



## **Government of Saskatchewan**

# **Public Opinion Polling**

from April 1, 2003 – June 30, 2003

**Saskatchewan  
Executive Council**

**Omnibus Polling  
Program**

**Report of Results**  
*April 2003*

# Introduction

## Objective

The objective of this poll was to query a sample of Saskatchewan residents on a range of issues identified by Saskatchewan Executive Council and its client departments.

A number of the queries are repeats from polls that have been conducted regularly over several years, in ongoing monitoring of issues and trends. Others are unique to this particular survey.

## Methodology

Interviews were conducted across Saskatchewan with respondents aged 18 or older in households selected at random by computer. All fieldwork was done by telephone from Sigma's call centre.

A total of 1011 interviews were completed. The results from a sample of this size can be expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Queries were supplied by Saskatchewan Executive Council and in some instances modified at the suggestion of Sigma Analytics.

## Cautions

Interpreting the results in this report should be done with the following cautionary considerations in mind:

- Sample surveys provide estimates of the prevalence of the measured factors in the total population from which the sample is drawn. The estimates are statistically reliable within the ranges indicated, at the 95% level of confidence. This means that the actual prevalence of the factor could be greater or lesser than the estimate, by the amount of the margin of error. It also means that 5% of the time, the estimate can be expected to differ from reality by more than the margin of error. Results from sample surveys should therefore be treated as contributing to knowledge, but not as defining it precisely.
- While polling results for the entire sample are statistically reliable within the range indicated, results for sub-sets of the sample will have a larger margin of error because they are based on smaller numbers. They should be treated with more caution.
- Polls are “snapshot” approximations of reality. Subject to the foregoing considerations, they can be expected to reflect reality validly, within the indicated

ranges, at the time they are conducted. Opinions change. It is important to bear in mind that a single poll cannot describe a trend.

- Indicators from the sample can be projected to estimate the prevalence of the measured factor in the total population from which the sample was drawn. They cannot be interpreted as describing any other population.

## Highlights

- Healthcare issues are the most important category of concerns facing Canada, with a score in the low forties. Next most important is government-related issues, scoring in the low thirties. The economy rated in the mid-teens, and all others showed in single digits.
- Provincially, there is a greater diversity of issues, none with a strong lead over the next. Issues around economy and population led, scoring 30%, followed by healthcare at 24%, with rural/agricultural and government-related issues at 18%.
- A strong majority expressed agreement with the budget priorities of health and education.
- Two in three respondents feel the Saskatchewan education system is about the same as in the rest of the country.
- A sizeable majority feel Saskatchewan high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary academic education, though most express this view moderately. By considerably smaller margins, respondents feel students are prepared to enter the workforce.
- An overwhelming proportion of people feel access to free legal advice is important for those who cannot afford it.
- About half of respondents think the provincial economy is stable. One third think things are worsening and one fifth think things are improving.
- Opinion is evenly split on how well the provincial government is handling the economy. The largest group (45%) approves moderately, but those who strongly disapprove outnumber those who strongly approve by over 4:1.
- Majorities have not heard of the Invest in Saskatchewan program, or of labour-sponsored venture capital funds.

## Section A: Executive Council General Issues

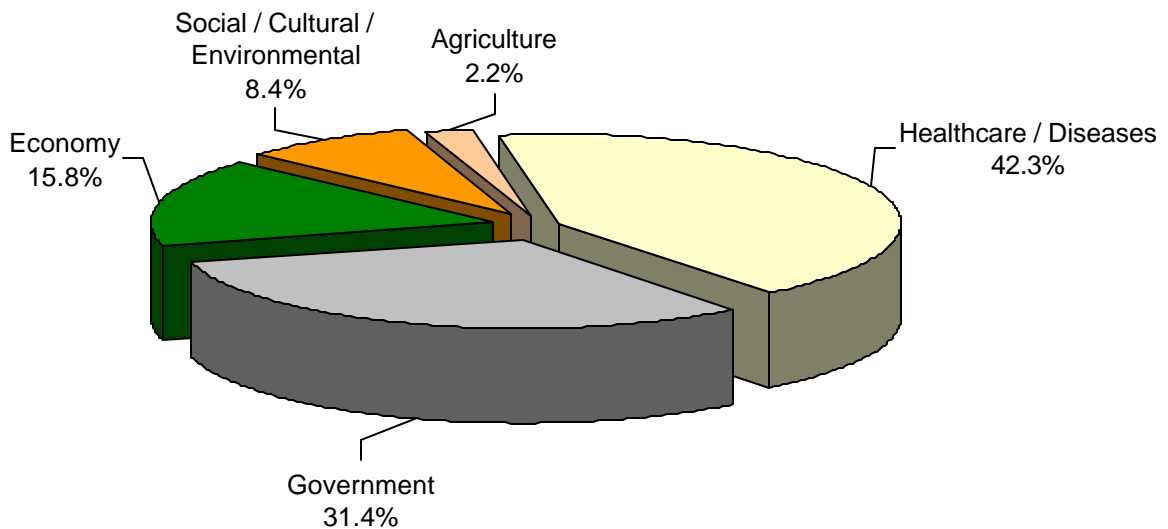
### A1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

The largest group of respondents, 42.3% overall, feel that healthcare and diseases are the most important issue facing Canada today.

An additional 31.4% feel that government is the issue of greatest importance.

Others issues trail at levels well below the two front-running subject areas.

#### What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

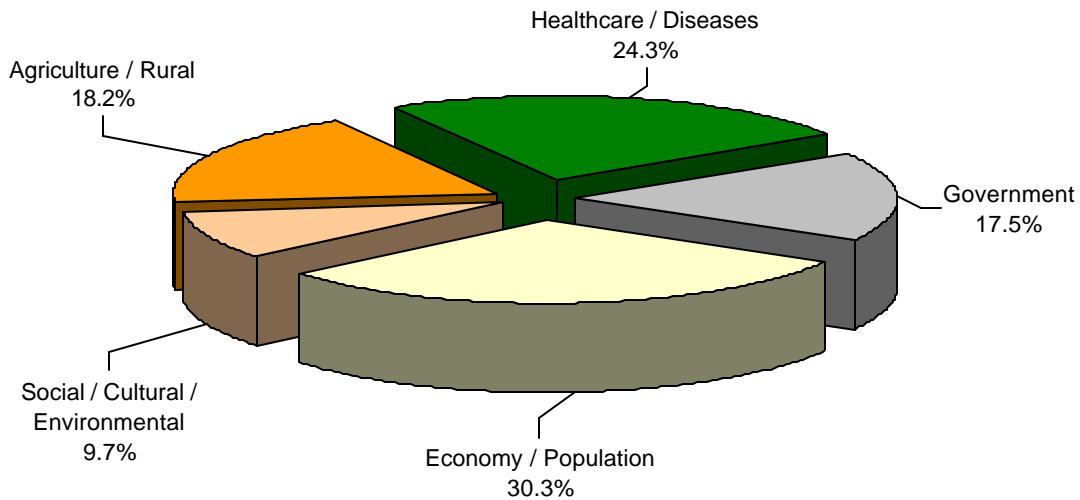


## A2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?

At the provincial level the largest single group of respondents, 30.3% overall, feels the issue area of greatest importance is the economy and population.

