



Results From Ipsos-Reid's "Reconnecting Government with Youth 2005"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Spring of 2005 IPSOS-Reid conducted a research study, *Reconnecting Government with Youth 2005*, to collect the views of young Canadians on a broad range of topics related to careers in the public service sector - a report was published in July. The Police Sector Council co-sponsored the study to research youth attitudes to public sector policing in general and policing as a specific career option.

This document outlines the results of the policing segment of the survey through a youth cohort recruitment "lens." The results highlight that Canada's youth appear uninterested in pursuing policing careers. When asked

- **which field provides the most employment opportunities?** 3% said policing
- **in which field would you be most interested in pursuing a career?** 5% said policing
- **would you ever consider a career as a police officer?** 37% said Yes, 63% said No

These results are cause for concern in attracting and selecting quality future police officer candidates. The police sector is already facing significant human resource challenges: a diminishing youth cohort, an aging work force, forecasted high attrition rates, increasingly complex and demanding work environments, enhanced and changing skill/knowledge requirements, etc. With an application to join a police service comes a rigorous and thorough screening/selection process - a large applicant pool is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the sector and the continued delivery of quality police services. If Canada's youth are disinterested in a policing career, then the sector could be in jeopardy.

This study provides both a baseline for further research and the impetus to begin the process of changing the opinions of young Canadians. The general information collected from this study on youth values, concerns, and labour market views provides useful contextual information as a starting point for further work. For example, Canada's youth appear to be particularly community oriented and have strong values. Factors such as these can provide a foundation for reinforcing the values inherent in police work and leveraging interest in policing as a career.

More specific questions revealed the underlying views of the youth cohort about policing:

- **what is the most important reason to choose a career in policing? - the top rated reason** "to make my community safer"
- **94% of youth agree that police work provides** "many opportunities to do meaningful work."

The survey results, both the specific policing responses and the more general opinions about public service, will inform the development of a targeted recruitment strategy designed to generate interest in police work. Through a clearer understanding of the dynamics of this labour market segment, the policing sector can begin to address its vulnerability and ensure the continued delivery of quality police services to the Canadian population.



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INTRODUCTION

Reconnecting Government with Youth 2005 is a survey of 2,000 young Canadians aged 12 – 30, designed to determine their views of government and broader society. IPSOS-Reid conducted this research as a continuation of a series of surveys starting in 1997. This latest study in the series, sponsored by a number of federal government departments and the Police Sector Council, examined important issues for young Canadians' and for those interested in better understanding youth in our country. The survey addressed the following core themes:

- society, governments and governance
- youth culture
- preferred communication and media consumption
- education and careers
- internet
- marijuana and cigarette use
- extracurricular programs and volunteering
- policing

The results of the survey indicate that today's youth face daunting challenges and exciting opportunities. Young Canadians come from more varied ethnic, religious, familial structures and political backgrounds than ever before in our country, and increasingly have a level of technological sophistication unprecedented in history. Current and future policy makers and governments will have to develop a unique and balanced approach that includes the views and needs of this complex group.

This document outlines the full results of the survey as they relate to the policing sector. Specifically included are the following sections:

- detailed findings by survey question **related to policing**
- policing specific questions – detailed findings
- recruiting youth to the policing sector
- summary

The data is proprietary to Ipsos-Reid and cannot be reproduced, or used without the express consent of Ipsos-Reid. The entire study is available on request from IPSOS-REID CORPORATION, One Nicholas Street, Ottawa Ontario K1N 7B7, Phone: 613-241-5802, Fax: 613-241-5460

METHODOLOGY

The 2005 edition of *Reconnecting Government with Youth* included a national telephone survey and an online survey conducted in May/June of 2005. Details of the survey methodology can be accessed through IPSOS-REID CORPORATION. The margin of error for a telephone sample of this nature is ± 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 and margin of error will be larger for sub populations. For the on-line survey, results are accurate to $\pm 4.2\%$, 19 times out of 20 and the margin of error will be larger for sub populations



KEY FINDINGS

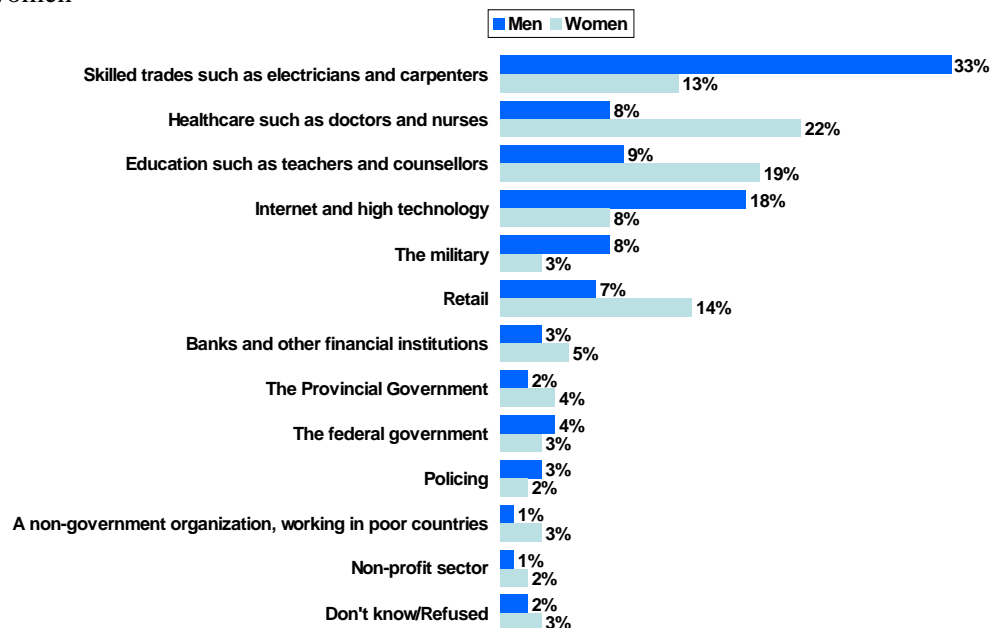
- **Top Priorities for Government** - of four social issues standing out as high priorities for young Canadians, one has clear implications for policing - reducing youth crime
- **Government Engagement** - most young Canadians place quite a high value on civic involvement and the impact of government decisions. Cynicism towards politicians and government programs remains high and growing.
- **Post-secondary Education** - most respondents who had yet to attend a post-secondary institution affirmed that they would or may - however, they were uncertain as to the source of financing for their education.
- **Community** - roughly four in ten youth express a degree of interest in getting more involved - however, less than three in ten are currently involved in making their community a better place.
- **Reason for Internet Use** - young Canadians view the Internet as a multipurpose tool - communicating with friends, source of information for their studies/learning, job hunting , etc
- **Volunteering** - unpaid volunteer work with community groups/voluntary organizations is common -

