



Confederation
of Tomorrow

Canadians on Reconciliation and Relations with Indigenous Peoples

**Environics
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For Survey Research

2025 SERIES

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The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

Contact Us

environicsinstitute.org

info@environicsinstitute.org

701-33 Bloor Street East
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1

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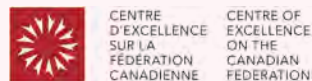


The Confederation of Tomorrow surveys give voice to Canadians about the major issues shaping the future of the federation and their political communities. They are conducted annually by an association of the country's leading public policy and socio-economic research organizations.

The 2025 study consists of a survey of 5,391 adults, conducted between May 1 and June 16, 2025 (92% of the responses were collected between May 6 and May 29); 90% of the responses were collected online. The remaining responses were collected by telephone (both landline and cell phone) from respondents living in the North or on First Nations reserves, or from francophone respondents in New Brunswick.

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Background

Ten years ago, in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held its closing event, published its six-volume final report and issued its Calls to action. Since then, the journey toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada has been marked by many steps forward and backward. Countless initiatives have been launched across the country to encourage greater awareness and understanding of the history and legacy of the Indian Residential School system in Canada, including the declaration of September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. At the same time, progress toward the implementation of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action has been slow, as economic and social inequalities affecting the well-being of Indigenous Peoples persist.

Since 2019, the annual Confederation of Tomorrow surveys have been tracking Canadian attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation. This year's report from the 2025 survey, published in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, provides an opportunity to assess the state of public opinion on these issues 10 years after the completion of the TRC's work.

The survey finds some encouraging trends. For instance, the proportions of both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people who view current relations between the two groups as positive, and who say they are optimistic that there will be meaningful progress toward reconciliation over the next decade, have both increased. There are also signs that familiarity with the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada is gradually increasing over time. At the same time, while most feel that individual Canadians have a role to play in bringing about reconciliation, fewer than before believe that governments have not been doing enough.

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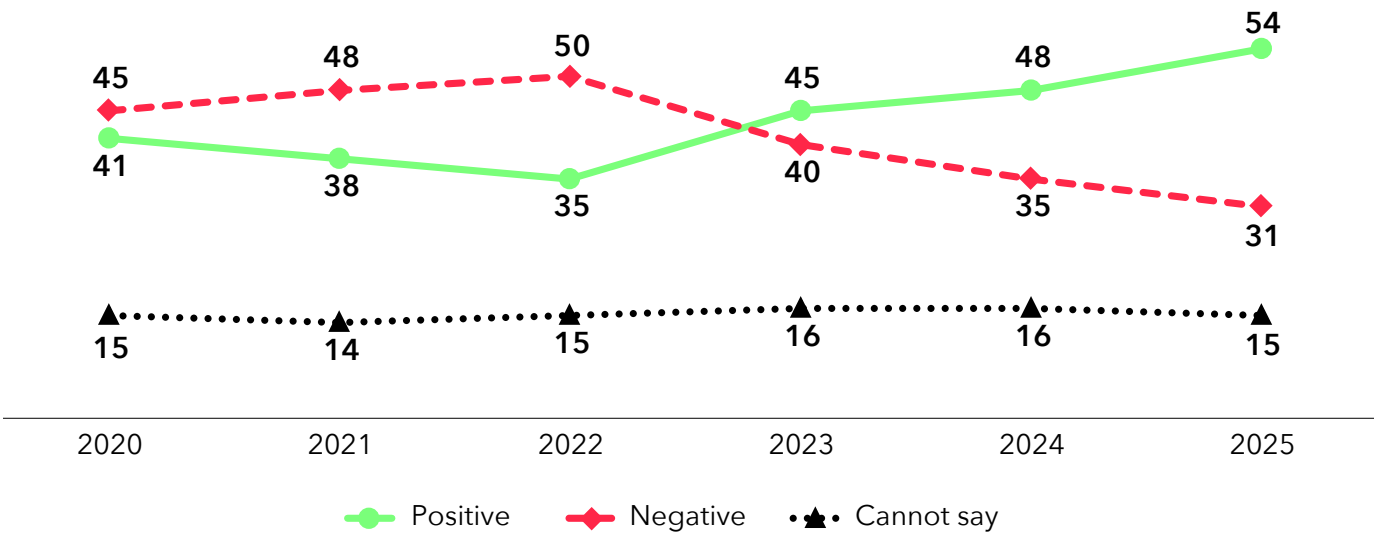
Key findings

