

Engage

MB

What We Heard

Budget 2024: Public Engagement Survey (Summary Report)

Project Overview

Each year, the Government of Manitoba encourages citizens and representatives of stakeholder groups to provide feedback regarding its annual budget. This pre-budget consultation includes activities such as virtual meetings, telephone town halls and an online survey available on EngageMB.ca website.

Engagement Overview

The budget consultation survey was available on the EngageMB.ca website between December 15th, 2024, and March 1st, 2024. The survey was promoted through a press release and a paid social media campaign, as well as during the stakeholder meetings and telephone town halls held in January and February 2024. A total of 8,227 individuals who registered with EngageMB.ca responded to the survey.

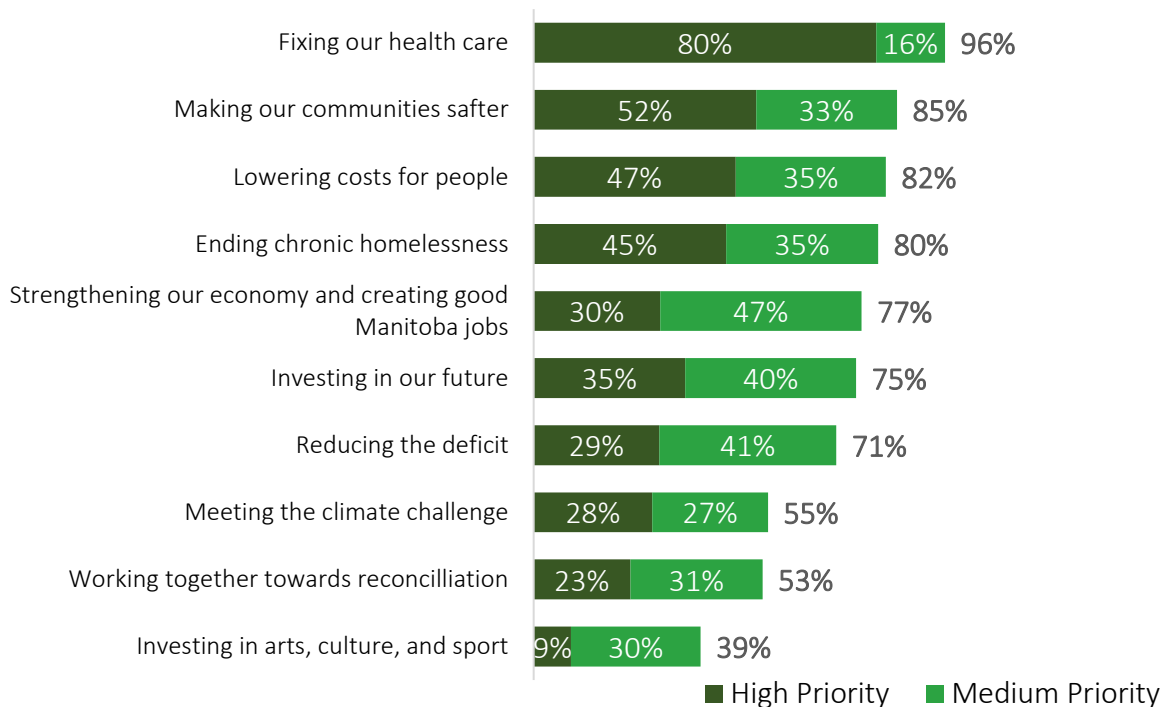
What We Heard

Overall Budget and Strategic Priorities:

Looking at the key priorities in the upcoming budget, health care continues to be the top priority among Manitobans. Virtually all (96%) believe that improving the health-care system should be a high priority for budget spending (80% say it's a high priority), with 19% specifically mentioning more public funding, support, and retaining staff). A majority (85%) want to see safer communities, while 82% consider lowering costs for people a priority, and 80% believe ending chronic homelessness should be seen as at *least* medium priority areas for the provincial budget.

Roughly three-in-ten respondents believe that strengthening the economy, investing in our future, reducing the deficit, and meeting the climate challenge should be high priorities for inclusion in the upcoming budget.