DETAILED FINDINGS BY SURVEY QUESTION

The following graphics highlight the results on some of the key questions posed in the survey of interest to the policing sector.

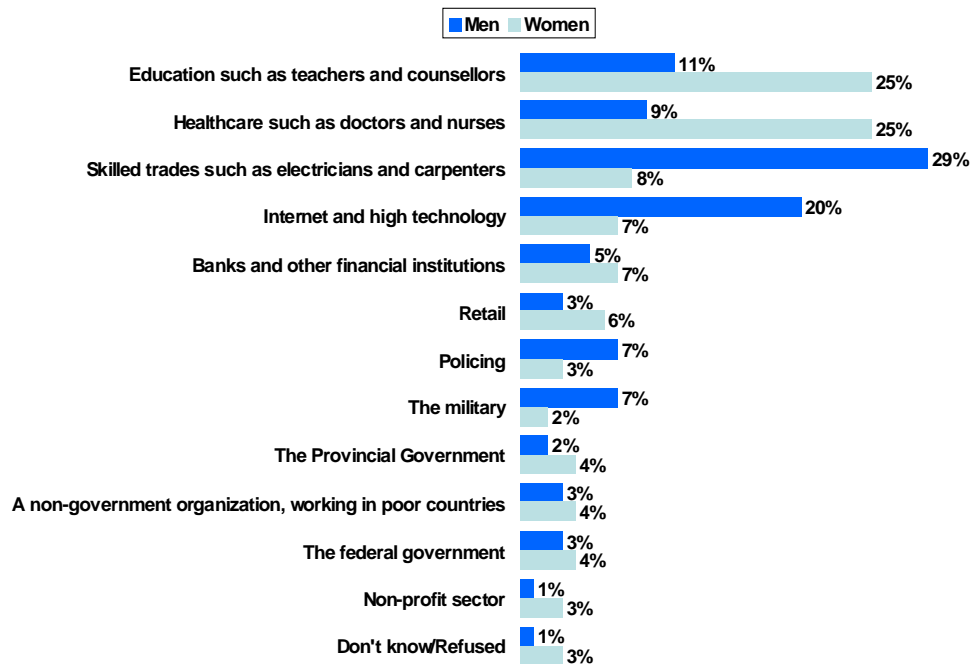
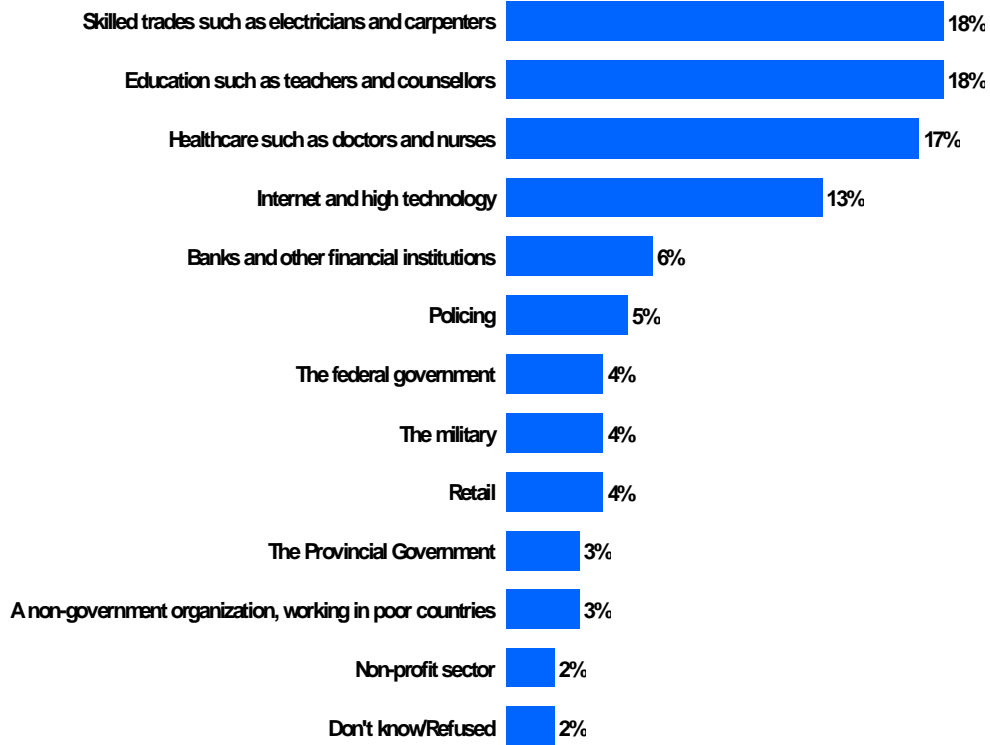
Employment Opportunities