- Canadians' view of current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people has been **steadily improving for several years**. The proportion describing current relations as positive has increased among both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people.
- A plurality of Canadians say that **governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation**, although the proportion expressing this view has declined somewhat in recent years. On this question, there is a significant difference in opinion between the views of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people.
- About seven in ten Canadians say that **individuals like themselves have a role to play** in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. One in two say they feel strongly about their own role in the reconciliation process.
- **Younger Canadians** are more likely than their older counterparts to say that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation, and to say they feel strongly that individual Canadians also have a role to play.
- Two in three Canadians say they are either very or somewhat **familiar with the history of Indian Residential Schools** in Canada. There are signs that familiarity is gradually increasing over time.
- A majority of Canadians continue to **feel optimistic that there will be meaningful reconciliation** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada over the next decade. Optimism has increased slightly since last year. Indigenous Peoples are about as likely as non-Indigenous people to express some degree of optimism.
- A large majority of Indigenous Peoples in Canada have **at least some friends and colleagues who are non-Indigenous**. However, the reverse is not the case for non-Indigenous people.
- There is a relationship between having friends who are Indigenous, and attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation. On most questions, **non-Indigenous people who report having many or some close Indigenous friends** are more likely than those with no close Indigenous friends to view current relations positively, and to be optimistic about the prospects for reconciliation.

Relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada

Canadians' view of current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people has been steadily improving for several years. The proportion describing current relations as either very or somewhat positive was as low as 35 percent in 2022. Since then, that proportion has increased each year, and in 2025 has reached a majority of 54 percent. Thirty-one percent of Canadians today describe current relations as somewhat or very negative, down from 50 percent in 2022. Thirty-one percent of Canadians today describe current relations as somewhat or very negative, down from 50 percent in 2022.

Figure 1
Current state of relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada
2020 - 2025



Would you describe the current relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada today as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?

Since 2022, the proportion describing current relations as very or somewhat positive has increased among both Indigenous Peoples (up 22 percentage points, from 34% to 56%) and non-Indigenous people (up 18 points, from 36% to 54%).



Canadians who say that current relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people are very or somewhat positive

35%

2022



54%

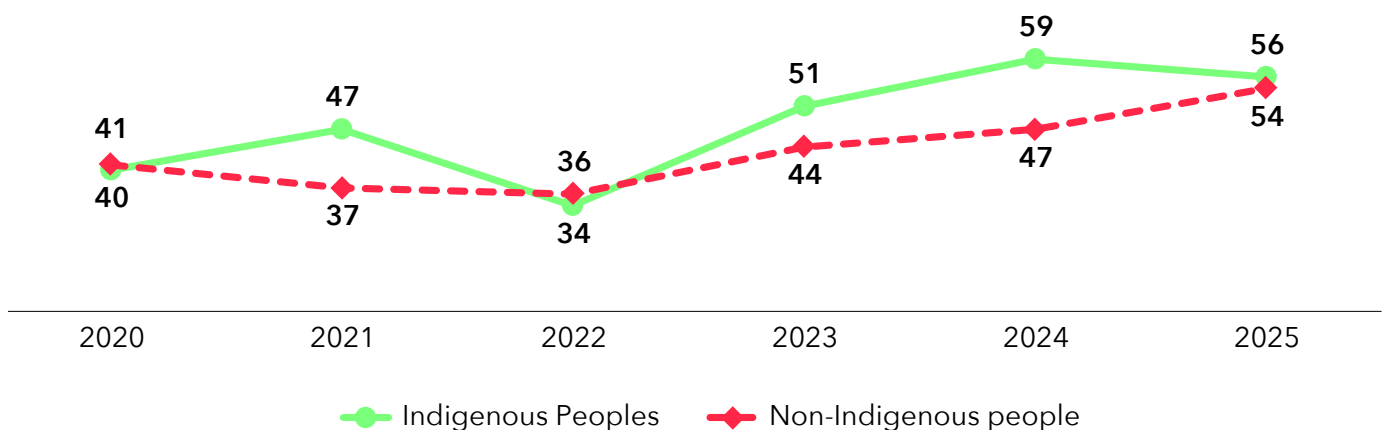
2025

The sense that relations are positive has increased in every region of the country. However, the proportion holding this view remains lower than average in the Prairies (47%), particularly in Manitoba (41%) and Saskatchewan (42%).

