

Leger

2026 Edition

City of Happiness

le journal de
montréal

le journal
de québec

TVA
NOUVELLES

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This report provides an overview of happiness as perceived by people in Canada and the United States. Based on a large representative sample, it highlights the regional, generational and social dynamics shaping well-being in 2026.

METHOD

A web survey was conducted among **63,710 Canadians**, including **30,830 respondents in Quebec**, and **6 408 Americans** aged 18 and over who could answer in English or French.

Questions not used to calculate the rankings were asked as part of omnibus surveys conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026, among representative samples of **1,528 Canadians** and **1,015 Americans**.

WHEN?

Data were collected through LEO, Leger’s proprietary panel, from June 9 to 29, 2026.

MARGIN OF ERROR

Canada: Although a margin of error cannot be calculated for a non-probability web sample, for comparison purposes, a probability sample of 63,710 people would have a maximum margin of error of ±0.39%, 19 times out of 20.

Quebec: Although a margin of error cannot be calculated for a web sample, for comparison purposes, the maximum margin of error for a sample of 30,830 respondents is ±0.56%, 19 times out of 20.

United States: Although a margin of error cannot be calculated for a web sample, for comparison purposes, the maximum margin of error for a sample of 6,408 respondents is ±1.2%, 19 times out of 20.

WEIGHTING

Results were weighted **by gender, age and regions (provinces in Canada and states in the United States)** to ensure a representative sample of the population.

COMPARISON

Where possible, the 2026 results were compared with the 2025 edition (web survey conducted from March 31 to April 13, 2025, among 39,841 Canadians, including 19,895 Quebecers). The U.S. portion of the survey is new in 2026.

Notes

Significant Differences

Numbers shown in **red** in the tables indicate a statistically significant **lower** difference versus the complement, while numbers shown in **green** indicate a statistically significant **higher** difference versus the complement.

Results showing significant and relevant differences are highlighted in a text box beside the overall results.

Data Rounding

The data presented have been rounded. As a result, totals may differ slightly from 100% or from the sum of their parts.

Average Conversion

For analysis and presentation purposes, the average response was converted to a 100-point scale. A score of 1 therefore corresponds to 10/100, a score of 10 to 100/100, and so on.

Key takeaways from the 2026 report:

1

Saint-Sauveur is Quebec's happiest city

With a happiness index of 82.0 out of 100, Saint-Sauveur ranks first among Quebec cities measured in 2026, ahead of Prévost (81.0) and Lavaltrie (79.8).

2

Quebecers remain the happiest

Quebec posts a happiness index of 74.5, compared with 69.3 in the rest of Canada, as well as a higher optimism score of 72.2 versus 66.6. Quebecers are also less likely to be classified as unhappy: 22% versus 33%.

3

Happiness levels are up in 2026

In Quebec, the happiness index reaches 74.5 out of 100, up 2.1 points from 2025. The same trend is seen across Canada, where the index rises by 1.8 points.

4

Despite financial pressure, the main foundations of happiness remain largely non-economic

The cost of living and financial pressures weigh heavily on well-being, but family, personal life and health contribute most to happiness. In Canada, Quebec and the United States, these three dimensions rank well ahead of work, leisure or travel.

5

A happy city is first and foremost a place where people feel good every day

Safety, access to nature and quality of neighbourhood life emerge as the main ingredients of municipal happiness. Infrastructure, transportation and activities rank lower, suggesting that people's lived experience matters more than the availability of services alone.

6

Older adults remain the happiest, but young people show the greatest gains

People aged 55 and over report by far the highest happiness levels in Quebec and across Canada. In Quebec, those aged 18 to 24 show the largest increase since 2025, at +3.3 points—an encouraging sign despite a persistent generational gap.

In 2026, happiness is resilient—but never guaranteed

Beyond the numbers, the results show that happiness rests on deeply human dimensions: caring for one's health, maintaining close relationships and living in a safe environment. They also remind us that shared challenges—particularly financial pressure and uncertainty about the future—continue to weigh on well-being. As individuals, communities and a society, we can collectively turn this progress into lasting well-being.

2026 self-reported happiness rankings

Quebec stands out on several fronts: it ranks first among Canadian provinces, while Montreal ranks first among Canada’s 10 largest cities. Within Quebec, Saint-Sauveur, Prévost and Lavaltrie lead the cities measured on the self-reported happiness index.