Career fields youth consider to have the **most employment opportunities** - note differences for men and women



■ **Interest**

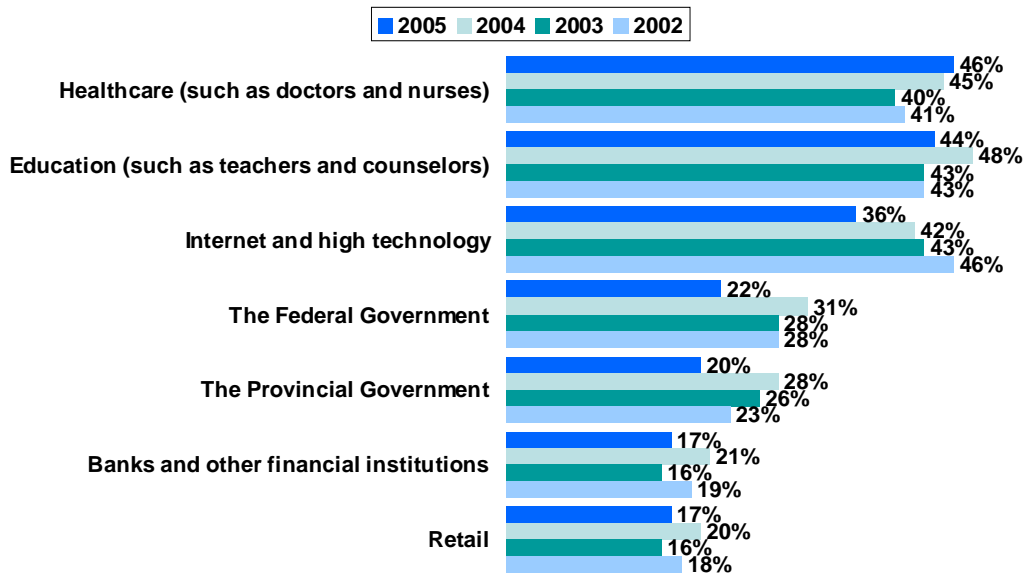
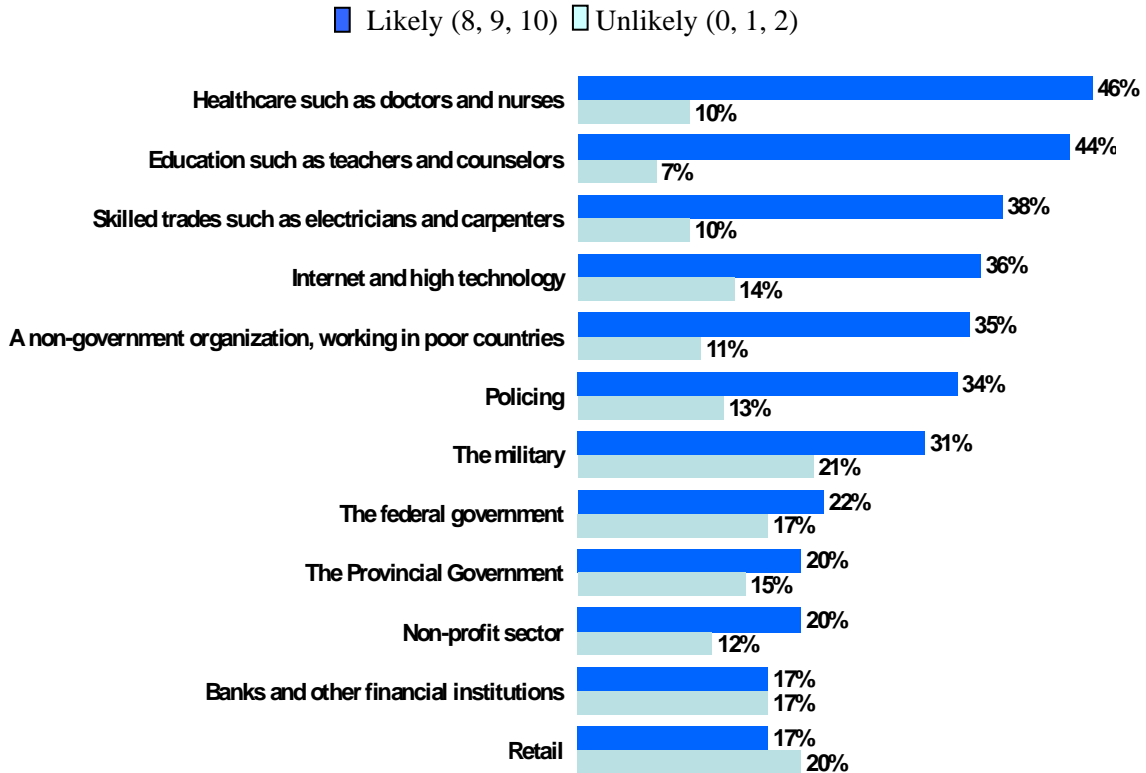
Career fields youth are **interested in pursuing** - note differences for men and women