Figure 2

Current relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada are positive

2020 - 2025, by identity



Would you describe the current relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada today as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?



Responsibility for reconciliation

Governments

A plurality of Canadians says that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation, although the proportion expressing this view has declined somewhat in recent years.

Currently, 37 percent of Canadians say that governments have not gone far enough, and 29 percent say their efforts are about right. This compares to 22 percent who feel that governments have gone too far to advance reconciliation (an additional 11% do not offer an opinion either way).

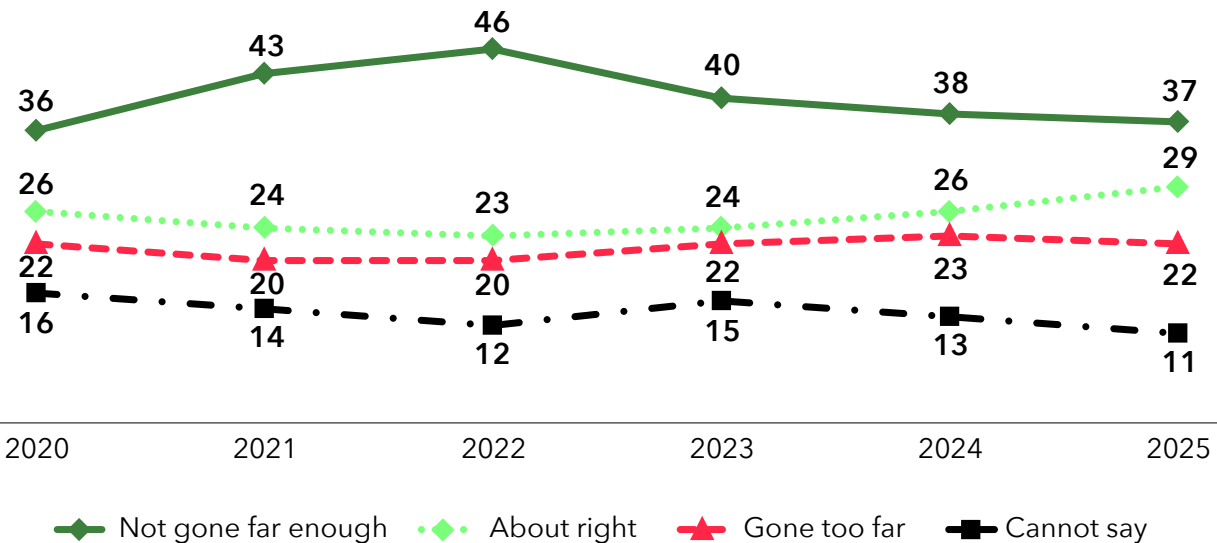
In 2022, 46 percent said that governments have not gone far enough; this proportion has declined by nine percentage points since then.

A plurality of Canadians says that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation, although the proportion expressing this view has declined somewhat in recent years.

Figure 3

Have governments gone too far or have they not gone far enough to advance reconciliation?