Healthcare and diseases placed second with nearly one-quarter (24.3%) of respondents citing it. The numbers citing it provincially are considerably lower than those who did so at the federal level.

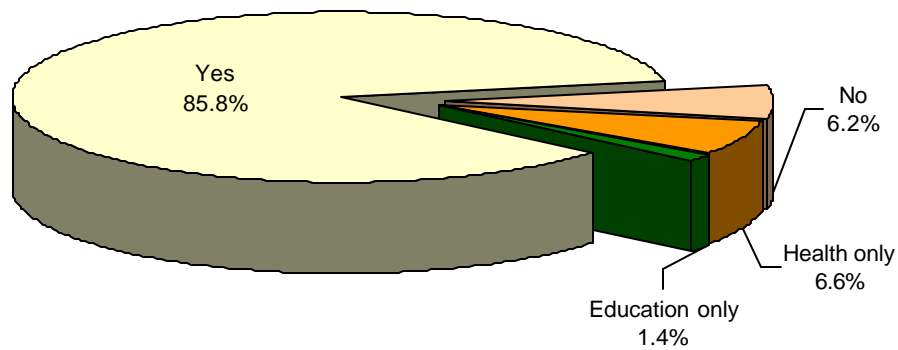
### What do you think is the most important issue facing Saskatchewan today?



### A3. The government priorities for increased spending in the 2003-2004 Budget were health and education. Do you agree with those priorities?

The vast majority (85.8%) of respondents that agrees with the spending priorities noted in this query massively outweighs the proportion who chose to register disagreement.

The government priorities for increased spending in the 2003-2004 Budget were health and education. Do you agree with those priorities?



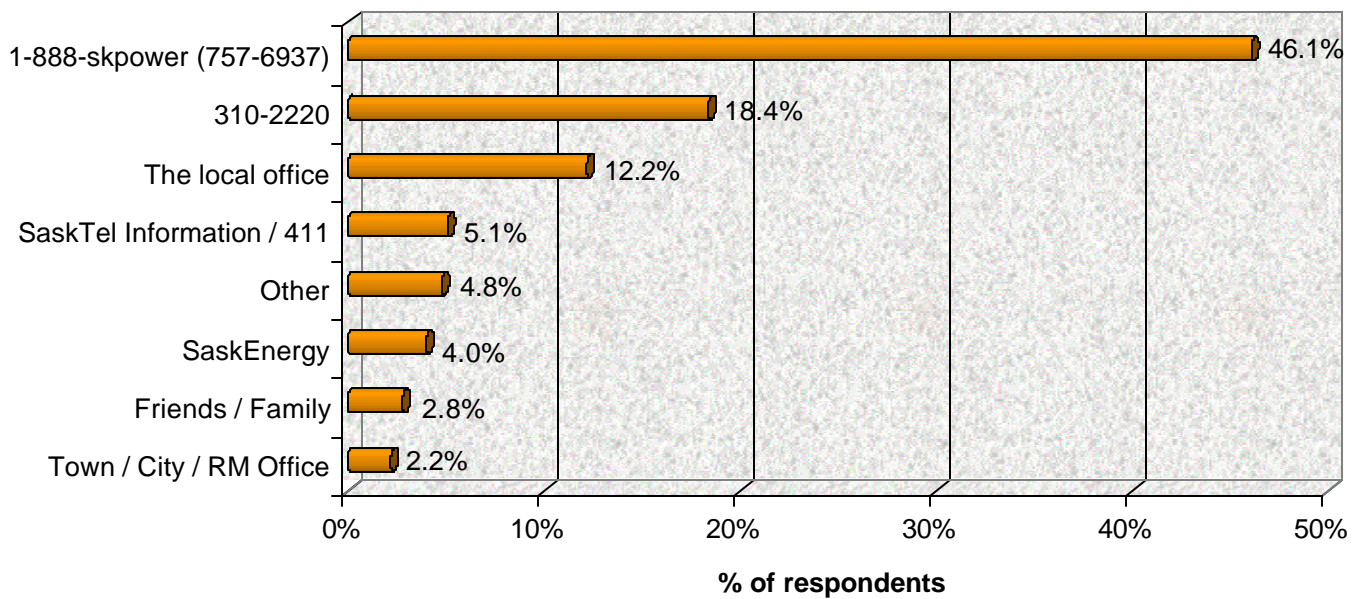


## Section B: SaskPower

### B1. What phone number would you call in the event of a power outage?

Nearly one-half (46.1%) of respondents chose the 1-888-skpower number as the one they would call in the event of a power outage.

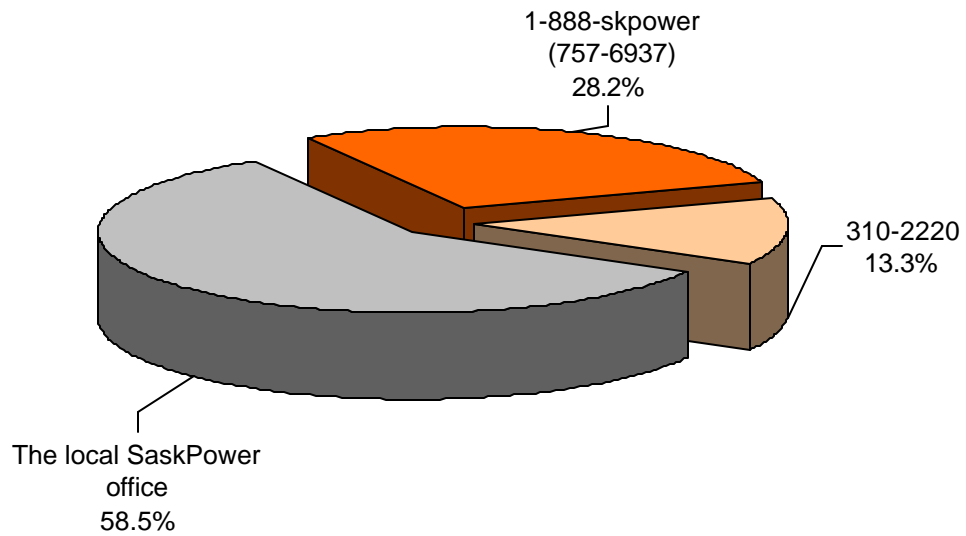
#### What phone number would you call in the event of a power outage?