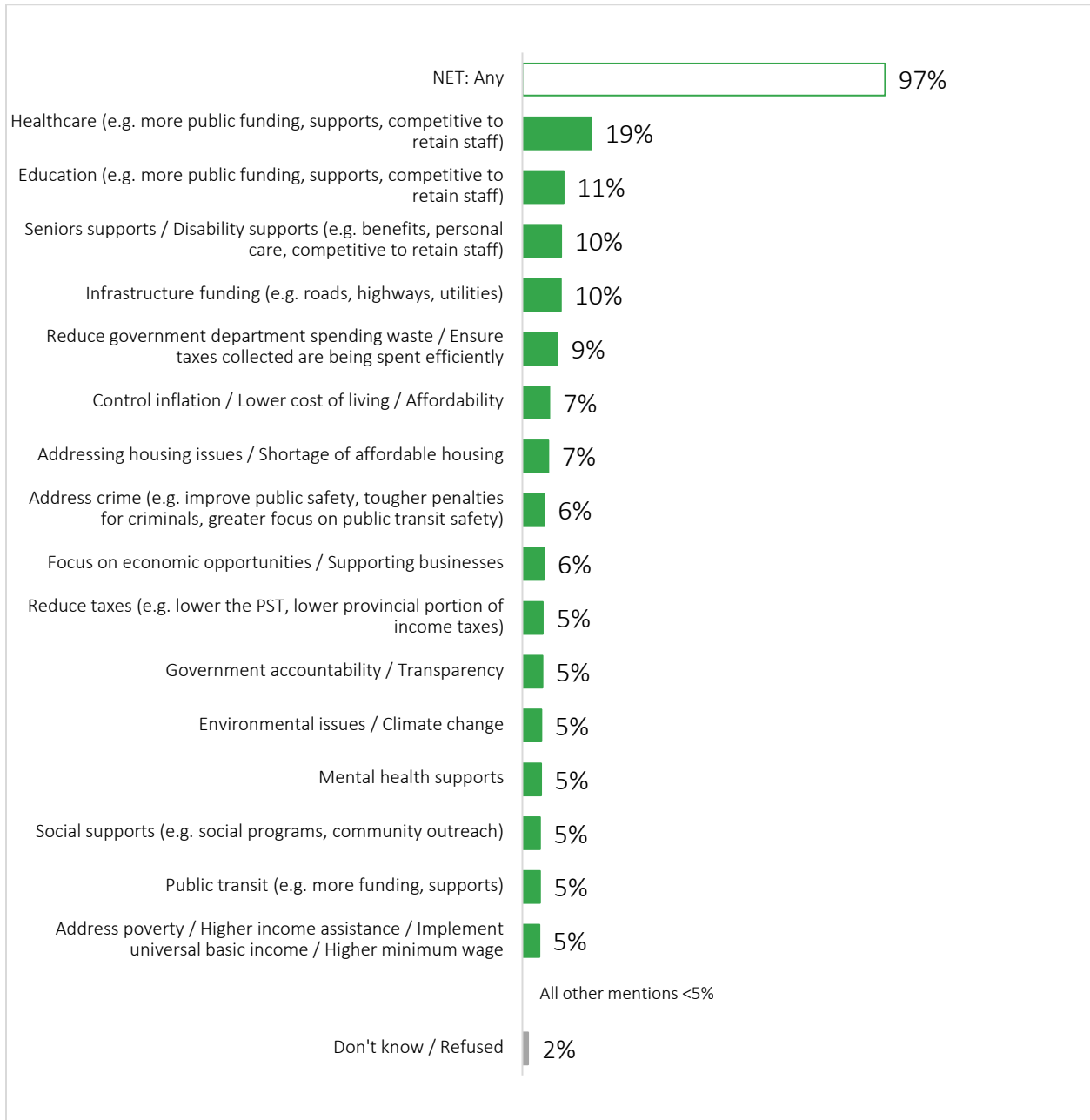
Nearly everyone prioritizes healthcare improvements, yet safer communities, reduced costs, and tackling homelessness are also key concerns.



Q1-10. Let us know how much you think your government should prioritize each area: high priority, medium priority, low priority or not a priority at all.
Base: All respondents (N=8,227)

Other Priorities for Government Focus:

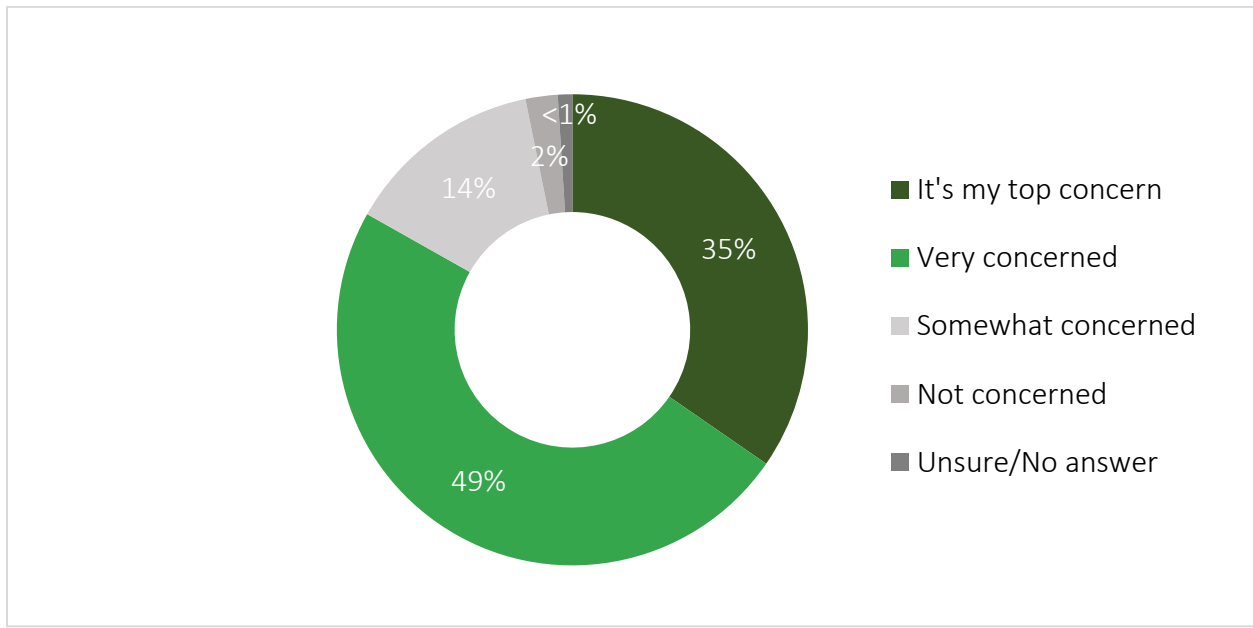
Healthcare funding and support is the top priority, followed by education funding/support, senior support, and infrastructure funding.