2020 - 2025



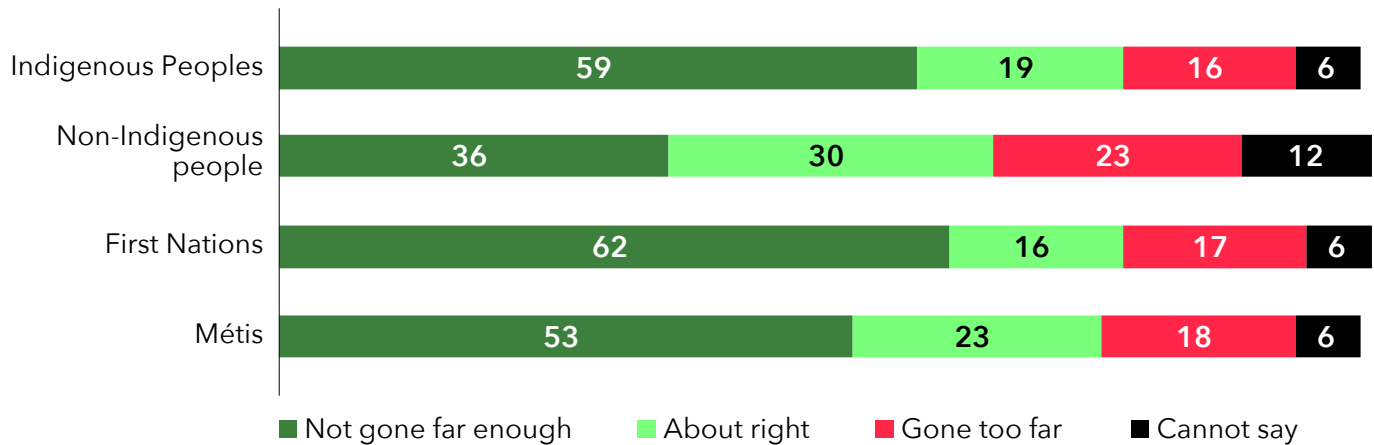
In your opinion, have governments in Canada gone too far or have they not gone far enough in trying to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples?

On this question, there is a significant difference in opinion between the views of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people. Among Indigenous Peoples, 59 percent say that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation, compared to only 16 who say that they have gone too far. Among non-Indigenous people, the proportions are 36 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

Figure 4

Have governments gone too far or have they not gone far enough to advance reconciliation?

2025, by identity



In your opinion, have governments in Canada gone too far or have they not gone far enough in trying to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples?

There are also differences of opinion by age and by region. Younger Canadians are more likely than their older counterparts to say that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation: this is the view of 50 percent of those age 18 to 24, but only 32 percent of those age 55 and older.

The view that governments have not gone far enough is highest in the North (53%), in Ontario (43%) and in the Maritimes (40%). The opposing view, that governments have gone too far, is highest in Manitoba (37%) and Saskatchewan (34%). In these two provinces, these proportions outweigh the proportions who say that governments have not gone far enough (26% and 30%, respectively).