**B2. (If response to B1 is other than 1-888-skpower or 310-2220): From the following list, what phone number would you call in the event of a power outage?**

Well over half (58.5%) of respondents identified the local SaskPower office as where they would call.

**From the following list, what phone number would you call in the event of a power outage?**

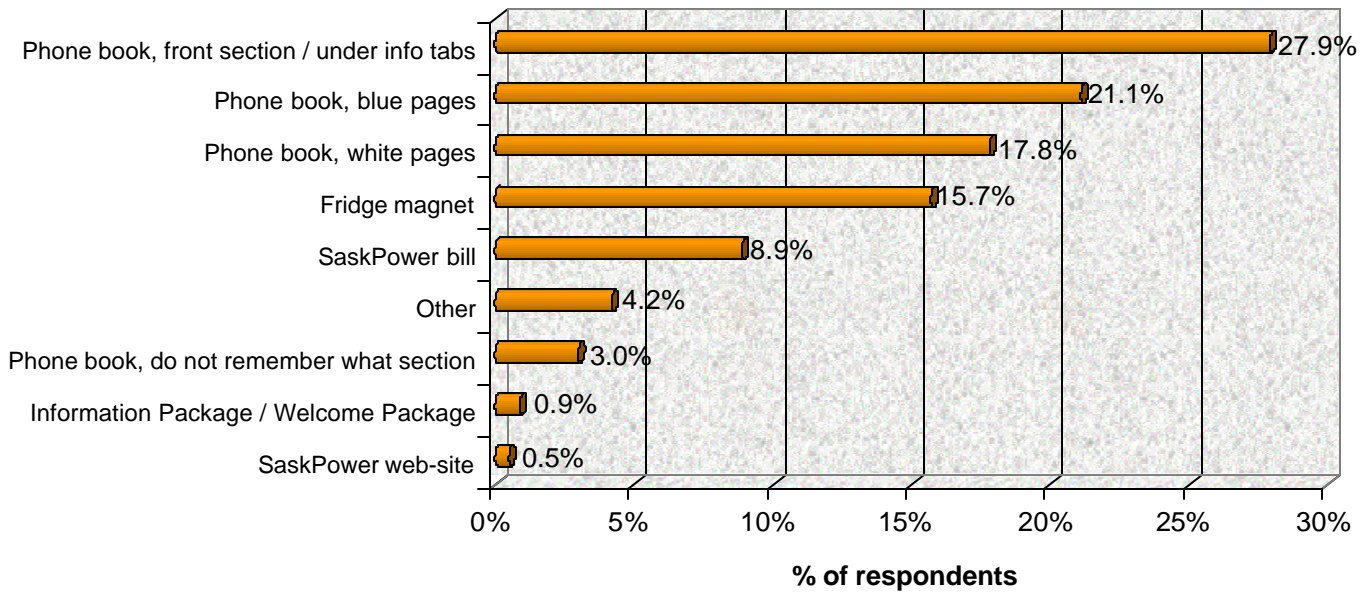


**B3. (If response to B1 is 1-888-skpower or 310-2220): From what source did you learn this phone number?**

By far the largest proportion of respondents sourced this number from part of the telephone book.

The greatest number of respondents, 27.9% overall, obtained the phone number from the front section of the phone book. Another 21.1% sourced it from the blue pages, and another 17.8% went to the white pages.

**From what source did you learn this phone number?**



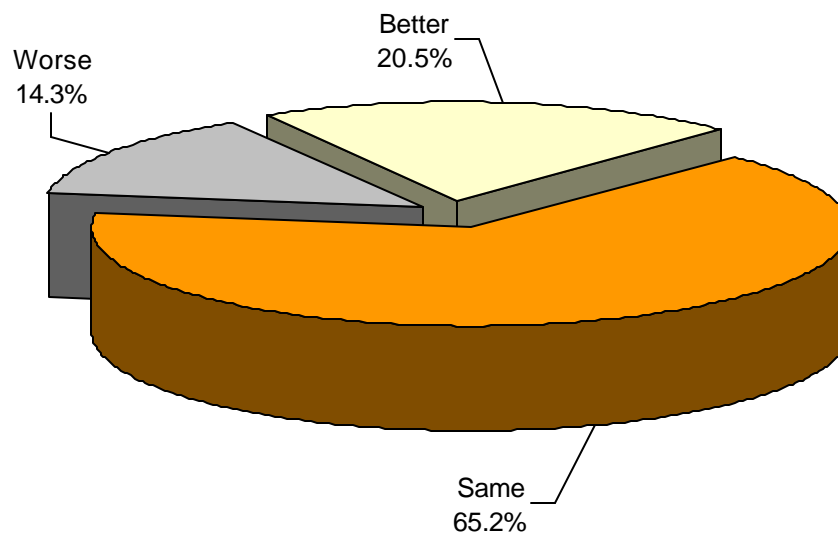
## Section C: Learning

### C1. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?

Two-thirds (65.2%) of respondents feel the education system in Saskatchewan is the same as the rest of the country.

Roughly one in five (20.5 %) believes the provincial education system is better than the rest of Canada, compared to one in seven who believe it is worse.