Q11. Apart from the priorities listed, what else should government focus on in its upcoming budget?
Base: (N=4,339)

The Current State of Health Care in Manitoba:

84% of Manitobans express some level of concern about the state of health care in the province; for 35%, it's their top concern.



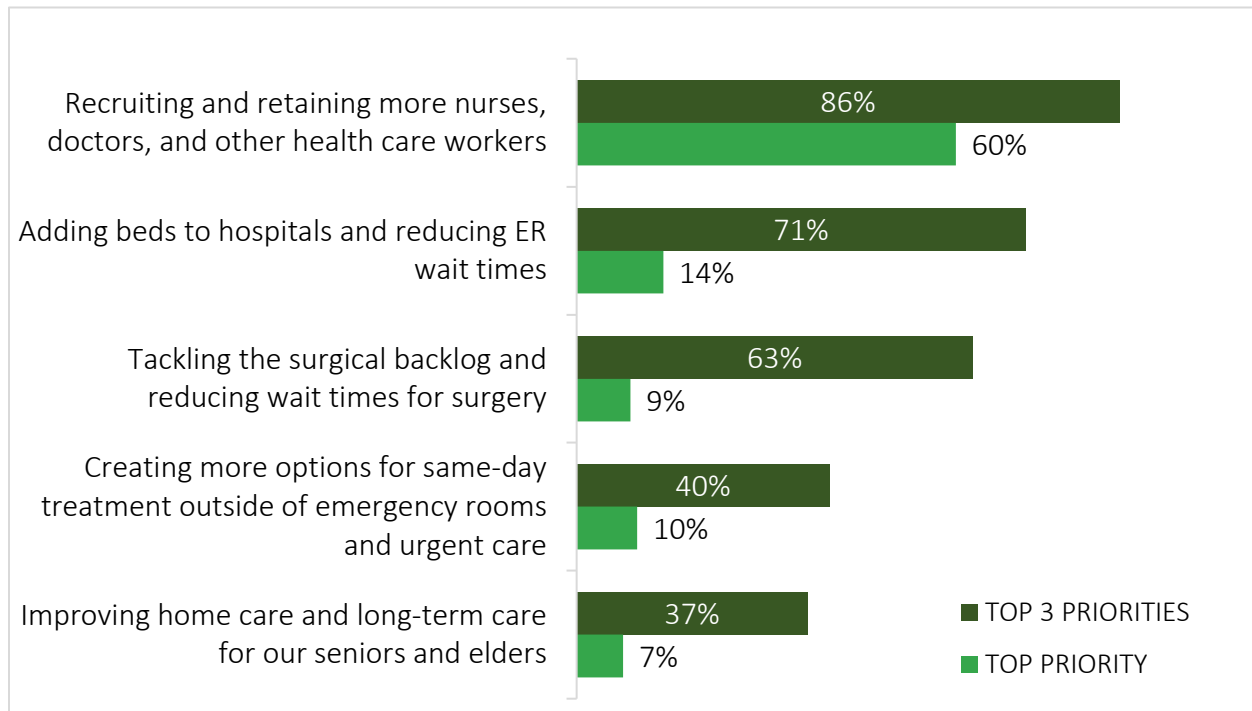
Q12. The Manitoba government has committed to taking action to help fix health care. How concerned are you about the current state of health care in Manitoba?

Base: All respondents (N=8,227)

Those who indicate their top concern is the current state of health care in Manitoba are significantly more likely to be Winnipeggers (36% vs. 33% in the rest of MB), aged 55+ (41% vs. 30% aged <55), women (42% vs. 27% of men), and white Manitobans (37% vs. 32% Indigenous or BIPOC). Few (2%) are not concerned at all.

The Top Priorities for Health Care in Manitoba:

60% of Manitobans rank recruiting and retaining nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers as the top healthcare priority.