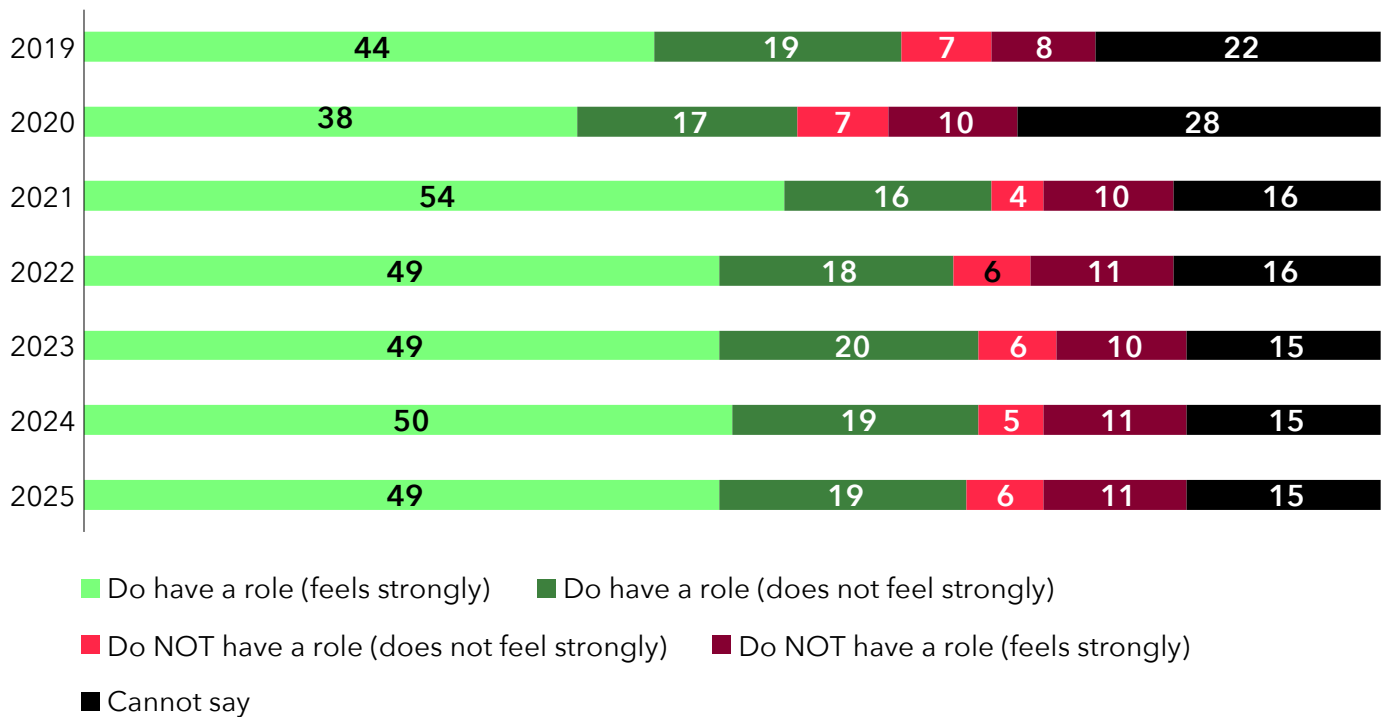
Individual Canadians

While a plurality of Canadians says that governments should do more to advance reconciliation, a majority continues to believe that citizens like themselves also have a role to play. About seven in ten (68%) say that individual Canadians have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and only 17 percent disagree (and additional 15% do not take a position either way). The distribution of opinions on this question have remained unchanged over the past four years.

Figure 5

Role of individual Canadians in reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

2019 – 2025



Do you believe that individual Canadians do, or do not, have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?

It is notable that many Canadians feel *strongly* about their own role in the reconciliation process. Overall, 68 percent believe that individual Canadians have a role, but this includes 49 percent who feel strongly about this, compared to 19 percent who agree but without feeling strongly. By contrast, only 11 percent feel strongly that individuals do not have a role to play.

Indigenous Peoples are more likely than non-Indigenous people to feel strongly that individual Canadians have a role to play (60%, compared to 48%). But there is no gap between the two groups when we consider all of those who believe that individuals have a role to play, whether they feel strongly about this or not (68% in both cases).

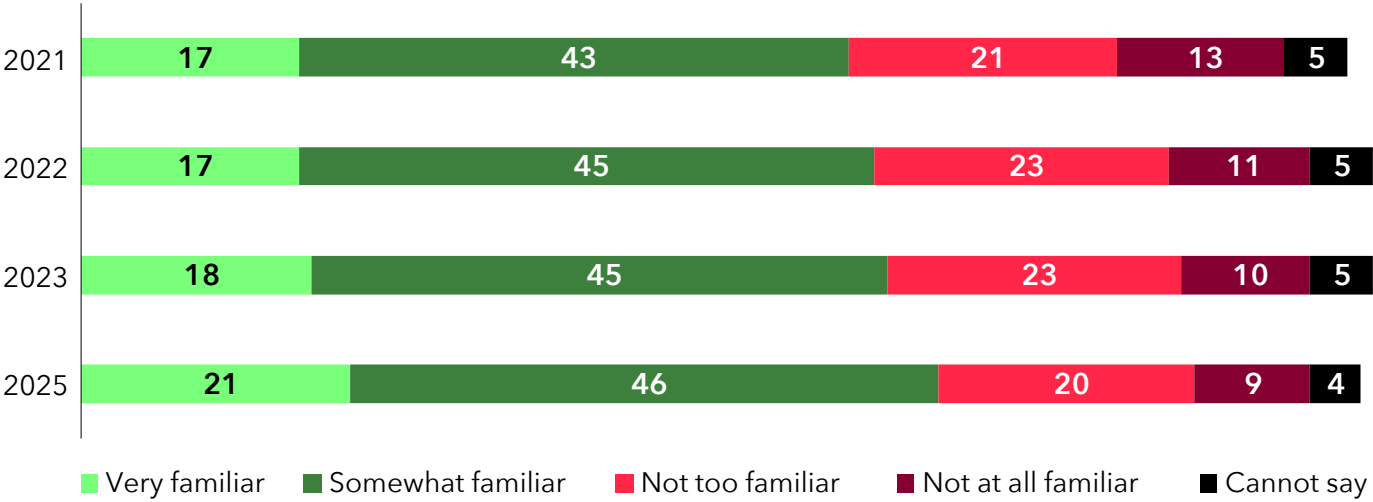
Once again, a more supportive outlook on reconciliation is more common among younger Canadians and in the North. The proportion that feels strongly that individual Canadians have a role to play is 59 percent among those age 18 to 24, compared to 43 percent among those age 55 and older. This proportion reaches 66 percent in the three territories, compared to 49 percent in the 10 provinces.