Top 3 among Quebec cities measured

City	LHI
Saint-Sauveur	82.0
Prévost	81.0
Lavaltrie	79.8

Top 3 among Canadian provinces

Province	LHI
Quebec	74.5
Newfoundland and Labrador	71.0
New Brunswick	70.3

Top 3 among Quebec regions

Region	LHI
Côte-Nord	77.5
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	76.4
Lanaudière	76.2

Top 3 among Canada’s 10 largest cities

City	LHI
Montreal	72.7
Brampton	71.7
Toronto	69.4

Note: Results show self-reported happiness levels. To be included in the Quebec city ranking, a city needed at least 50 unweighted respondents; sample sizes vary by city. Small differences between some cities should be interpreted with caution.
Source: 2026 report rankings—Quebec cities, regions, Canadian provinces and Canada’s 10 largest cities.

1

Rankings



Ranking of Quebec's happiest cities

Rank	Cities	Happiness Level (Index out of 100)	Rank	Cities	Happiness Level (Index out of 100)	Rank	Cities	Happiness Level (Index out of 100)
1	Saint-Sauveur	82.0	31	Pont-Rouge	76.3	61	Mascouche	74.2
2	Prévost	81.0	32	Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac	76.3	62	Sainte-Thérèse	74.1
3	Lavaltrie	79.8	33	Terrebonne	76.3	63	Shawinigan	74.1
4	Candiac	79.5	34	Rivière-du-Loup	76.2	64	Joliette	74.0
5	Saint-Lazare	79.4	35	Saint-Basile-le-Grand	76.2	65	Saint-Jérôme	74.0
6	Varenes	79.3	36	Boucherville	76.2	66	Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville	73.8
7	Repentigny	78.8	37	Sainte-Julie	76.0	67	Saint-Eustache	73.7
8	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures	78.6	38	Boisbriand	75.9	68	Saint-Colomban	73.7
9	Sainte-Catherine	78.4	39	Chambly	75.9	69	Sorel-Tracy	73.6
10	Saint-Lin-Laurentides	78.3	40	Saguenay	75.8	70	Deux-Montagnes	73.2
11	Magog	78.1	41	Sainte-Adèle	75.7	71	Rawdon	73.1
12	Vaudreuil-Dorion	78.1	42	Beloeil	75.7	72	Gatineau	72.9
13	Saint-Georges	78.0	43	Mont-Saint-Hilaire	75.6	73	Brossard	72.9
14	La Tuque	77.8	44	Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu	75.5	74	Montréal	72.5
15	Saint-Constant	77.8	45	Lachute	75.5	75	Longueuil	72.4
16	Blainville	77.7	46	Quebec	75.4	76	Montmagny	72.2
17	Rimouski	77.6	47	Sherbrooke	75.4	77	Victoriaville	72.0
18	Gaspé	77.4	48	Salaberry-de-Valleyfield	75.4	78	Thetford Mines	71.9
19	Alma	77.3	49	Granby	75.3	79	Sainte-Sophie	71.9
20	Sept-Îles	77.2	50	Sainte-Julienne	75.3	80	Laval	71.6
21	Saint-Charles-Borromée	77.2	51	Kirkland	75.2	81	Dorval	71.3
22	Drummondville	76.8	52	Rouyn-Noranda	75.2	82	Châteauguay	71.0
23	Cowansville	76.8	53	Pointe-Claire	75.1	83	Côte-Saint-Luc	70.9
24	Saint-Raymond	76.7	54	Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines	75.1	84	Dollard-Des Ormeaux	70.7
25	Rosemère	76.6	55	Sainte-Marie	75.1	85	Val-d'Or	69.3
26	La Prairie	76.6	56	Saint-Hyacinthe	75.0			
27	Beauharnois	76.5	57	L'Assomption	74.9			
28	Lévis	76.5	58	Mirabel	74.8			
29	Saint-Lambert	76.4	59	Trois-Rivières	74.7			
30	Bécancour	76.4	60	L'Ancienne-Lorette	74.6			

**Quebec
average
index, 74.5
out of 100**

Ranking of Canadian provinces



Average happiness index (out of 100)

Rank	Province	Index out of 100 2026	Index out of 100 2025	Gap 2026-2025
1	Quebec	74.5	72.4	+2.1
2	Newfoundland and Labrador	71.0	69.5	+1.5
3	New Brunswick	70.3	70.2	+0.1
4	Saskatchewan	69.8	68.5	+1.3
5	Ontario	69.6	67.2	+2.4
6	Manitoba	69.3	66.7	+2.6
7	British Columbia	69.0	68.0	+1
8	Alberta	68.5	68.0	+0.5
9	Nova Scotia	67.7	68.2	-0.5
10	Prince Edward Island	67.6	66.5	+1.1
Canada (average index)		70.5	68.7	+1.8