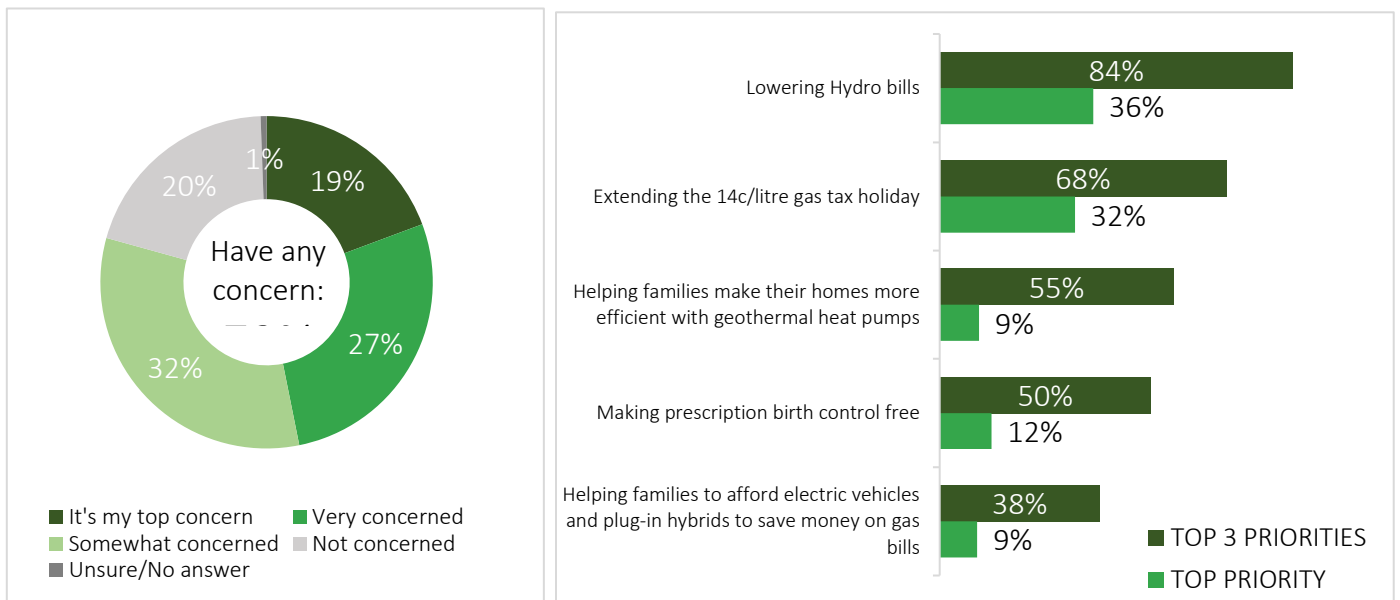
Q13. Thinking about your priorities for health care, please rank each of these options in order of importance:

Base: All respondents (N=8,227)

Winnipeg residents are more likely to feel that adding beds to hospitals and reducing ER wait times is in their top three important options compared to those in the rest of the province and less likely to say a priority is tackling the surgical backlog and creating more options for same-day treatment. Younger Manitobans (aged 18-54) rank in their top three, adding beds (73%) and creating more same-day treatment options (45%) higher than those aged 55+ (69% and 34% respectively), while Manitobans aged 55+ rank improving home care options for seniors (41%) in their top three ranking vs. those younger (32%), and seniors aged 65+ rank recruiting/retaining health care professionals in their top three (90% vs. 85% under age 65).

Outlook of Economic Condition:

Most Manitobans are concerned about their ability to make ends meet. Lowering Hydro bills is a number one concern, and nearly as many want the 14c/litre gas tax holiday to be extended.



Q14. The Manitoba government has committed to lowering costs. How concerned are you about your ability to make ends meet?

Q15. Thinking about your priorities when it comes to affordability, please rank each of these options in order of importance:

Base: All respondents (N=8,227)

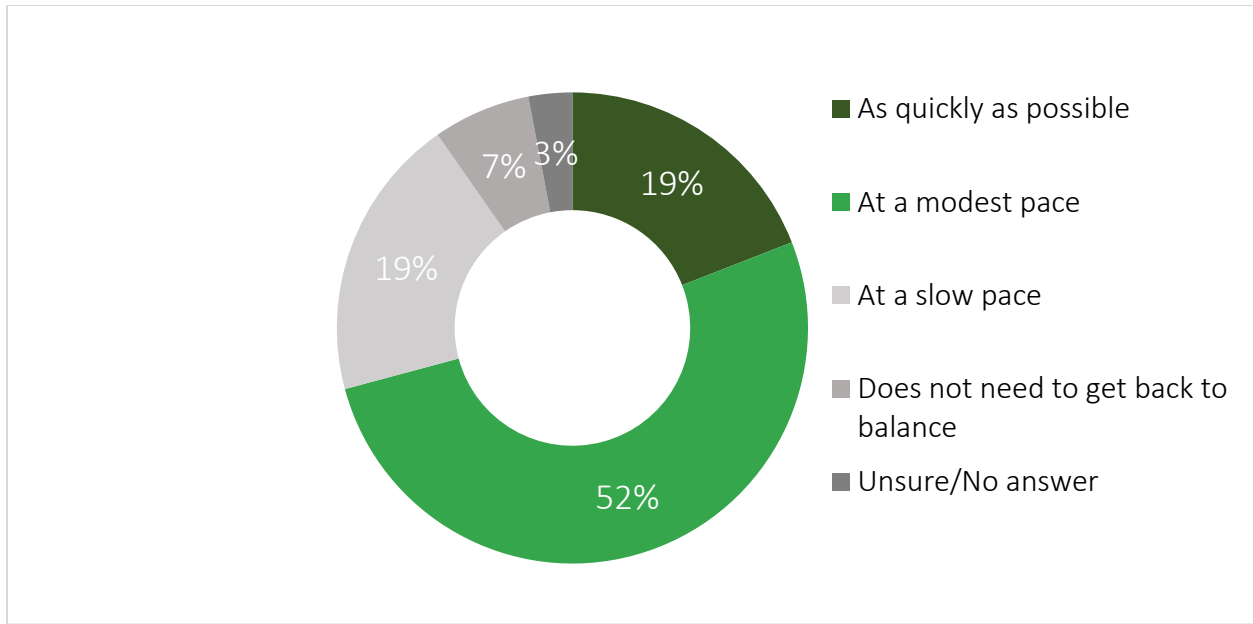
Eight-in-ten respondents have concerns about their ability to make ends meet, with 47% saying it's a top concern or they are very concerned.

