of households completely agree their debt feels unmanageable, similar to 23% of households reporting the same in February 2025 and 2021. A gap between living costs and income growth is eroding households' financial resilience overall even as the broader liquid savings buffers and household savings rates appear more stable. Additionally, just under one in five households report their income varies significantly from month to month and household income increases are nuanced. Job insecurity, life events and other challenges continue to impact households unequally, with significant differences by lifestage, financial resilience segment, province and for key populations.

Despite difficulties, in particular for households facing systemic barriers and/or unplanned life events such as reduced work or divorce, Canadian households overall report disciplined, healthy financial behaviours, contributing to their financial resilience. These include minimizing or reducing non-essential expenses, saving, and planning ahead financially for one's upcoming and unexpected expenses or to save for long-term savings goals. As outlined in the Institute's ['Financial Planning as a Pathway to Financial Resilience' Report](#) (July 2023) and this Index Release, households that report planning ahead financially have a Mean Financial Resilience Score that is more than double those that report they not planning ahead financially.

[1] Tended Index segment distribution and other data is available in the February 2026 Index Complementary Release Report (May 2026).

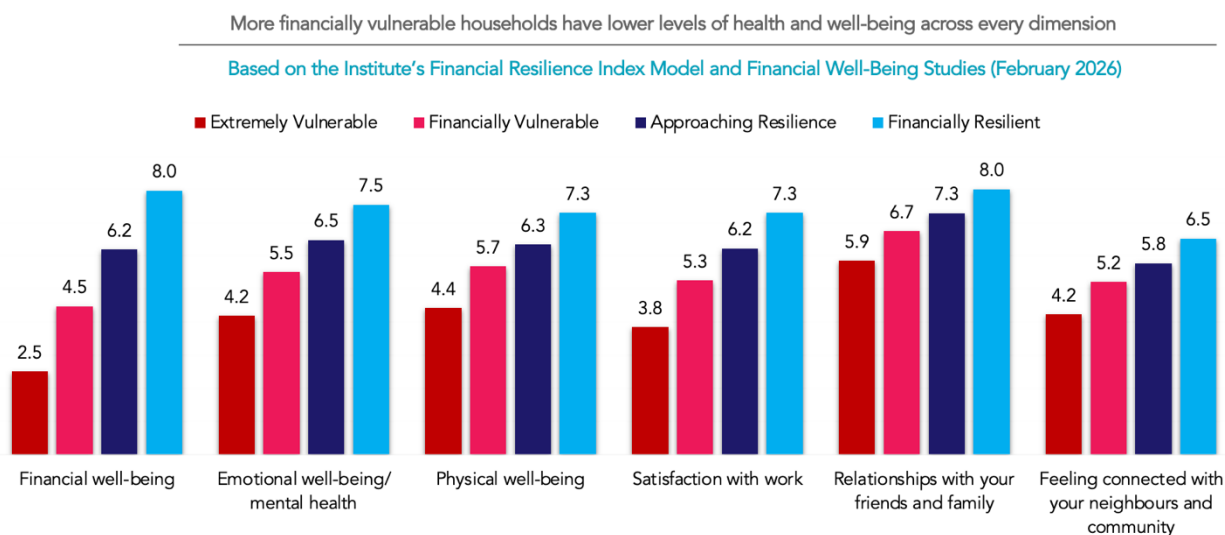
Financial resilience is growing in importance for all life stages, and in particular for Baby Boomers

The concept of financial resilience is highly relevant, with this growing in relevance for households across all life stages, and in particular for Baby Boomers over the past year. As of February 2026, 76% of households overall agree or completely agree that they want to better understand their financial resilience and how they can improve it [1]. This is the case for 83% of Millennials, 84% of Gen Z, 75% of Gen X households, and 64% of 'Baby Boomers'.

Amid increased challenges in household financial resilience, including from an investment and saving perspective, as a result of more volatile stock markets in 2025 and recent months, interestingly, the proportion of Baby Boomers that report wanting to better understand their financial resilience has risen from 54% to 64% over the past year, as outlined in the complementary Index Release deck (May 5, 2026). This is assumed to be of more relevance for this population, especially as market volatility and policy uncertainty, amongst other challenges, cause concerns and impact the financial resilience of those with hard-earned savings and investments [2].

As reported for several years, financial stress negatively impacts the financial well-being and every well-being dimension for Canadians, and in particular those who are more financially vulnerable. This is the social impact case for Policymakers to invest in peoples' financial health, resilience and financial well-being, with multiple financial and social benefits of national financial health and well-being strategies, policy and support.