Canada average index,
70.5 out of 100

Ranking of Canada's 10 largest cities*

Average happiness index (out of 100)

Rank	Canada's 10 largest cities	Index out of 100 2026	Index out of 100 2025	Gap 2026–2025
1	Montreal (Quebec)	72.5	69.4	+3.1
2	Brampton (Ontario)	71.7	66.7	+5
3	Toronto (Ontario)	69.4	65.8	+3.6
4	Vancouver (British Columbia)	69.0	66.3	+2.7
5	Hamilton (Ontario)	68.7	67.5	+1.2
6	Mississauga (Ontario)	68.7	70.3	-1.6
7	Calgary (Alberta)	68.6	67.4	+1.2
8	Ottawa (Ontario)	68.3	66.4	+1.9
9	Edmonton (Alberta)	67.7	66.3	+1.4
10	Winnipeg (Manitoba)	67.2	65.9	+1.3
Canada (national average)		70.5	68.7	+1.8

**Canada average index,
70.5 out of 100**

*Canada's 10 largest cities according to Statistics Canada estimates as of July 1, 2023.

Ranking of U.S. states*

Average happiness index (out of 100)

Rank	State	Index out of 100 2026	Rank	State	Index out of 100 2026	Rank	State	Index out of 100 2026
1	Florida	75.3	13	Wisconsin	70.9	25	Ohio	66.7
2	Kansas	74.5	14	Oklahoma	70.3	26	Alabama	66.7
3	New Jersey	74.4	15	Tennessee	70.2	27	Nevada	66.0
4	Arizona	73.1	16	Illinois	70.1	28	Iowa	65.6
5	Virginia	73.1	17	North Carolina	69.9	29	Kentucky	65.4
6	South Carolina	72.9	18	Colorado	69.7	30	Michigan	65.3
7	Texas	72.7	19	Arkansas	69.6	31	Oregon	65.3
8	Pennsylvania	72.1	20	California	69.1	32	Indiana	64.3
9	Connecticut	71.9	21	Minnesota	68.7	33	Maryland	63.7
10	New York	71.5	22	Mississippi	68.5	34	Missouri	63.0
11	Louisiana	71.4	23	Massachusetts	67.5	35	West Virginia	62.5
12	Georgia	71.2	24	Washington	66.7			

U.S. average index, 70.0 out of 100

*States not shown in the ranking were excluded because the number of respondents was insufficient for statistically reliable interpretation.

Quebec stands out from the rest of Canada



2026 self-reported happiness rankings

In 2026, Quebec reports the highest happiness level among the territories measured, ahead of Canada and the United States. Over the past 12 months, remaining stable is the most common outcome in all three territories, while the United States shows more movement both upward and downward.