Manitobans aged 18-34 (85% vs. 78% aged 35+), those living outside Winnipeg (85% vs. 76% in Winnipeg), women (81% vs. 76% of men), Indigenous (89%) and BIPOC (87%) individuals vs. white (77%), and those with household incomes of <\$50K (92% vs. 76% earning \$50K or more) are significantly more likely to be concerned about their ability to make ends meet, and in fact, are more likely to be highly (top or very) concerned.

The top three priorities when it comes to affordability are topped by lowering Hydro bills, followed by extending the 14c/litre gas tax holiday. This is particularly true among those living outside Winnipeg, aged 45-64, women, those with household incomes of <\$50K, and Indigenous/BIPOC individuals vs. their counterparts.

Government Budget Deficit:

71% of Manitobans want a quick or modest pace of getting back to balance.



Q16. The government is currently in a deficit. How quickly should the government work to get back to balance?

Base: All respondents (N=8,227)

When asked about how quickly the government should work to reduce budgetary deficits and get back to balance, 52% of respondents preferred the government to take a modest pace; however, 19% say it should be as quickly as possible, and the same number believe it should be at a slow pace.

Men (27% vs. 12% of women), those aged 45+ (20% vs. 15% aged 18-44), respondents living outside Winnipeg (24% vs. 16% of Winnipeggers), and respondents with household income less than \$50K (21% vs. 15% with a household income of more than \$50,000) were more likely to favour the government getting back to balance as quickly as possible.

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER OF FINANCE

SUBJECT

Summary of findings from pre-budget consultations.

ISSUE

Manitoba undertook broad consultations for Budget 2024. Information from this note will be included in Manitoba's What We Heard Report for Budget 2024.

BACKGROUND

Pre-budget consultations for Budget 2024 consisted of stakeholder meetings, in-person community consultations, an online survey and quick-polls through Engage MB, and written submissions via the Manitoba (MB) Budget Feedback email.

For privacy purposes recommendations and concerns are grouped into commonly identified categories.

ANALYSIS

Stakeholder Meetings

Between 18 to 20 stakeholders met with the Minister and were given the opportunity to provide the government with their budget priorities and recommendations.

The top five themes from the stakeholder meetings were:

- Increase taxes and reverse tax rebates on corporations to generate revenue.
- Make life more affordable.
- Strengthen the local economy.
- Increase funding to community programs.
- Address the housing crisis.

(See Appendix A for details)

In-Person Community Town Halls

The following four community consultations were scheduled across the province. Approximately 100 Manitobans attended the community consultations. Ten stakeholders and eleven Manitobans brought forward provincial and local priorities to the Minister at the Brandon and Winnipeg consultations.

January 31	Brandon
February 12	Morden (Cancelled)
February 26	Winnipeg (Fully accessible)
February 29	The Pas (no information available)

Feedback highlighted several needs that included addressing bedbug issues in social housing, securing housing support and childcare funding, providing senior and mental health support services, funding advanced learning programs, and reducing joint replacement wait times. Other concerns involve:

- Animal and human care.
- Supporting Indigenous populations.
- Collaborating with municipalities.
- Expanding the Manitoba Hydro grid.
- Encouraging immigration and international trade.
- Addressing labour shortages.
- Updating legislation.
- Improving public safety.
- Funding downtown programs.
- Making infrastructure investments.

(See Appendix B for details)

Submissions to MB Budget Feedback email

Between December 18, 2023, and March 1, 2024, 118 Manitobans wrote to the Minister of Finance to provide their input and priorities for Budget 2024.

Thirty-two organizations submitted budget recommendations with an additional seven who submitted after the deadline. The top five themes from the thirty-two submissions were:

- Improving access to healthcare.
- Improve employment opportunities.
- Community well-being.
- Invest in infrastructure.

Fifty-nine individuals submitted recommendations for Budget 2024. Emails concerning municipal or federal-related topics, survey feedback, inappropriate/harmful comments, and items the Government has recently dealt with (i.e., Sio Silica) are excluded from this summary.