Familiarity with the history of Indian Residential Schools

One of the main objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was to ensure that Canadians gained awareness and understanding of the painful history and legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system. Ten years after the Commission completed its work, a majority of Canadians report at least some familiarity with this history: 67 percent say they are either very or somewhat familiar with the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, compared to 29 percent who are not too or not at all familiar. However, only one in five (21%) say they are very familiar.

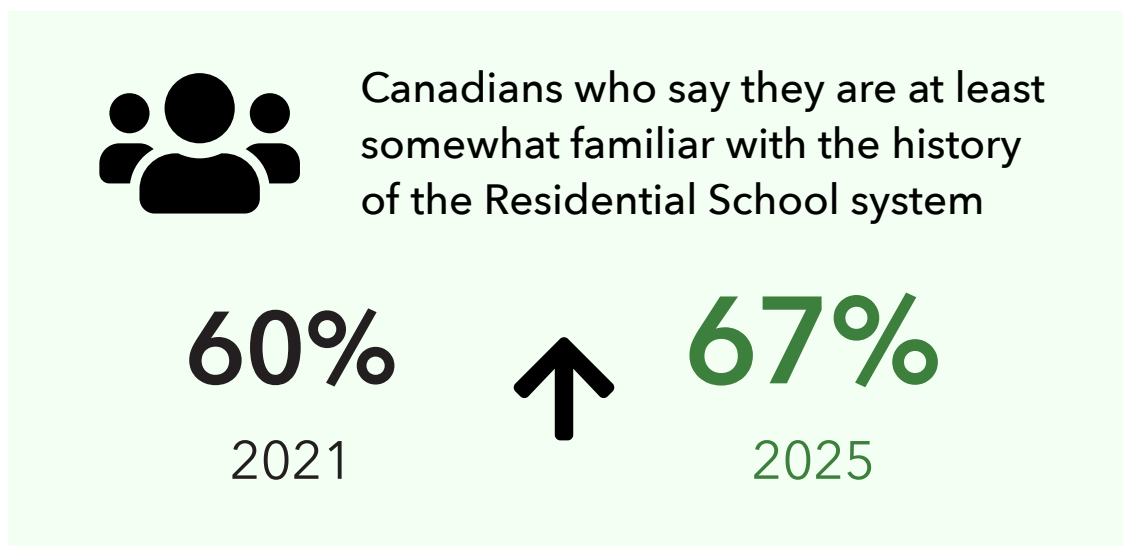
Figure 6
Familiarity with the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada
2021 - 2025



How familiar do you feel you are with the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada?

There are signs that familiarity is gradually increasing over time. In 2021, 60 percent of Canadians said they were at least somewhat familiar with the history of the Residential School system; in 2025, this figure stands at 67 percent. Familiarity is a little higher among younger Canadians: 78 percent of those age 18 to 24 say they are either very or somewhat familiar with this history.

Familiarity is higher among Indigenous Peoples (81%) than non-Indigenous people (66%). Regionally, familiarity is lower than average in Quebec (55%), and higher than average in the West (73%) and the North (90%).