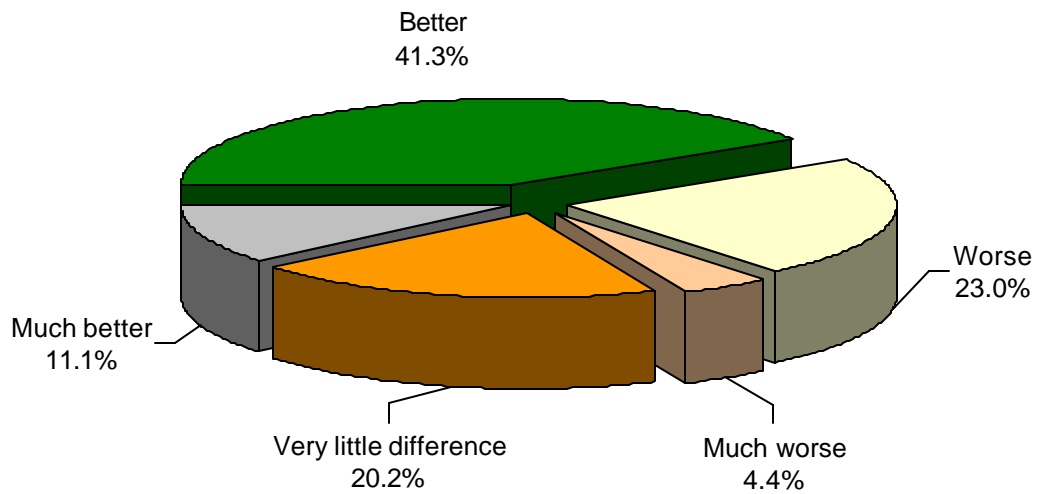
#### Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



**C2. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?**

The province's education system appears to have improved in the minds of the half (52.4%) of respondents indicating a betterment of the system since their own school education. The number is roughly double the proportion (27.4%) who feel education has become worse.

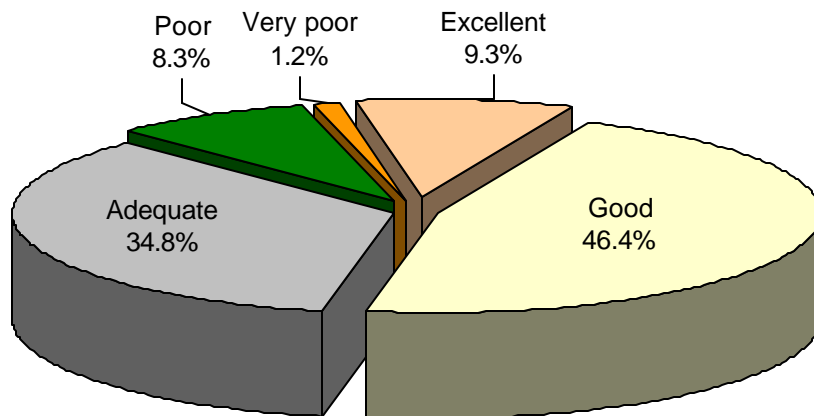
**When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?**



**C3. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

Over half (55.7%) of respondents feel that the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is good or excellent versus 9.5% who feel it is poor or very poor.

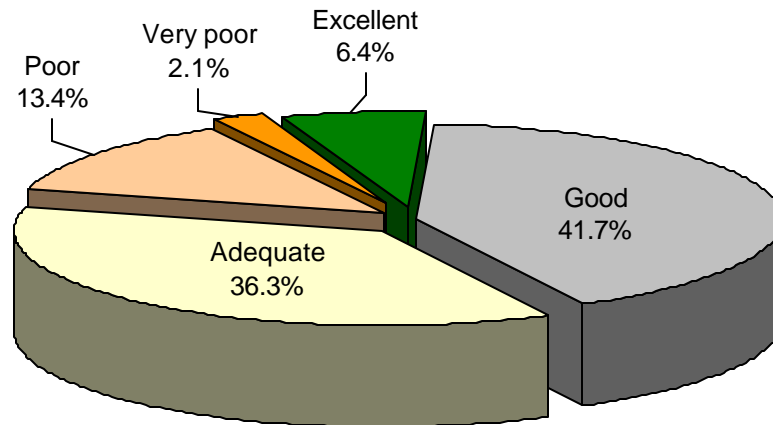
**Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**



**C4. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

Compared to the ratings given to elementary education, slightly fewer respondents (48.1%) feel the quality of secondary or high school education is good or excellent.

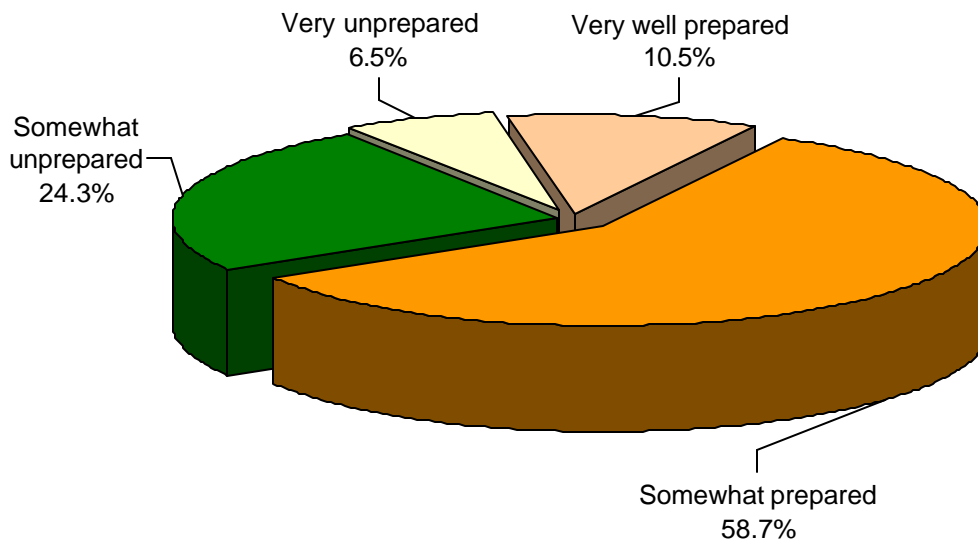
**Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**



**C5. Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like college or universities? Do you think they are...**

Nearly seven out of 10 respondents (69.2%) feel that the provinces' high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions. The largest group of respondents, 58.7% overall, feel they are somewhat prepared.

**Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like college or universities?**

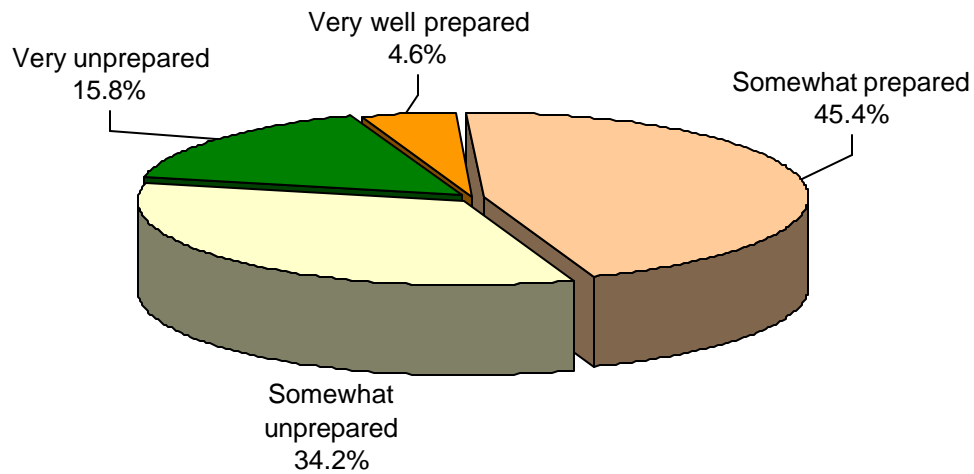




## C6. How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce? Do you think they are...

Respondents are divided on how well prepared they feel students are for entering the workforce.