The top five themes from 47 submissions were:

- Improve funding to strengthen healthcare.
- Improve community well-being.
- Create jobs and cut taxes to make life more affordable.
- Reduce government spending to increase revenue.
- Prioritize education.

(See Appendix D and E for details)

Appendix A Stakeholder Meetings

Affordability and Economic Growth

- Permanently cut provincial gas tax.
- Cut PST by one per cent.
- Phase out health and post-secondary education tax levy.
- Restructure tax credits.
- Adjust tax rates, introduce high-income tax brackets.
- Align tax rates with western provinces.
- Introduce a mansion tax and land transfer taxes.
- Focus on competitive tax rates over corporate handouts.
- Focus on economic development.
- Address immigration and the cost of living.
- Address Indigenous economic development.
- Alleviate economic insecurity.
- Increase integration of eligible dividends.
- Retail sales tax (RST) statute of limitations.
- Simplifying RST Compliance.
- Analyze alternative minimum tax rate.
- Invest in key sectors (green economy, tourism, and address interprovincial migration loss).
- Maintain tax competitiveness, track investments, and prioritize business consultation.
- Increase outside investors, invest in trade infrastructure, and leverage trade agreements.

Childcare /Early Childhood Education

- Use property taxes to fund schools.
- Maintain 50 per cent education property tax reduction.
- Increase operating expenditure grant.
- Allocate multi-year funding for learning recovery and mental health.
- Prioritize catch-up increases and new school capital projects.
- Resume education funding model review.
- Reassess Public-Private Partnership (P3) school building.

Manitoba Businesses

- Promote the Manitoba Advantage.
- Enhancing existing business tax credits.
- Reduce small business costs.
- Reduce carbon tax on small businesses.
- Reduce red tape.
- Address high payroll tax.
- Financial relief for small and medium enterprise.
- Continue wage adjustment program, offer worker training tax credits, and oppose new employer mandates to address labour shortages.

Community Development

- Prioritize support for community-led development initiatives, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged community.
- Develop a co-operative development strategy.
- Establish a dedicated committee for effective community economic development implementation.
- Strengthen and utilize tools for job creation, poverty reduction, and community initiatives.
- Expand funding for youth empowerment and social supports.

Government Spending

- Reduce spending to pre-pandemic levels.
- Bring government compensation in line with Manitoba's labour market.
- Cut business subsidies to return more money to Manitobans.
- Address fiscal imbalances through spending cuts.
- Address costs of maintaining existing Manitoba Hydro infrastructure.
- Redirect resources to reinvest in public service.

Healthcare

- Increase funding for community-based care and dementia support.
- Address physician shortage and promote healthcare accessibility.
- Add health care workers for the Alternate Response to Citizen in Crisis.
- Improve healthcare on and off reserve.

Housing

- Senior housing in Bridgewater.
- Increase access to housing.
- Additional funding for Manitoba Tipi Mitawa First Nations Housing Program.
- Add 1,000 rent-to-income geared units annually for 10 years.
- Introduce an income-based land transfer tax.
- Commit to a provincial land audit.
- Protect social housing from loss due to disrepair or sales.
- Ensure fair rent regulations, prevent excessive increases, and enhance evictions practices.
- Increase funding for tenant services and support workers.
- Partner with social enterprises for job training in housing construction and maintenance.

Municipalities

- Increase economic immigration to rural bilingual municipalities.
- Invest in rural infrastructure.
- Support economic development.
- Funding for incremental rail relocation opportunities
- Provide tools for local governments to offer bilingual cultural, sport, and leisure services including attractive bilingual libraries.
- Support infrastructure and municipal support.
- Police oversight and services.
- Economic development and coordination.
- Regional planning and environmental responsibility.
- Ensure predictable funding for municipalities.

Post-Secondary Education

- Strategies to emphasize international students potentially making Canada their permanent home.
- Additional funding.
- Fair allotment of funding for all universities.
- Predictable funding model for future years planning.
- Funding support required for daycare funding from federal government.
- Look at opportunities for a medical campus for more doctors.

Reconciliation

- Develop law like the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
- Support northern infrastructure roads, airports, and flight services.
- Treaty Land Entitlement Fund.
- Implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (mainly free, prior, and informed consent to activities on traditional First Nations territories).
- Resource revenue sharing for projects on First Nation traditional territories.
- Urban harm reduction campaign.

- Transition Child and Family Services to Indigenous jurisdiction.
- Red River National Metis Heritage Centre Development (former BMO).
- Hudson's Bay Company renovation/remodel/repurpose.
- Michif language revitalization.
- Ste. Madeleine's Land Transfer and Reclamation.
- Sixties Scoop/Residential and Day Schools initiatives/programs.
- Address Housing/homelessness.
- MMIWG2S+
- Emergency services and health care.

Other

- Consult industry experts and adopt best practices for new P3 Accountability legislation.
- Additional funding for the North End Water Pollution Control Centre project.