A more strategic focus on Canadians' financial health and financial well-being can strengthen quality of life, mental and physical health, support the productivity and engagement of employees, help reduce health and other costs for those who are more financially vulnerable and deliver other positive economic and social outcomes [3].



Source: Financial Resilience Institute, February 2026 Financial Resilience Index Model and Financial Well-Being Studies
Seymour Financial Resilience Index ®

[1] Individual households can track their individual financial resilience score and understand how they compared to Canadians of a similar age and household income to them based on the Index, made available through the [free individual Financial Resilience Score Tool](#) and articles and resources.

[2] December 2025 and [April 2026 Bloomberg articles](#), amongst others, highlights that notes that early-year volatility" materially shaped market outcomes in 2025, with extreme swings in the CBOE Volatility Index, which tracks expected volatility in the US stock market over the next 30 days. Volatility Index spokes with VIX scores in the 40s and over 50s - derived from options prices on the S&P 500 Index - highlights market's expectations of turbulent stock prices in the near future. Other [Bloomberg analysis](#) and articles highlight tariff shocks and policy uncertainty driving volatility across asset classes, with sharp episodic spikes, frequent macro-driven swings as a result of tariffs, geopolitics and AI disruption, and persistently elevated uncertainty, even when markets rebound.

[3] This is why the Institute has released its robust, open-source subjective Financial Well-Being Index and Tool, linked optionally to an Overall Personal Well-Being Score for Canadians and global citizens. More details are available on our website [here](#).



Quebec households improve their financial health and resilience, while other provinces are more challenged

Household financial resilience varies by province as well as by household segment, with nuanced household financial resilience data is valuable to allow provincial policymakers, financial institutions and other organizations to make more timely and targeted policy decisions for their citizens and customers, as outlined in multiple reports and three Intelligence Memos published by Eloise Duncan through the C.D. Howe Institute in 2021, 2023 and 2025 [1,2,3].

As of February 2026, Quebec leads the way with a Provincial Mean Financial Resilience Score of 56.6, up over 2 Index points from four months prior in October 2025 (54.1). Newfoundland and Labrador showed improvements in their Provincial Mean Financial Resilience Scores, while by contrast, Saskatchewan and B.C. showed decreases in their scores compared to a year ago. Provincial variations highlight the importance of disaggregated data for informing targeted regional policy interventions, plus more nuanced evidence-based support by Financial Institutions for their customers in different provinces, while tracking outcomes that matter over the short, medium and longer-term.

Middle Income Families with Children are more Financially Vulnerable

Latest Index data highlights a concerning increase in the household financial vulnerability of Middle-Income Families with Children under 18 years old, plus no improvement for Middle-Income Working Families without children or Single Parents.

Specifically, the Mean Financial Resilience Score of households with children under 18 and a household income between \$75,000 and \$125,000 is 48.3 as of February 2026, with these households 'Financially Vulnerable' [4,5,6,7]. This decrease is almost 10 percentage lower compared to during the pandemic in June 2021 (57.8). The proportion of 'Financially Resilient' Middle Income Working Families with Children has decreased from 30% of households in June 2021 to just 13% of households as of February 2026.

There has also not been an improvement in the household financial resilience of Middle-Income Working Families without children in the last year. The Mean Financial Resilience Score of Single Parents similarly declined from 43.2 in June 2021 to 41.5 in February 2026, with this flat over the year and them still requiring more targeted support from policymakers and others.

[1] Financial Resilience Index: a New Tool to Refine Income Support (October 28, 2021). <https://cdhowe.org/publication/eloise-duncan-financial-resilience-index-new-tool-refine-income-support/>

[2] Financial Resilience Index Highlights Provincial Differences: Quebec a Key Leader (March 21, 2023) <https://cdhowe.org/publication/eloise-duncan-financial-resilience-index-highlights-provincial-differences/>. Provincial Mean Financial Resilience Score data are available through Haver Analytics.

[3] Renters becoming more financially vulnerable: emerging implications (October 28, 2025) <https://cdhowe.org/publication/renters-becoming-more-financially-vulnerable-emerging-implications/>

[4] Working Canadians have a total reported household income from all sources between \$75,000 and \$125,000 in 2025 (before taxes and deductions.) This includes individuals and households working full time, part time, self-employed and students with a full or part time job.