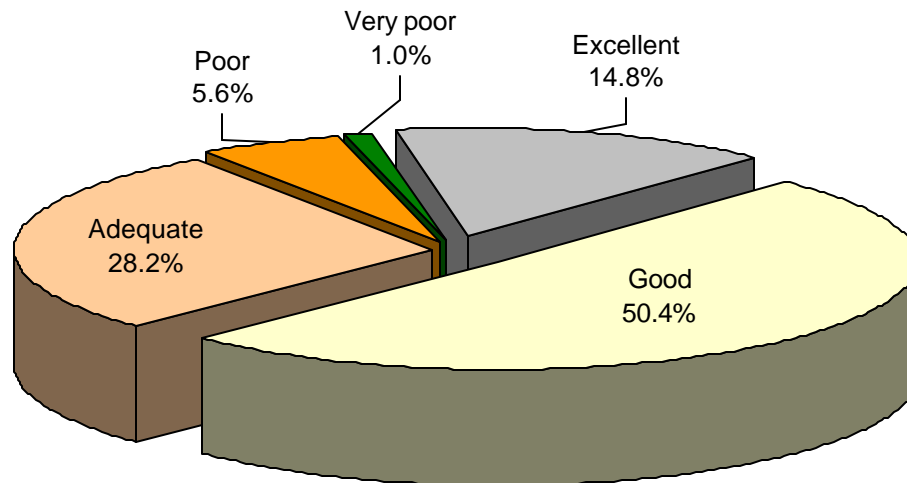
### How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce?



**C7. How well do you believe Saskatchewan’s education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the internet to enhance learning opportunities for students? Would you say it is...**

Saskatchewan residents appear to feel that the provinces’ education system is doing a good job in using new technology to enhance learning opportunities for students. Nearly two-thirds (65.2%) of respondents responded “ good” or “excellent.”

**How well do you believe Saskatchewan’s education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the internet to enhance learning opportunities for students?**

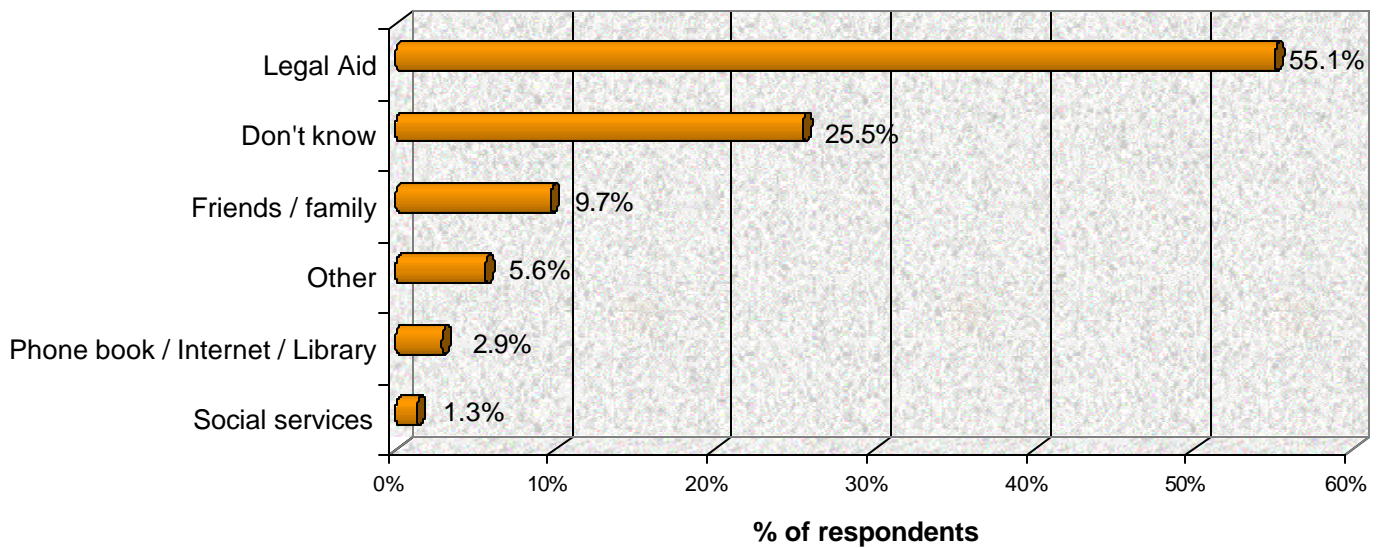


## Section D: Justice

### D1. If you could not afford to hire a lawyer on your own, where would you go for legal advice?

Legal Aid is by far the dominant choice among respondents with over one-half (55.1%) saying it would be their source for legal advice if they could not afford a lawyer.

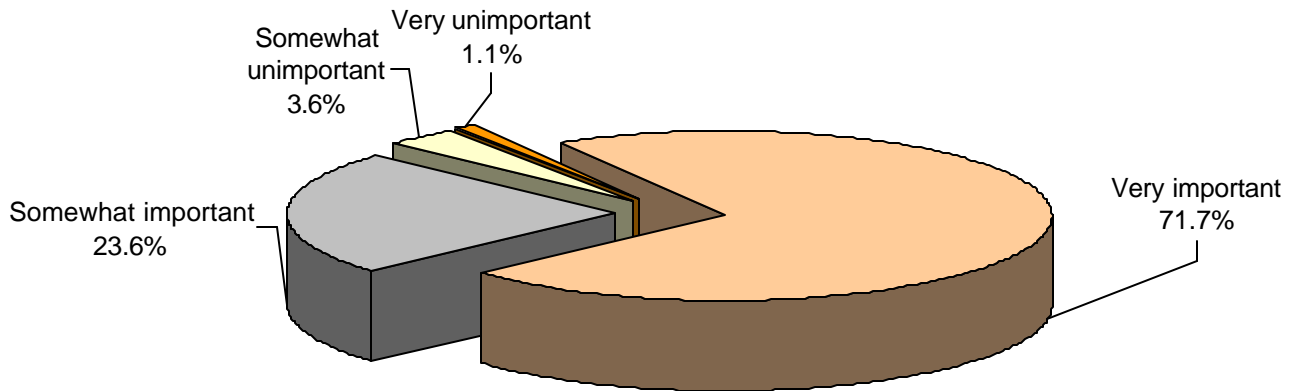
#### If you could not afford to hire a lawyer on your own, where would you go for legal advice?