Appendix B In-person Consultations

Brandon - January 31, 2024

Affordability and Economic Growth

- Work with municipalities to attract staff and provide incentives.
- Correct funding inequity.
- Support economic development through mining and energy sector.
- Encourage immigration and increase utilization of Provincial Nominee Program.
- Funding should consider Urban Indigenous population/organizations.
- Reignite international trade.

Education

- Remove funding for businesses and reallocate into education.
- Increase education and supports in rural communities.
- Invest in fair funding for post-secondary education.
- Previous budgets need to better reflect post-secondary needs.

Infrastructure

- Invest in infrastructure.
- Reinstate satellite programs cut in 2017.
- Increase investments in Manitoba Housing units.
- Require operating funding to keep existing infrastructure.
- Repairs needed at facilities.
- Housing accelerator funding.

Manitoba Businesses

- Continue Manitoba Hydro grid expansion.
- Review funding allocations for success of Keystone Centre.
- Address mental health, housing, and social services issues.
- Address social problems for business owners.
- Develop equitable and consistent funding.
- Find opportunities to generate revenue and growth.
- Labour shortages and staffing concerns.
- Require businesses to be self-reliant.

Seniors Care

- Facility is losing funding, and more space is required.
- Not-for-profit organization that relies on government funding.
- Need Westman hospice/palliative services.
- Personal care home needs to be reimaged, how they are built combined with supportive housing.

Other Concerns Raised

- Increase funding for post-secondary institutions.
- Socio-Cultural focus and meaningful discussions.
- Need for fluid impact assessments.
- Update Environment Act.
- Increase funding for crime and public safety.
- Funding for program like Winnipeg's Downtown Biz Program.
- Remove barriers for Indigenous people.
- Reinstatement funding for non-government organizations overseas.
- Research Manitoba is falling behind.
- Are fuel taxes related to road repairs?

Winnipeg - February 26, 2024

Animal Welfare

- Increase in funding.
- Animal care and human care must go hand in hand.
- Consider broader implications/impacts of all the work organizations do, holistic approach.
- Run an emergency boarding program.
- Find pet friendly homes and temporary foster homes.

Childcare/Early Childhood Education

- Invest in sustainable childcare funding.
- Funding for Early Childhood Education salaries.
- Recommend increasing budget for childcare by \$110 million.
- Additional funding for childcare (staff salaries, etc.).
- Address and increase childcare services (e.g., first aid, etc.).
- Advanced learning programs for elementary schools.
- Create Manitoba version of Advanced Placement

Affordable Housing

- Municipal social procurement.
- Not on priority funding list.
- Do not have training program.
- Need training for people for social issues.
- Bedbug issues are happening at social housing units.
- Evictions are happening due to bedbug problems.

Healthcare

- Bring attention to osteoporosis.
- More supports for funding arthritis programs.
- Currently no such programs available in Manitoba including rural.
- Address wait times for joint replacements.
- Do more for mental healthcare.

Non-profit Housing

- Repair and modernization of existing community housing.
- Housing supports initiatives.
- Predictable funding model to assist with staffing.
- Remove PST from new builds.

Seniors

- Look at age related health issues.
- More senior support services.
- Older people population in Manitoba is high.
- Senior home modifications.

Transportation

- Funding for city's Active Transportation Bridge.
- Encourage alternatives modes of transportation.
- Province should budget for bike skills shop.
- We pay the highest amount of money for car ownership.
- Loss of Greyhound bus.
- More inner-city bus opportunities.

Other Concerns Raised

- Supports programs need to be looked at like Connections.
- Address safety concerns – online harm/cyberbullying (need legislation like Nova Scotia).

Appendix C

MB Budget Feedback email Submissions

Organizations

Agriculture

- Focus on recruitment, training, and post-secondary education.
- Implement Foot-and-Mouth Vaccine Bank, Livestock Investigation Unit.
- Address climate change.
- Improve rural childcare, internet, and cell phone networks.
- Remove education property taxes from farm property.
- Enhance livestock inspection services.

Community Wellness

- Invest in community-based sport and recreation facilities.
- Additional funding for community support programs.
- Build stronger communities.
- Sustain affordable homes.
- Co-operative housing.
- Ensure affordable childcare.

Healthcare

- Affordable fertility services for adolescents and young adults affected by cancer.
- Boost MS Specialist care.
- Enhance cancer screenings/prevention.
- Create Diabetes action plan.
- Access to Diabetes treatment.
- Provincial Dementia strategy.
- Access in supportive living for Manitobans with brain injury.
- Improve brain injury community services.
- Address joint surgery wait times, care, and treatment.
- Invest in arthritis research.
- Transparent view of Review and Funding of Preventative Health Solutions.
- Advance clinical Trial Activity.
- Create a space for prevention and follow-up medical care.
- Provide access to oncology and mental illness.

Healthcare Workers

- Invest in healthcare professionals.
- Ensure pay equity.
- Double Physician Assistant (PA) training spots and include in discounted billing.
- Enhance Community-based hospice palliative care and care provider education.
- Strategies for medical Radiation Technologists hiring/retention strategies.