[5] Canadian households with children under 18 years old have total reported household income between \$75,000 and \$125,000 in 2025 before taxes and deductions. This includes households that may or may not have a spouse working full time or part time.

[6] Sources of income include: wages/salaries from employer(s), self-employment earnings, government and private pensions, rental income, spousal and/or child support payments received.

[7] The latest Statistics Canada release (Canadian Income Survey, 2024 to April 2026) does not publish a single headline before-tax median household income figure in the Daily release in the same way it does for after-tax income. However, it reports Median market income (before taxes, excluding transfers) of \$69,800.00, with Median government transfers: \$10,300. Combined, this implies a median total income before taxes of approximately \$80,100 for Canadian families and unattached individuals in 2024. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260429/dq260429a-eng.htm>

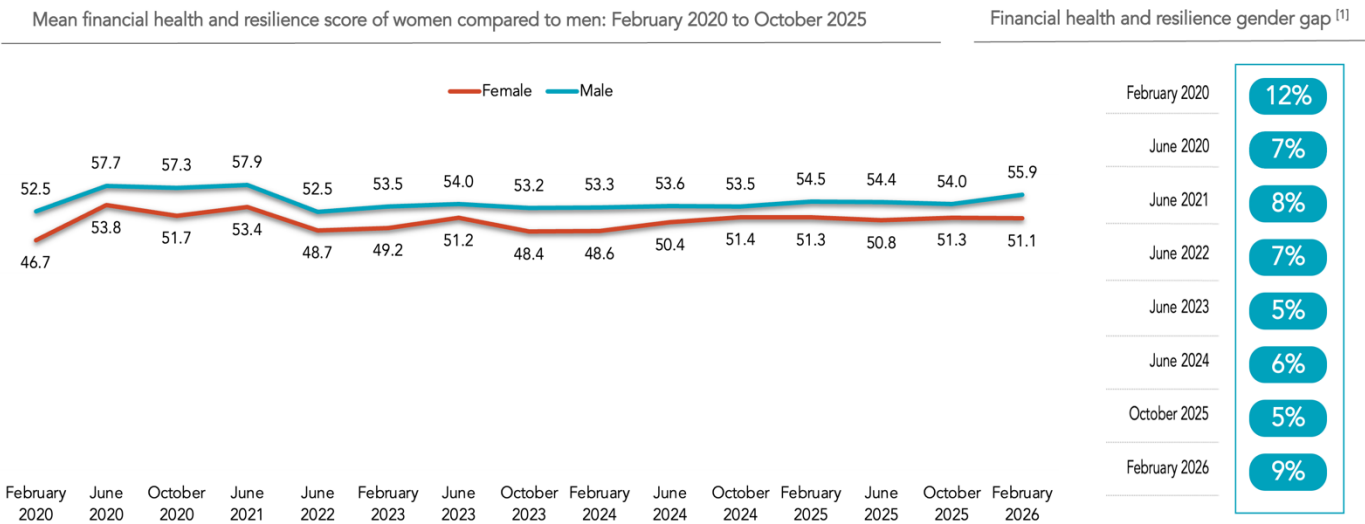


The Financial Resilience Gender Gap is widening again

Despite a narrowing financial health and resilience gender gap over recent years, as published in our ‘[Financial Resilience and Financial Wellness Gender Gap Report](#)’ (November 2023) and other reports, the February 2026 Index shows a recent widening of this gap between October 2025 and February 2026.

The financial resilience gap between women and men had narrowed significantly from 12% in February 2020 to 5% in February 2025, with a Mean Financial Resilience Score of 51.3 for women and 54.0 for men [1]. However, as of February 2026, financial vulnerability for women has been increasing again, with the gap widening again to 9%, with a Mean Financial Resilience Score of 51.1 for women and 55.9 for men.

This widening is driven by a 1.9 Index point increase in men’s scores (from 54.0 to 55.9), while women's scores edged down by 0.2 Index points. Intersectional analytics highlights increased financial vulnerability for women facing more than one barrier. These include, for example, women that are single parent households living with low incomes and/or struggling with their debt.



Source: Financial Resilience Institute, October 2025, June 2023, June 2022, June 2021, June 2020 and February 2020 Financial Resilience Index Model, Seymour Financial Resilience Index ®

This is a challenge in terms of advancing gender equity and the financial health of women overall and women in the economy. Men have statistically significantly higher Mean Financial Resilience Scores compared to women in both October 2025 and February 2026, with the Mean Financial Resilience Score of men having marginally increased over this period. The financial health and resilience gender gap has widened as of February 2026 [1].

