



## Results From "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 survey methodology, presents the overall findings and details 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 background and more 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. Some 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.