Immunization

- Publicly fund shingles vaccine.
- Publicly fund adult vaccines.
- Vaccines for Seniors.
- Adult shingles immunization to routine immunization schedule.
- COVID Vaccine Procurement Strategy.
- Support Community Pharmacist Vaccinators.

Income Support and Job Security

- Employment Security for people living with MS.
- Provide income Security for Manitobans with disabilities.
- Create a Working Towards an Effective Canada Disability Benefit.
- Increase earned income exemption for social assistance recipients.
- Exempt Canada Disability Benefit for all social assistance recipients.
- Augment the Canada Workers Benefit into the proposed Canada Working-Age Supplement.
- Protect currently effective workplace benefit plans and permit standalone Variable Payment Life Annuities (VPLAs).
- Monitor and parallel federal measures to introduce Advanced Life Deferred Annuity (ALDA), Variable Life Benefits (VLBs) and VLPAs as new retirement income options.

Prescription Drugs

- Transition from original biologic drugs biosimilar biologic.
- Create a drug therapy reimbursement process.
- Transparent public drug program.
- Support people without prescription drug coverage.

Tobacco

- Improve dialogue with regulators.
- Address access to non-compliant vaping and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products.
- Enhance NRT program.
- Fund vaping prevention/reduction efforts.
- Maintain tax policy reducing legal tobacco costs.
- Increase tobacco and vaping taxation.
- Change the federal harmonized vaping tax.
- Illegal tobacco enforcement and investigations.
- Commercial tobacco manufacturers cost recovery fee.
- Implement youth access prevention programs.
- Increase awareness on alcohol-specific risks.
- Address job protection and long-term illness benefits.

Seniors

- Address elder abuse and ageism.
- Develop loneliness strategy.
- Enhance Financial Security.
- Improve transportation and care homes.
- Fund low-cost rehab programs.
- Provide low-income subsidies for devices/Internet.

Other

- Study alternative rural and remote police service delivery models.
- Invest in tourism.
- Amend Manitoba Retail Sales Tax Act, Retail Sales Tax regulation and the Fuel Tax Act.
- Study with the Canada Infrastructure Bank Technological infrastructure.
- Build technological infrastructure.
- Promote physical and mental health.
- Intelligent technology educational awareness for students.
- Hotelier input as gaming is reviewed.
- Hotel vendor sustainability.

Appendix D
MB Budget Feedback email Submissions
Individuals

Affordability and Economic Growth

- Reduce taxes.
- Support the middle class.
- Lower Hydro bills.
- Job opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Create jobs.
- Support Indigenous economic growth.

Climate and Environment

- Do not extend the gas tax holiday.
- Rebates for e-bikes.
- Tax incentives for electric vehicles or geothermal is over funding.
- Fund soil biology and green energy research.
- Install geothermal systems in Manitoba Housing builds for condominiums.
- Invest into fighting forest fires.
- Lumbering focused on coniferous trees.

Community Well-Being

- Improve and increase social housing.
- Address homelessness.
- Increase detox centers, shelters for vulnerable women and children.
- Create safe consumption sites.
- Address unemployment insurance pitfalls.
- Increase social supports for people with disabilities.
- Address youth crime.
- Introduce a universal basic income for individuals in government housing allocated for food.
- Increase tax on tobacco and alcohol.
- Support children in care.
- Restructure the incarceration system.
- Fund for First Nations communities.
- Education opportunities for drug offenders.
- Have social workers conduct wellness checks.
- Increase supports and services for newcomers.

Education

- Increase spending.
- Free post-secondary education for Manitoban's who have lived in the province for two years.
- Incentivize regular exercise for school aged students.
- Segmented education.
- Funding to meet language-learning needs for children (newcomers).
- Pay for education on income-taxes.

Government Spending

- Eliminate Efficiency Manitoba.
- Reduce government boards.
- Balance the budget.
- Drop tax cuts.
- Re-evaluate departmental spending.
- Do not search the landfill.
- Leverage the scale of the government to efficiently spend our tax money.

Healthcare

- Increase prescription drug coverage.
- Expand healthcare coverage (i.e. physiotherapy, psychology).
- Increase public health education.
- Address waits times for emergency rooms and doctors.
- Increase beds for hospitals.
- Faster care for heart health.
- Reduce spending on agency nurses.
- Increase wages for healthcare workers.
- Recruitment and retention for healthcare workers.
- Fund research.
- Government controlled health data.
- Reduce Pharmacare deductible for seniors.
- Fund borderline personality disorder.
- Allow private healthcare.
- Increase support for mental health.
- Affordable and quality assisted living for seniors.
- Support healthcare costs for seniors.
- Enable physicians to prescribe healthcare education through dieticians, public health nurses and exercise.
- Eliminate administration waste.
- Remove abortion.

Other

- Work from home subsidies.
- Store electronic data up north to save costs.
- Improve transportation infrastructure between Winnipeg and northern communities.
- Fund farming equipment.
- Government controlled botanist research.
- Reduce artificial scarcity.
- Have government-controlled farmland.
- Legalize personal cannabis growing.
- Increase taxation.
- Increase funding for heritage sites.
- Cut costs from mining investments.
- Investing in Canadian company called "Framework."