▪ **Interesting Work**

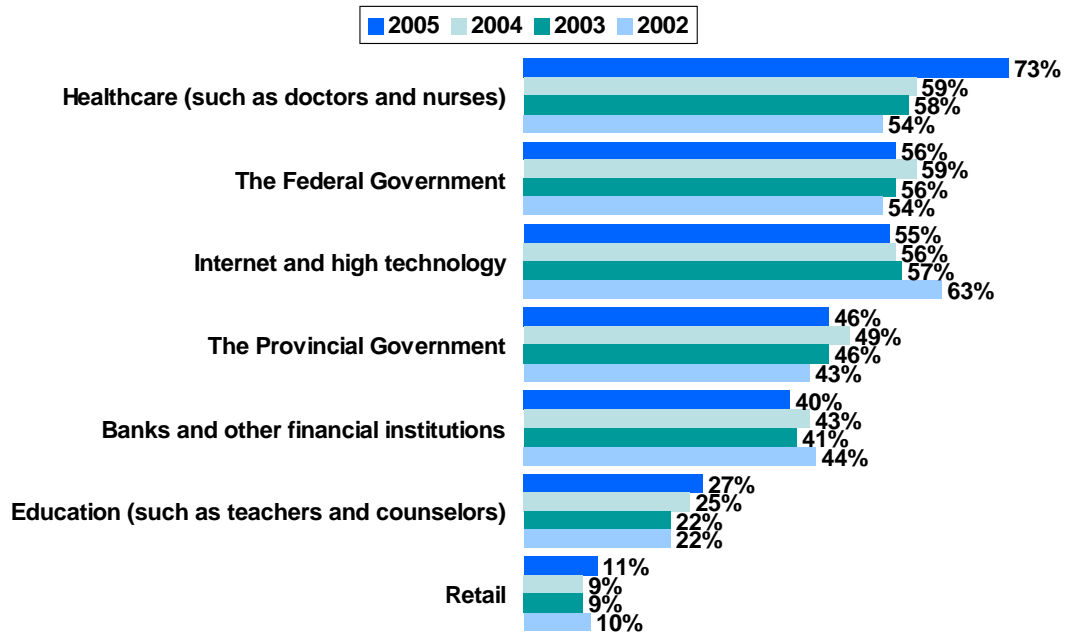
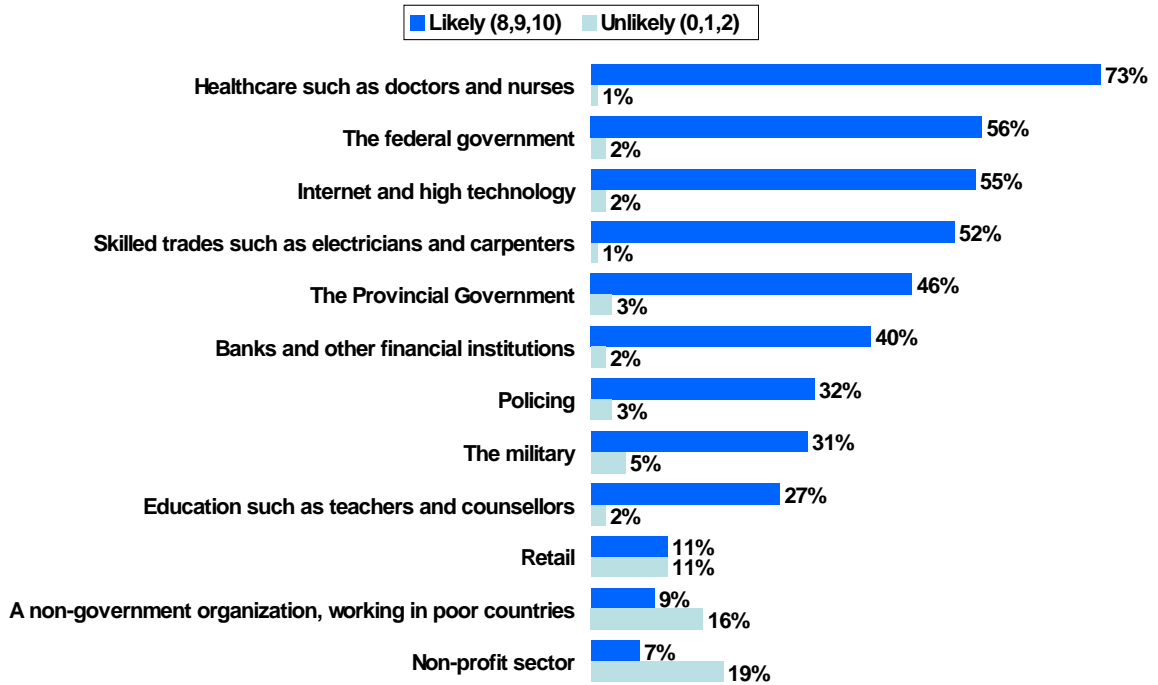
Careers considered by youth with the potential of being **interesting** - note continued downward trend in those who mention the Internet and high technology as a likely source for interesting work - scale of 0 (least likely) to 10 (most likely)