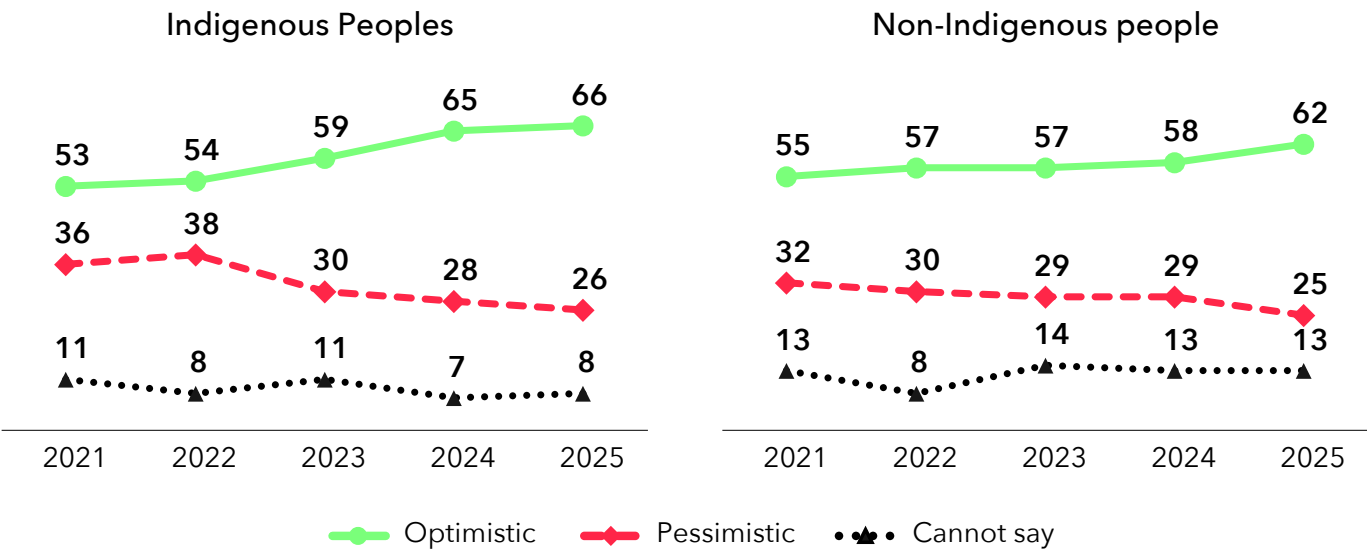
Future outlook

A clear majority of Canadians (62%) continues to feel very or somewhat optimistic that there will be meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada over the next decade. Optimism has increased slightly since last year, when it stood at 58 percent. One in four (25%) Canadians are currently very or somewhat pessimistic about the prospects for reconciliation, down from 29 percent in 2024.

Indigenous Peoples (66%) are about as likely as non-Indigenous people (62%) to express some degree of optimism. However, Indigenous Peoples (24%), especially those who identity as First Nations (28%), are about twice as likely as non-Indigenous people (12%) to say they are very optimistic.

Optimism among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people has increased since this question was first asked in 2021, but a little more so among Indigenous People (up 13 percentage points) than non-Indigenous people (up 7 points).

Figure 7
Outlook on reconciliation
2021 - 2025



Thinking about Canada over the next decade, are you very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, somewhat pessimistic or very pessimistic that we will make meaningful progress towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?



It is notable that optimism is higher among those who express at least some familiarity with the history of Residential Schools, compared to those who are not familiar. Among non-Indigenous people, 70 percent of those who are familiar with this history, compared to 51 percent of those who are not familiar, say they are optimistic that there will be meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada over the next decade. Among Indigenous Peoples, the respective figures are 69 and 59 percent.

The importance of social connections

A large majority of Indigenous Peoples in Canada have at least some friends and colleagues who are non-Indigenous. However, the reverse is not the case for non-Indigenous people.

Among Indigenous Peoples:

- 87% have many (42%) or some (45%) close friends who are non-Indigenous;
- 87% have many (40%) some (47%) people in their larger group of friends who are non-Indigenous;
- 77% have many (39%) or some (38%) people that they work with or go to school with who are non-Indigenous;
- 81% have many (45%) or some (36%) people who live in their neighbourhood who are non-Indigenous.

Among non-Indigenous people, however:

- 35% have many (7%) or some (28%) close friends who are Indigenous;
- 39% have many (5%) some (34%) people in their larger group of friends who are Indigenous;
- 36% have many (6%) or some (30%) people that they work with or go to school with who are Indigenous;
- 38% have many (6%) or some (32%) people who live in their neighbourhood who are Indigenous.

Among non-Indigenous people, the extent of social connection with Indigenous Peoples is much higher in the North: 20 percent of non-Indigenous residents of the territories have many close Indigenous friends, and 78 percent have at least some (the figures in for non-Indigenous residents of the provinces are 7% and 35%, respectively).