[1] The financial health and resilience gender gap is the Mean Financial Resilience Score of people identifying as men divided by the Mean Financial Resilience Score of people identifying as women, minus 1 multiplied by 100.

Continued Inequities Evident, with Increased Financial Vulnerability for Canadians living with Low Incomes

The Index spotlights increased challenges and inequities for more financially vulnerable populations, with 'Extremely Vulnerable' households (representing 18% of the population) unable to meet their essential expenses (shelter, food, utilities and transport) compared to just 2% of 'Financially Resilient' households and 22% of Canadians overall as of February 2026.

As of February 2026, 86% of 'Extremely Vulnerable' households report facing significant financial hardship, compared to just 2% of 'Financially Resilient' households, with peoples' financial resilience changing (for better or worse) within just a few months, as proven through the Institute's robust longitudinal research and analysis over several years. Example Index data and analytics proving that financial resilience mobility is real, and people can 'move up' a financial resilience segment (or slip back) is outlined on slides 38 to 40 of the complementary report.

As of February 2026, 94% of 'Extremely Vulnerable' households are stressed their household will not have sufficient savings for retirement, with this even the case for 29% of 'Financially Resilient' households.

Concerningly, the Mean Financial Resilience Score of Canadians living with low incomes under \$25,000 has deteriorated based on the February 2026 Index, with more detailed Index analytics available for Institute clients and partners. This data builds on our many trended reports on Canadians living with low incomes and those who are most financially vulnerable [1]. These reports and our Index data have been used as a community asset for good, to make the powerful case for Canada's most vulnerable households living with low incomes to be supported through enhanced community-delivered financial help, through \$60 MM in federal funding provided by the federal government for the Resilient Futures Program [2].

This report underscores opportunities for more targeted policy interventions, programs and supports that prioritize the financial health and financial resilience of Canadians overall, 'middle' class working Canadians and in particular those facing systemic barriers, as a foundation for financial and overall well-being, quality of life and resilience. As tariffs, geopolitics, policy instability and uncertainty lie ahead for Canada's economy and the global economy in the near term, the current economic environment and Index data highlights the need for an increased strategic focus on the financial health and resilience of individuals, families, small businesses and communities. This includes for working individuals and families, women and particular people that are more vulnerable.

It is also critical to invest in evidence-based decision making so that Policymakers, Financial Authorities, Financial Institutions, Employers and others can help steward households and communities through challenging times. This, in turn, is key to building more resilient communities and supporting inclusive growth, while managing risk, reducing inequalities and delivering positive customer, financial and social impact outcomes.

A financially healthy and resilient Canada is one where households, businesses and communities can withstand shocks, pursue opportunities, and strengthen their financial resilience and overall well-being. Through evidence-based policy, targeted interventions and inclusive financial systems, we can drive stronger economic and societal outcomes.
Now is the time for policymakers to make financial health and resilience a national priority.

[1] Trended reports on Canadians living with low incomes and those who are most financially vulnerable can be accessed here:

<https://www.finresilienceinstitute.org/low-income-canadians-reports/>

[2] [Resilient Futures](#) Resilience Futures is a four-year, \$60 million national project led by Prosper Canada and funded by the Government of Canada through the Social Development Partnerships Program – Children and Families. Since 2017, our non-profit Institute as a partner of Prosper Canada has provided robust, free reports and Index data analytics to the ecosystem and, through many years of pro-bono trended data and evidence, to support evidence-driven advocacy for this program and Canadians in need. This has helped make the case for Policymakers to expand access to free, high-quality financial help services for approximately one million additional financially vulnerable households with low and modest incomes. Through this program, community help organizations will expand access to year-round tax filing, benefits assistance, and financial coaching for those who need help most. Resilience Futures is focused on people facing barriers to financial security, including Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), members of Black communities. Some of the Institute's trended reports for more financially vulnerable households and their financial inclusion and access-to-financial help challenges data and evidence are published [here](#).



About the Financial Health and Resilience Index Model

Seymour Financial Resilience Index ®

The peer-reviewed Financial Health and Resilience Index Model is the first and most robust Index of its kind in the world, measuring household financial health and resilience at multiple levels, with longitudinal, benchmark data, and real-life dynamic changes. It is being levered by our non-profit Institute as a community asset for good, to help drive systemic change through improved financial health, resilience and well-being for all.