▪ **Perceived Salary**

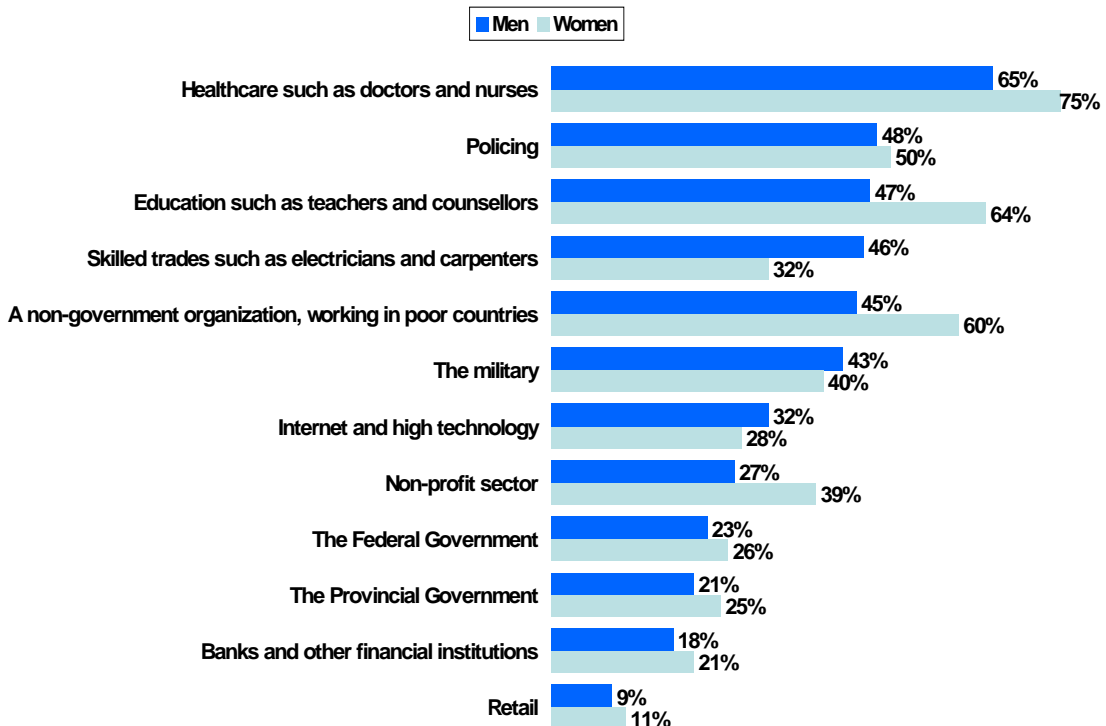
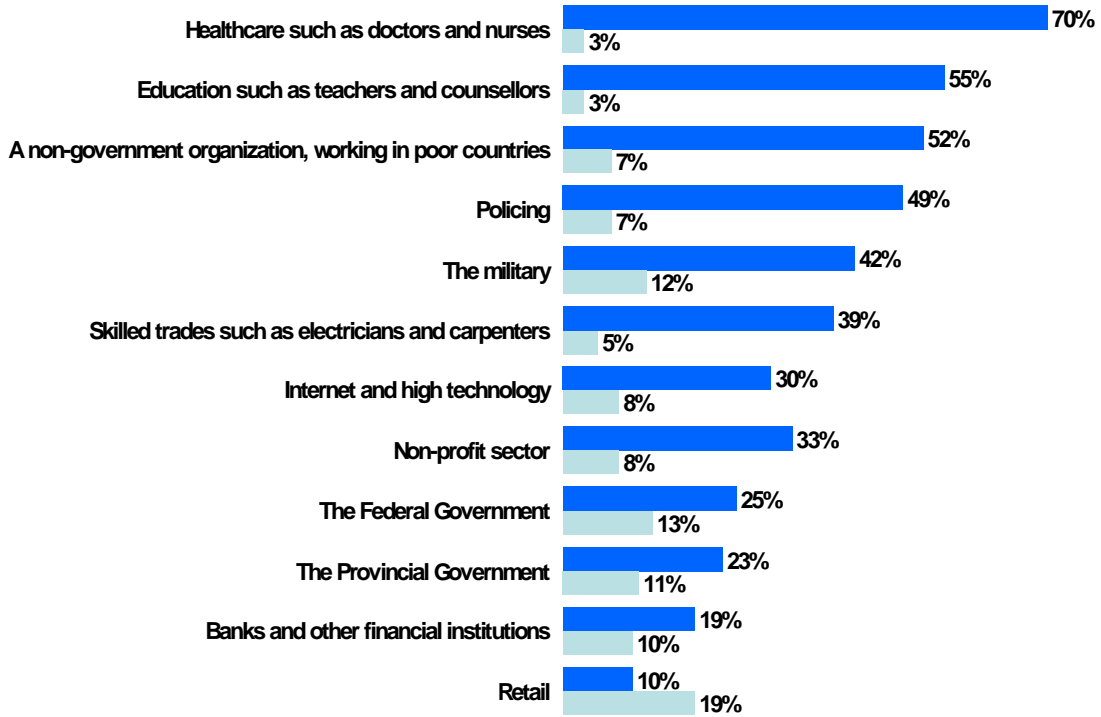
Careers seen as most lucrative - using a 10 point scale of 0 (least likely) to 10 (most likely)





▪ **Source of Pride**

Helping others is considered important - note variation in careers considered a **source of pride** between men and women - using a 10 point scale of 0 (least likely) to 10 (most likely)