**D2. How important do you think it is for the people who are unable to afford legal advice to have access to free legal services through the legal aid system?**

There is virtual unanimity on the importance of access to free legal advice for those who cannot afford it. Over 95% find access is important, with a very strong majority finding it very much so.

**How important do you think it is for the people who are unable to afford legal advice to have access to free legal services through the legal aid system?**

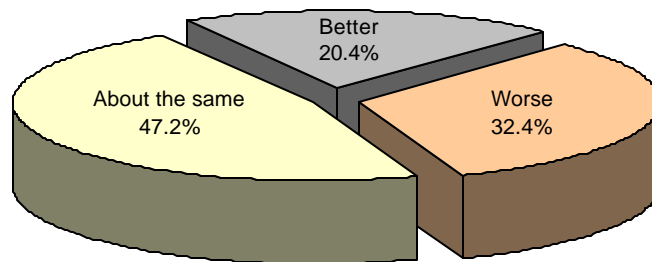


## Section E: Industry and Resources

### E1. How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think things are getting better, worse or about the same?

Nearly half (47.2%) feel things are staying the same in the province's economy. The next largest group, one in three, feels the economy is worsening. One in five respondents (20.4%) thinks Saskatchewan's economy is improving.

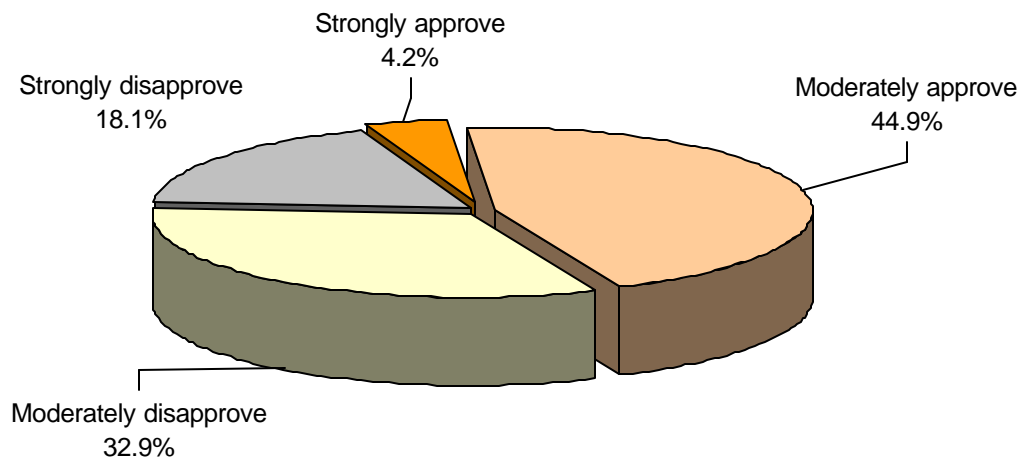
How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think things are getting better, worse or about the same?



**E2. Generally speaking do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the way the provincial government is handling the economy?**

Saskatchewan residents are divided in their opinions of the way the provincial government is handling the economy. The number that approves moderately is larger than the number that moderately disapproves, but those who disapprove strongly greatly outweigh the number that strongly approves.

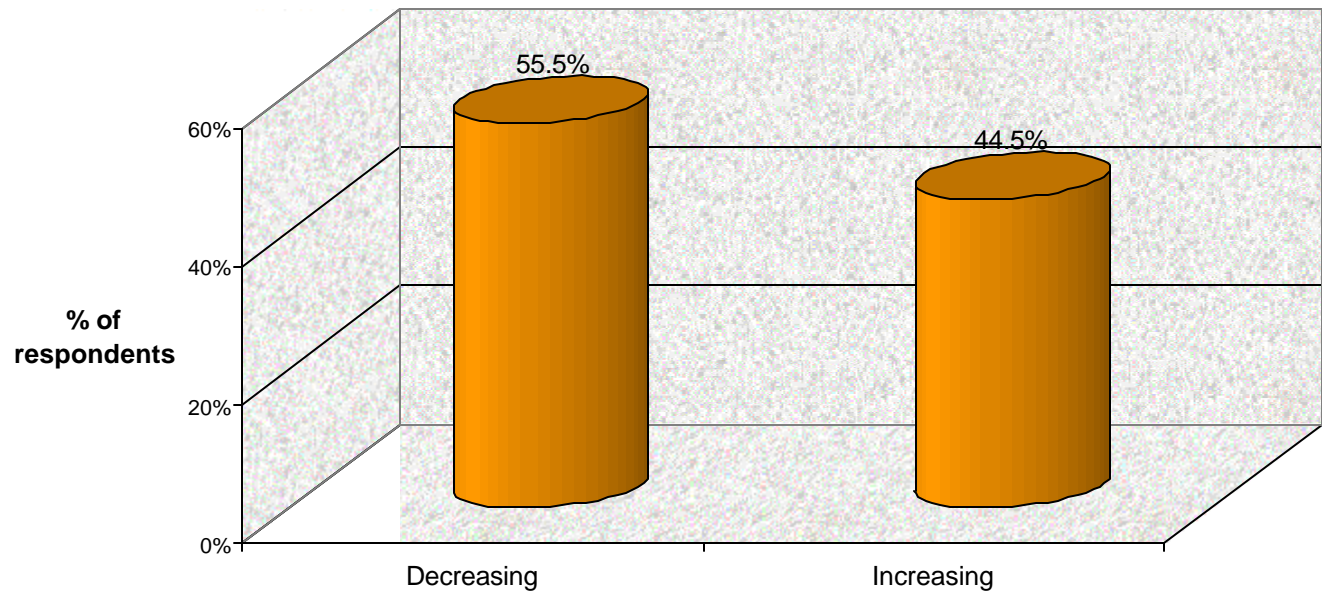
**Generally speaking do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the way the provincial government is handling the economy?**