Social connections with Indigenous Peoples are also more common among younger non-Indigenous Canadians: 17 percent of those age 18 to 24 say they have many close Indigenous friends, compared with only two percent of those age 55 and older.

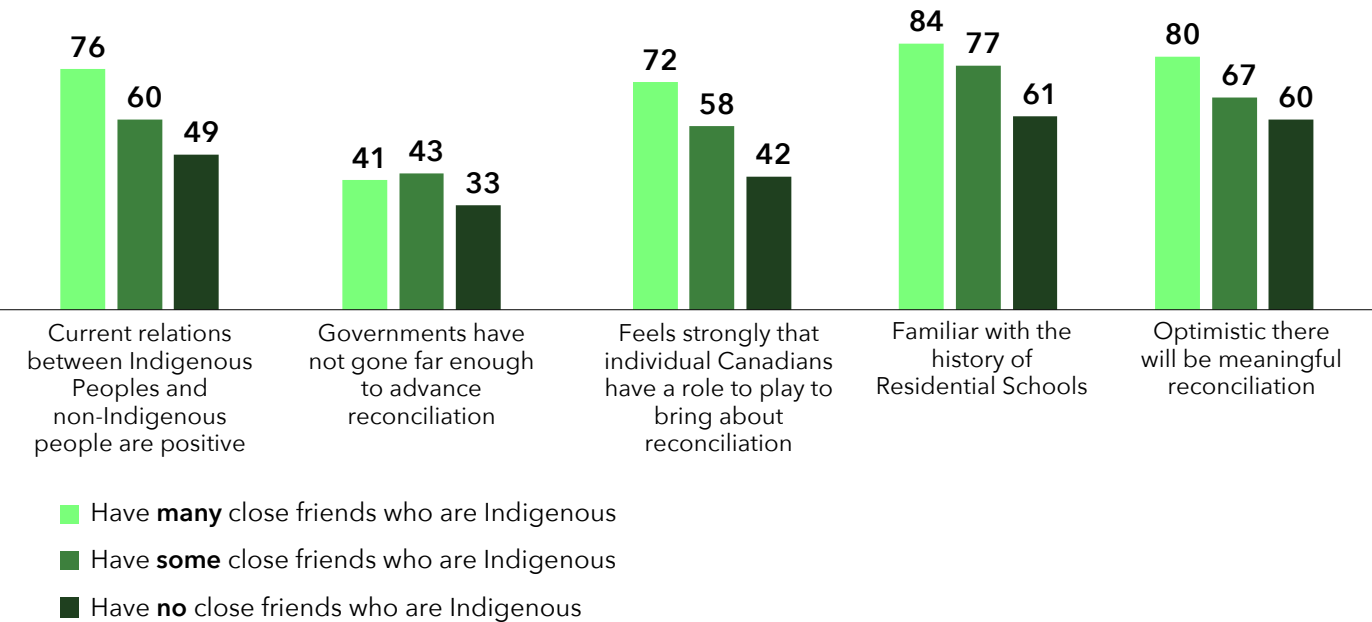
There is a relationship between having friends who are Indigenous, and attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation. On most questions, non-Indigenous people who report having many or some close Indigenous friends are more likely than those with no close Indigenous friends to take a positive view. For instance, 76 percent of those with many close Indigenous friends view current relations positively, and 80 percent are optimistic about the prospects for reconciliation, compared to 49 and 60 percent, respectively, for those with no Indigenous close friends.

76 percent of those with many close Indigenous friends view current relations positively.

Those with many or some close Indigenous friends are also more likely to feel strongly that individual Canadians have a role to play in reconciliation, and to say they are familiar with the history of Residential Schools.

Figure 8
Views on relations and reconciliation, by number of Indigenous close friends

2025, Non-Indigenous people



On one question, the pattern is less clear. Those with many close Indigenous friends are more likely than those with no close Indigenous friends to say that governments have not gone far enough to advance reconciliation; however, they are also more likely to say that governments have gone too far. Those with no close Indigenous friends are more likely to say that government have made about the right amount of effort or to express no opinion either way.

In the case of Indigenous Peoples, those who report having many or some close non-Indigenous friends are also more likely than those with fewer close non-Indigenous friends to view current relations positively and to be optimistic about the prospects for reconciliation.





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