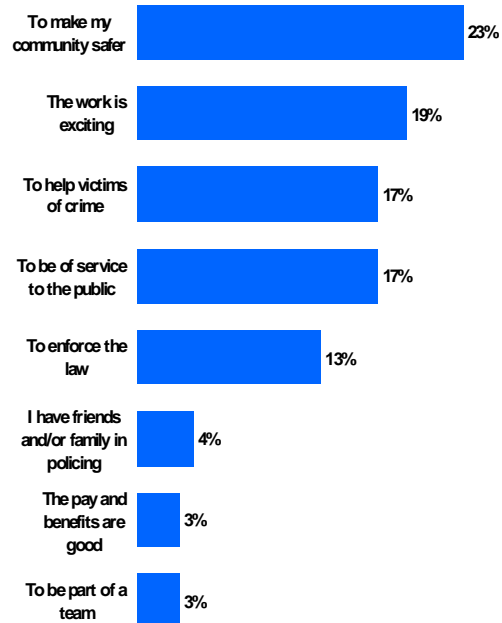
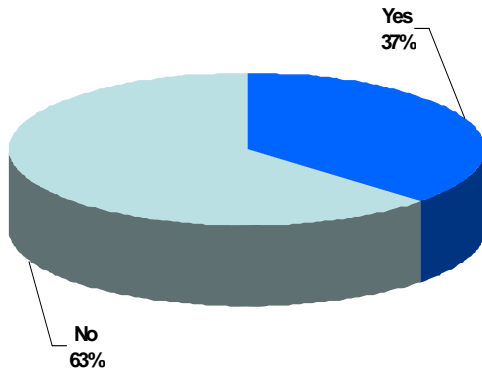
DETAILED FINDINGS on POLICING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

As noted above, young Canadians are less likely to feel that policing provides good employment opportunities (3%), and just five percent of youth say they would be most interested in pursuing a career in policing. However, 49% say that policing would be a career that they would be proud of, would likely involve interesting work (34%), and would offer a good salary (32%).

■ Policing As A Career

Policing is a popular community service oriented career choice. When those between the ages of 16 and 30 were specifically asked whether they would ever consider a career as a police officer, a healthy proportion (37%) said they would.

But they are not in it for the money - young Canadians would consider a career as a police officer for reasons related to serving their community; aspects such as “making ones community safer” (23%), “helping victims of crime” (17%), “being of service to the public” (17%), and “enforcing the law” (13%). The work being exciting (19%) is another popular motive youth say they take into consideration. Fewer than five percent consider having friends or family who work in the field (4%), pay and benefits being good (3%), or being part of a team (3%) as the most important reason they would consider policing as their line of work.



Base: Respondents 16 to 30 n=1,595

IPSOS-REID CORPORATION

Base: Respondents 16 to 30 who would consider a career in policing n=555

Demographic and regional differences

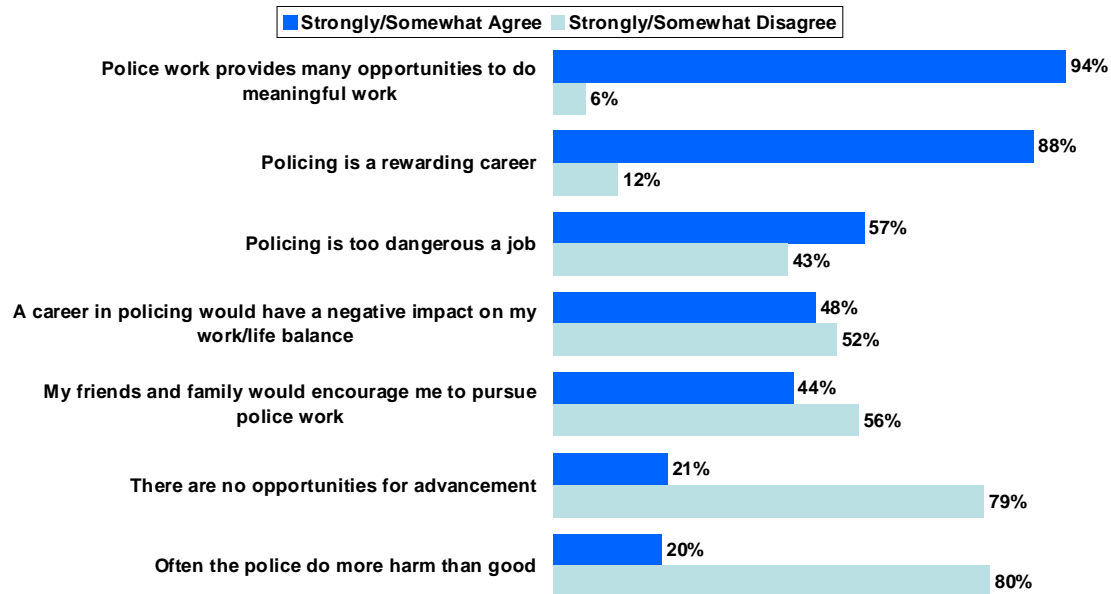
- youth in Quebec (21%) are less likely than those in other parts of Canada to say they would consider this line of work
- younger respondents and men are more likely to consider a career in policing
- those with a high school education are more likely than university educated respondents to be interested in this type of work
- Ontario (27%) are more likely than youth in Quebec (13%) to say “making ones community safer” is the most important factor to consider a career in policing.

- youth in Saskatchewan/ Manitoba (27%) and Quebec (25%) are more likely to consider police work because it's exciting
- residents of the Atlantic Provinces are more likely to say they want to be of service to the public (29%)

Attitudes Towards Policing

Policing is considered a respectable career overall, but has some negative aspects - a wide majority (94%) agree that policing offers many opportunities to do meaningful work, and more than four in five (88%) agree that it is a rewarding career and that policing provides opportunity for advancement.

Although they may have a positive outlook on policing as a career, a majority of young Canadians (57%) feel that policing is too dangerous a job, and 48% feel it would have a negative impact on their work/life balance (52% who disagree). Less than half (44%) say their friends and family would encourage them to pursue this type of career, while one in five youth (20%) believe that the police often do more harm than good.