### E3. Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan right now has been increasing or decreasing?

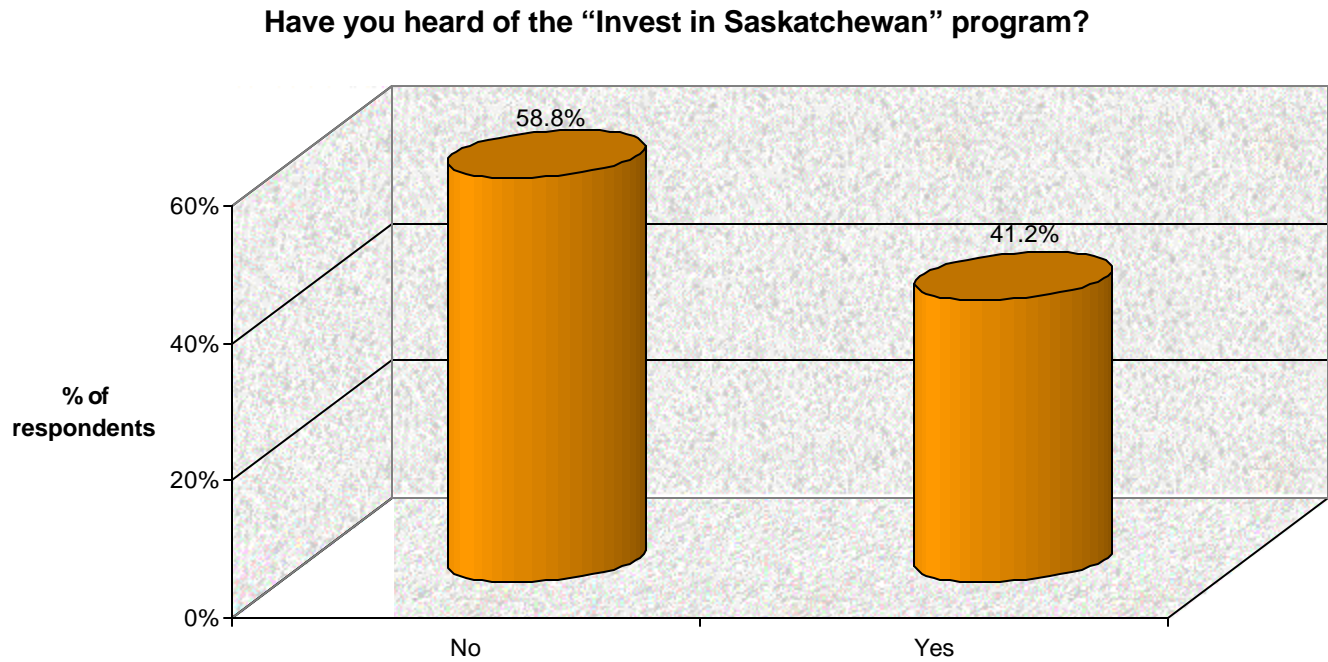
More than one-half (55.5%) of respondents think that the number of people employed in the province has been decreasing.

**Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan right now has been increasing or decreasing?**



## E4. Have you heard of the “Invest in Saskatchewan” program?

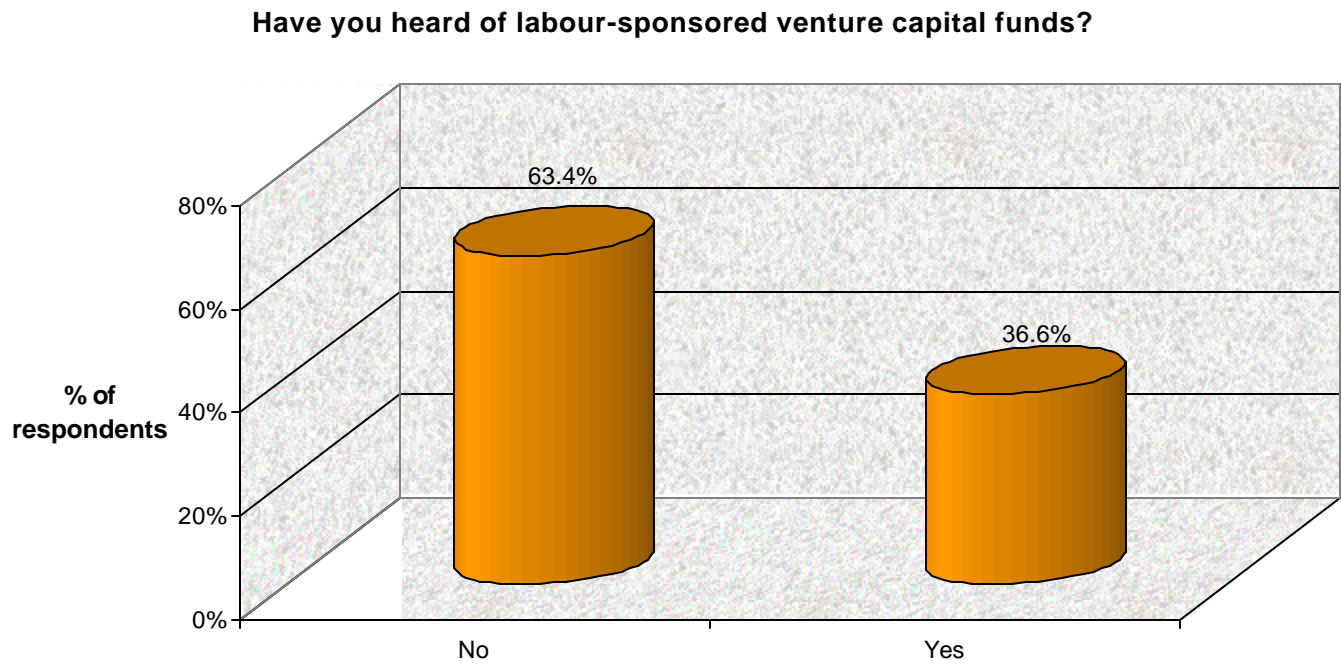
Most respondents had not heard of the program. Just over four in 10 indicated they had heard of it.