The proprietary Financial Health and Resilience Index Model measures individuals and households' *financial resilience*, i.e. one's ability to get through financial hardship, stressors and shocks as a result of unplanned life events. Financial health and resilience is measured across nine behavioural, sentiment and resilience indicators at the national, provincial and individual household levels for individuals and households in Canada, with applications for other countries. It is also complemented by the Financial Well-Being Studies Instrument, open-source subjective Financial Well-Being Index Model and Toolkit and other instruments and work provided by our non-profit.

The Financial Health and Resilience Index Model is a highly holistic, robust Index. As of February 2026, the nine indicators account for 66% of the variance in the financial resilience construct. All indicators are significant at a 95% confidence interval, with p-values less than 0.05. It builds on a highly robust [development methodology and validation process](#), and on the Institute's Financial Well-Being Framework (developed and published in 2016) and over 18 national Financial Well-Being Studies (2017 to 2026).

As the first and most robust of its kind in the world and is complemented by data analytics from the Financial Well-Being Studies instrument. The Index has been peer-reviewed and recognized by many leading organizations and academics in Canada and globally. It has been peer-reviewed and/or used by many organizations including but not limited to: Statistics Canada, C.D. Howe Institute, Co-operators, Haver Analytics, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, Royal Bank of Canada, FP Canada, Prosper Canada and others. The Index and our other instruments have also been recognized by many leading organizations and academics including UNEP-FI, IMF, Standard Chartered Bank, Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC), UNGSGA, World-Bank/CGAP, Financial Health Network, ING, federal policymakers in Canada and others [1]. More recently, the Index was presented at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Financial Health (UNSGSA) conference in Basel, in November 2025 upon invitation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), BIS and UNSGSA.

It is complemented by the Financial Well-Being Studies instrument, a comprehensive online study conducted three times a year to date, with a representative sample of the population by household income, age, province and gender. The February 2026 Financial Well-Being Study is based on a sample size of 5,429 households with 4,655 scored through the Financial Health and Resilience Index Model, representing a margin of error of +/-1.33% at a 95% confidence interval across all provinces. More details and the Index development methodology are available in the Power Point complementary deck and on our website.

The Index and Institute's complementary instruments measures and tracks the financial resilience, financial health and financial well-being and the customers, employees or stakeholders of client and partner organizations working with our non-profit Institute. Many free reports published since 2017 are at: <https://www.finresilienceinstitute.org/>

It has been used to support evidence-based decision making and advocacy, including by making the case for the Canadian federal government to provide \$60 Million in federal funding for community-delivered financial help for Canada's low income and more financially vulnerable households. The Index has also been used to make the case for Policymakers to expand financial planning or coaching for Canadians living with moderate to low incomes and more.

The Index has also been made available at the individual household level as a free tool linked to resources for Canadians and global citizens at: <https://financialresiliencescore.com/>

The Index and our methodologies also be used by Financial Institutions, financial authorities, Policymakers, Employers and other organizations in order to track the financial health and resilience of their customers, employees, target segments, regions and countries over time, along with many other indicators, leveraging proven methodologies and experience of our expert team. Index data and analytics can complement organization's transactional or administrative and other data, bringing added value. For more information or to explore collaboration opportunities for impact, [contact us](#).



About Financial Resilience Institute

Financial Resilience Institute is a non-profit and a leading independent authority on financial health and resilience and financial well-being in Canada and globally. Its growing team strives to help improve financial resilience and financial well-being for all, in line with the Institute's impact goals. Together with values-aligned partners, the Institute is working to help:

- Reduce financial vulnerability, in particular for those who need help most;
- Be a catalyst for positive systemic change, through thought leadership, impact measurement, partnership and cross-sector collaboration, and
- Foster financial inclusion and empowerment, while helping people, businesses and communities to thrive and prosper.

This work is central to all its purpose and impact goals, with the Institute bringing data and evidence to help make the case for Policymakers, Financial Institutions, Employers, Social Enterprise and ecosystems to provide targeted support and interventions that drive positive financial resilience and financial well-being outcomes and help create a better world.

View the Institute's publicly available reports: <https://www.finresilienceinstitute.org/index-releases-and-reports/>

To learn more about our work and explore opportunities to become a client, funder or partner to help accelerate impact together: <https://www.finresilienceinstitute.org/>

For feedback or questions on this Index release, please contact lead author and creator of the Index, CEO and Founder, Eloise Duncan: eloise@finresilienceinstitute.org

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