IPSOS-REID CORPORATION

Base: Respondents 16 to 30 n=1,598

Demographic and regional differences

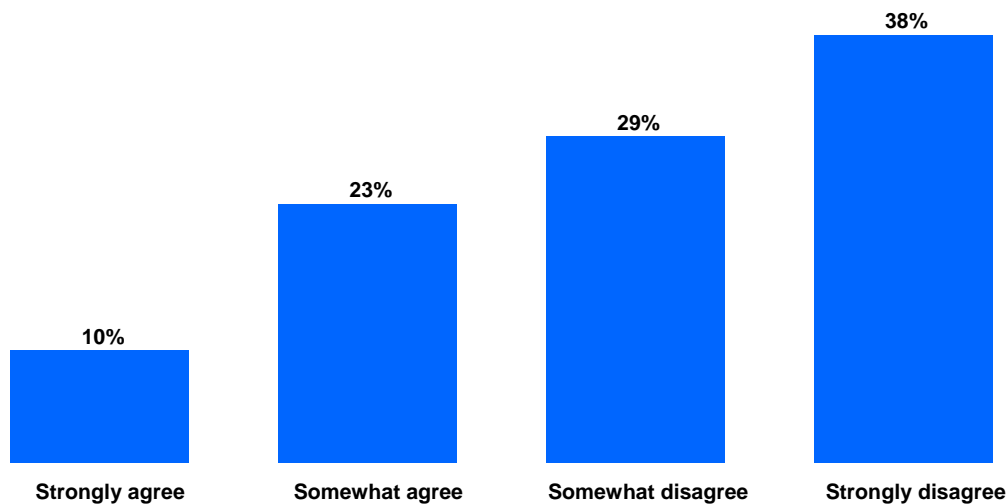
- Ontario (95%) and the Atlantic Provinces (97%) are more likely than those in Quebec (91%) to agree that policing provides many opportunities to do meaningful work
- there is also strong agreement on meaningful work among older youths, and those with higher levels of education
- Quebec (80%) are less likely to feel that policing is a rewarding career
- older youths, those with lower household incomes, and those who reside in the Atlantic (66%) and Alberta (62%) tend to feel that policing is too dangerous
- older youth are more likely to feel that a career in policing would have a negative impact on their work/life balance - those who live in Quebec tend to be less likely to feel this way
- encouragement from friends and family is important to many youths - those in Quebec (55%), younger respondents, and those with lower levels of education are more likely to say that their family and friends would encourage this career
- Quebec (24%) and the Atlantic Provinces (25%) are more likely than those in Alberta (15%) to say that there are no opportunities for advancement - younger respondents also agree

- younger youth are more likely to feel that police often do more harm than good
- opinions of male and female respondents differ - women are more likely to agree that policing is a rewarding career, and that it would provide many opportunities to do meaningful work
- women are more likely to say that this type of job would have a negative impact on their work/life balance, and that policing is too dangerous of a job
- male respondents, on the other hand, are more likely to say that there are no opportunities for advancement, and that often the police do more harm than good
- males are also more likely to say that their friends and family would encourage them to pursue this type of career

■ Interested in More Information on Policing

Another way to gauge interest in a topic is to inquire about the degree of interest in learning more about the topic. Although more than one-third of youth (37%) said they would consider a career in policing, only 32% would be interested in receiving more information - just 10% say they are very interested in receiving more information.

I would like to have more information about a career in policing



IPSOS-REID CORPORATION

Base: Respondents 16 to 30 n=1,595

Demographic and regional differences

- youth who reside in Quebec (25%) tend to be less interested than those in most other provinces
- interest is higher among the younger cohort, 16-21 years of age
- interest is higher among men with lower levels of education and lower incomes



RECRUITING YOUTH TO THE POLICING SECTOR

From a recruitment perspective, the results of the IPSOS Reid survey are particularly important. Although 37% of respondents said they would consider a career as a police officer, the majority of respondents (63%) said they would not. Only 5% said that policing is the field in which they are most interested in pursuing a career.

The survey results indicate a need for more in-depth examination of the underlying reasons for the disinterest in policing. They also point to the importance of recruitment strategies that are specifically targeted to the youth segment. What is needed are strategies that encourage young people to consider policing as a viable/exciting career option.

▪ **Future Plans Made Early**

Decision-making and career planning occurs early and very few young Canadians rule out post secondary education of some form. A full 90% of respondents reported that they would likely go on to further education beyond high school. Young people are thinking about their future careers and actively making education and career planning decisions early.

Strategies to encourage youth toward a career in policing need to address early planning and provide adequate and enticing information. Most have actively thought about what course of study they will pursue after high school, with or without all of the necessary information and are discussing these plans with their parents, with friends, with guidance counsellors and teachers.

Educators, parents and peers who are guiding youth regarding careers need to be secondary targets of any recruitment strategy. Youth recruitment strategies need to start early - once someone embarks on an educational path, they often do so with a career outcome in mind. Respondents who were university educated reported that they were less interested in pursuing policing careers.

▪ **Making Information Available**

The sources used to inform these early education and career decisions are important. Post secondary institutions and university/school websites are the basis for targeted searches and are not in the business of promoting any one particular career choice. For this reason, quality information on the police sector needs to be provided to young people in their high schools.

The information can take many forms; pamphlets, packets, videos, posters, booklets and should be coupled with information directed toward those staffing high school career and education planning offices.

Guidance counsellors are responsible for advising students through the process of post-secondary education decisions. Any effective youth recruitment strategy should ensure guidance counsellors are versed in the opportunities available within policing, and the educational path to become a police officer.