## E5. Have you heard of labour-sponsored venture capital funds?

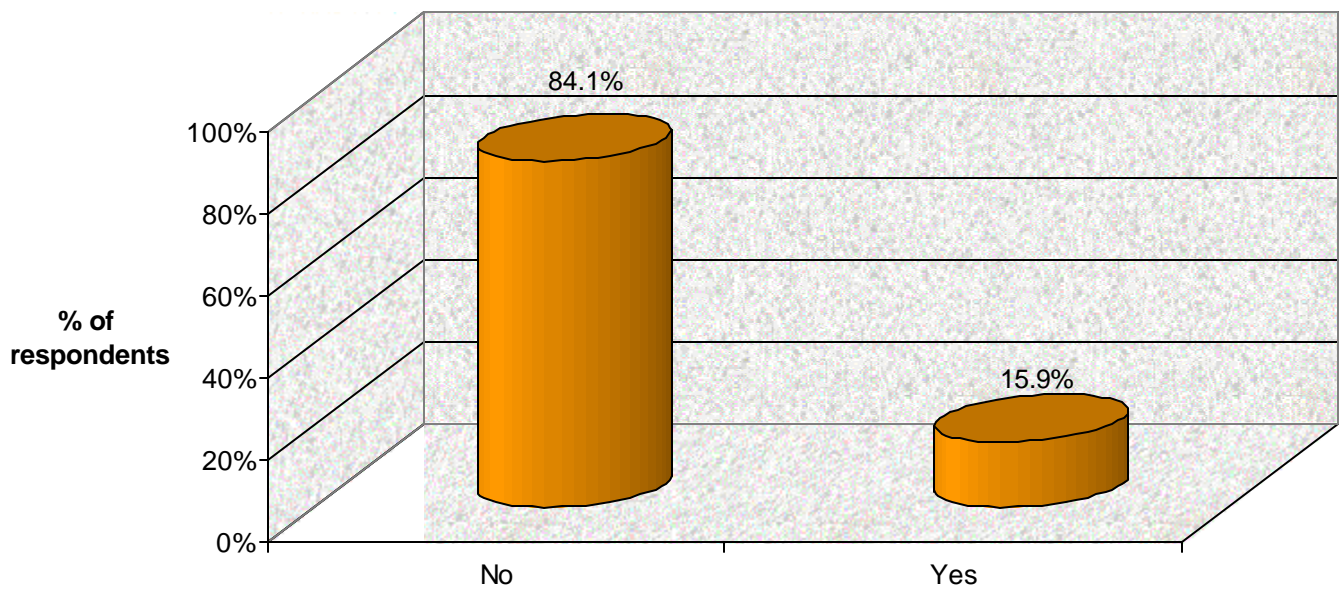
Approximately a third of respondents recognize venture capital funds as something they have heard of.



## E6. If yes: Have you invested in labour-sponsored venture capital funds as a tax credit strategy?

Of the one third of respondents who have heard of LSVC funds, nearly one in six (15.9%) has invested in the funds as a tax credit strategy.

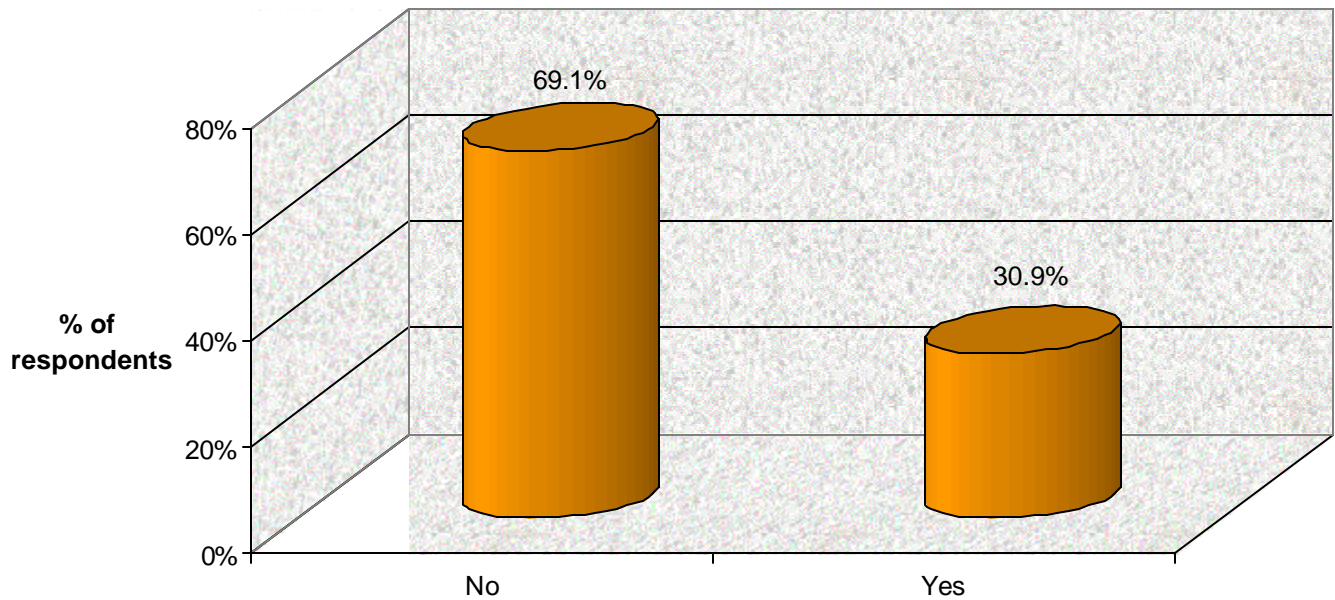
### Have you invested in labour-sponsored venture capital funds as a tax credit strategy?



## E7. Would you consider investing in labour-sponsored venture capital funds as a tax credit strategy?

Most respondents would not consider the LSVC option, though three in ten would.

### Would you consider investing in labour-sponsored venture capital funds as a tax credit strategy?



## Demographics:

### Gender:

Male	49.9%
Female	50.1%

### Age:

18 – 34	23.3%
35 – 54	38.7%
55 and over	38.0%

### Location:

City	53.8%
Town/Village/Hamlet	30.4%
Rural Municipality	15.8%

### Occupation:

Retired	25.2%
Student	6.2%
Homemaker	5.5%
Not employed	2.6%
Farmer	9.9%
Professional	15.2%
Trades person	7.2%
Business owner/self-employed	5.8%
Employee – private sector	7.2%
Employee – local government	3.0%
Employee – provincial/federal government	4.8%
Manager – private sector	1.1%
Manager – public sector	0.7%
Other	5.8%

## **Education:**

Less than grade 12	17.6%
Grade 12	26.3%
Some technical or university	13.0%
Technical diploma	16.0%
University degree	23.0%
Graduate degree	4.1%

## **Income:**

Less than \$25,000	24.1%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	34.2%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	29.0%
Over \$100,000	12.7%

## **Region:**

Saskatoon	19.8%
Regina	18.5%
Moose Jaw	2.6%
Prince Albert	3.4%
Southeast	9.0%
Southwest	12.8%
East Central	8.7%
Central	11.5%
Northwest	11.1%
North	2.4%