To supplement quality information within the high school setting, the police sector can use the internet and ensure that all police organization websites include youth focused career information.

▪ **Concerns Over Education Costs**

Concern over educational costs is the single most important problem facing young people. Tuition and fees associated with post secondary education topped the list of concerns. Concerns regarding unemployment were not far behind.



Money is a concern and may be a barrier to post secondary education. Youth meet education costs using a combination of different means. Recruiting strategies need to emphasize subsidies, defrayed costs, or training that is included within a career. The policing community needs to present viable options to entice youth to the sector.

▪ **Changing Perceptions of Policing**

Although we need to make information available early, information alone will not be enough. When asked whether they would like more information about a career in policing, 68% of respondents answered “no.” A recruitment campaign for the police sector needs to highlight the exciting aspects of policing - especially for youth in Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Quebec who reported that they valued the exciting aspects of police work most.

Only 3% of youth feel that policing provides good employment opportunities - and only 5% said they would be most interested in pursuing a policing career. Slightly more encouraging is that 37% of respondents would “consider” a policing career and 34% of respondents indicated that policing would provide work that was interesting.

The majority of respondents (63% and 66% respectively) would not consider the policing sector and feel that policing falls outside the interesting category. There are demographic differences as well. Youth in Quebec (21%) are less likely than other parts of Canada to consider this line of work. Younger respondents and men are more likely to consider a career in policing.

Respondents also indicated that they have a negative view of some aspects of policing.

- a career in policing would have a negative impact on my work/life balance agree 48%
- policing is too dangerous a job agree 57%

Changing these perceptions will need to be the focus of any successful recruitment strategy. Young people will become more receptive to listening to the detailed information, educational requirements, and career opportunities, if they better understand and more positively view what policing involves.

▪ **Creating An Effective Campaign**

So, how do we go about changing their minds? The survey provides some clues - respondents rated keeping your word, freedom, helping others worse off than you, taking an active role in causes, tolerance, having a sense of belonging to Canada, diversity and multiculturalism, being patriotic as key concepts.

These clearly correspond with the competencies, characteristics, and values of being a police officer. Appealing to the idealism of youth and illustrating the link between upholding these values and the role of policing would be an important starting point for building a recruitment strategy.

Respondents agreed strongly with pride in being Canadian, respecting cultural differences, the unique and distinct Canadian culture; although young Canadians in Quebec felt less enthusiasm about Canada. Community issues are important to youth - they strongly agreed with getting involved to improve communities, getting hands-on with other young people to tackle community projects, having ideas about improving communities and being active in the community and making it a better place

When asked to outline the most important reason for a career in policing, respondents rated the answer “to make my community safer” as the number one answer. Clearly young Canadians have strong values and a heartfelt commitment to community. These factors provide a foundation of common ground for highlighting the goals of policing and building interest in policing as a career.



▪ **Delivering Information Effectively**

The IPSOS Reid survey results provide information about how to best market to youth - the most **effective methods** for communicating with young Canadians:

▪ television ads	78%
▪ having M.P.s visit schools/community groups	62%
▪ the internet	60%
▪ radio ads	54%
▪ material available through schools	51%
▪ movie theatre ads	50%
▪ public transit ads	43%
▪ magazine ads	42%
▪ billboard ads	33%
▪ newspaper ads	26%

When asked to identify how many hours per week they spent using different media. The results indicated around 10 hours for each of: watching television listening to the radio using the internet. Very little time was spent on newspapers or magazines.

Targeting effective delivery of recruitment information and dollars spent is critical. The marketing of a policing career through TV ads is likely cost prohibitive. But, a strategy for police recruitment which includes a combination of different communications and takes into account how often young Canadians use different media, will result in a campaign that is highly effective at reaching the youth.

▪ **Considering Demographic Differences**

The survey results provide information for developing an effective recruitment strategy targeting different groups. Demographic information, including region specific differences, age differences, and gender based differences are important to note when targeting a particular market. For example,

- for the young female cohort, a strategy that appeals to their views of a rewarding career and opportunities to do meaningful work will be most effective
- a campaign designed to recruit young males should be easier - they are more likely to consider a career in policing and say that their friends and family would encourage them to pursue it
- youth in the Atlantic region require a strategy that focuses on their sense of community and their desire to be of service
- youth in the Quebec or Saskatchewan/Manitoba market want the excitement of a career in policing
- targeting those with higher levels of education, and older youths will need to focus on the many opportunities to do meaningful work

The specific demographic approaches will help to create an informed and targeted recruitment strategy for different segments of the youth cohort.

SUMMARY

Ipsos-Reid's *Reconnecting Government with Youth* survey provides a solid source of information for understanding the views of young Canadians on a broad range of topics. These questions collected youth opinions about policing in general and policing as a career option.



The results were clear, Canada's youth generation are not intending to pursue careers in policing. This is problematic given the demographics of an aging workforce. For the policing sector to deliver quality services to the Canadian community at large, we must address these youth opinions and plans.

A quality recruitment strategy for the policing sector will take into consideration both specific issues of policing and more general opinions of youth:

- future plans regarding education and careers are made early
- planning involves parents, guidance counsellors
- information is sought out at high schools
- education costs are a major concern
- perceptions of policing as a job are negative and not well informed
- young Canadians have strong values and a heartfelt commitment to community
- certain means of communication and media sources are most favoured
- there are demographic differences (age, region)

We will use this information, to develop a clearly targeted strategy informing and enticing Canada's youth to a policing career.