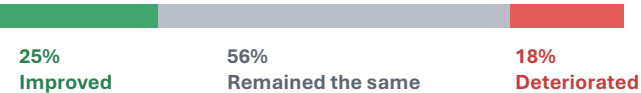
Quebec

2026 index

74.5 / 100

+2.1 points vs 2025

Change in self-reported happiness over the past 12 months



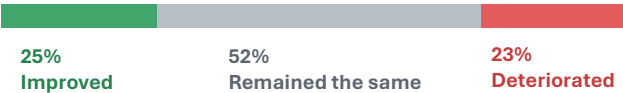
Canada

2026 index

70.5 / 100

+1.8 point vs 2025

Change in self-reported happiness over the past 12 months



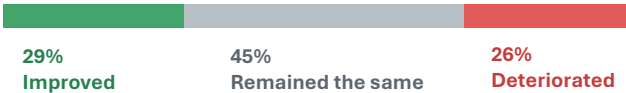
United States

2026 index

70.0 / 100

New measure in 2026

Change in self-reported happiness over the past 12 months

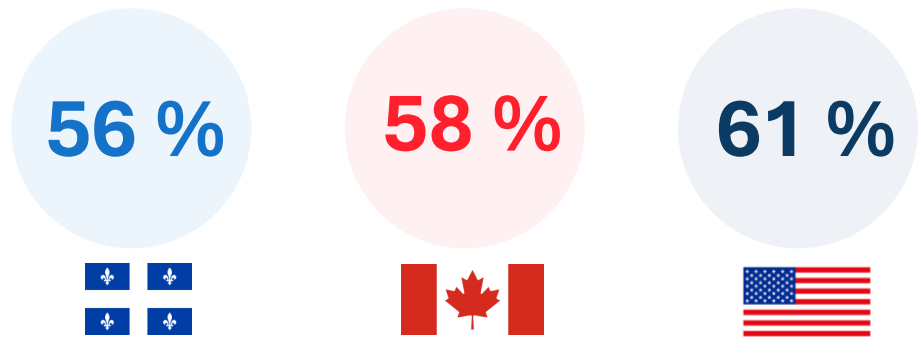


The main barriers to happiness in 2026

The cost of living remains the leading barrier to happiness

The cost of living affects the happiness of more than one in two people

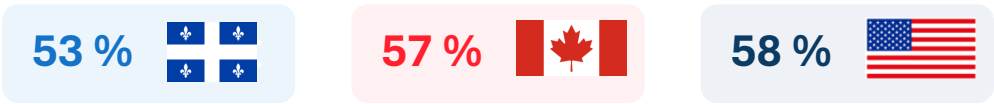
SHARE OF RESPONDENTS



Share of respondents who say the cost of living is currently affecting their happiness.

Financial pressures rank first among sources of pressure

Cost of living, housing, debt, income and financial future



Main sources of pressure

			
Financial pressures	53%	57%	58%
Physical health	37%	32%	33%
Mental health	18%	23%	26%
Uncertainty about the future	22%	23%	21%

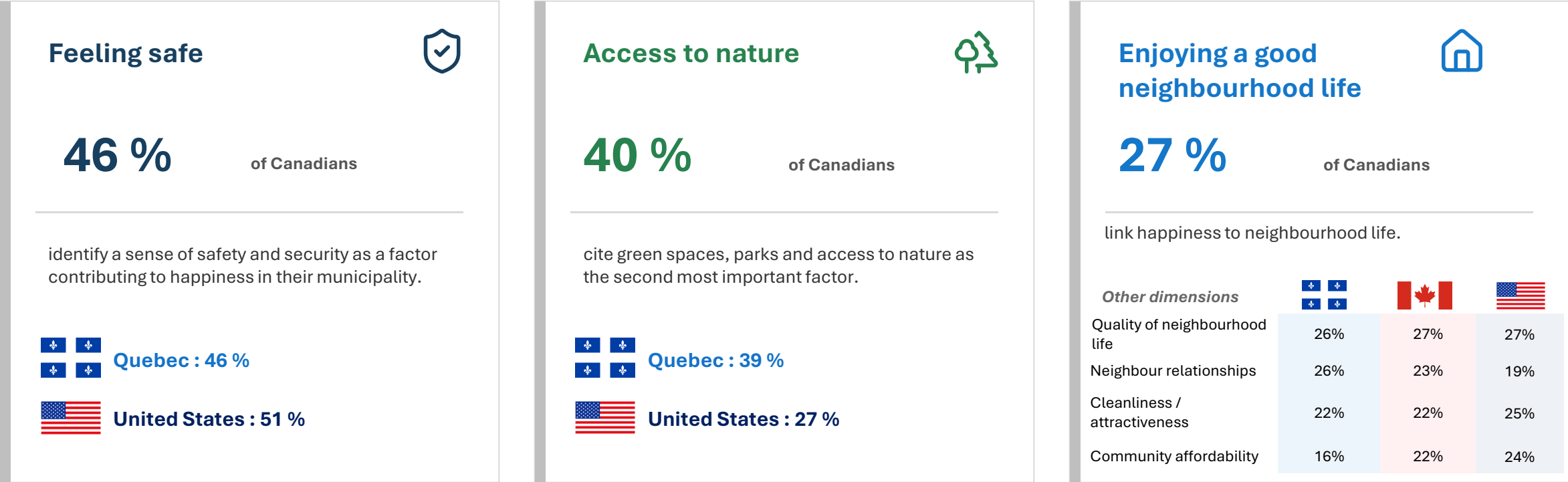
KEY
TAKEAWAY

In 2026, happiness is strongly influenced by economic conditions. The cost of living and financial pressures are by far the main barriers to well-being in Quebec, Canada and the United States.

Note: Self-reported results. Question asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026, among 1,528 Canadians and 1,015 Americans.

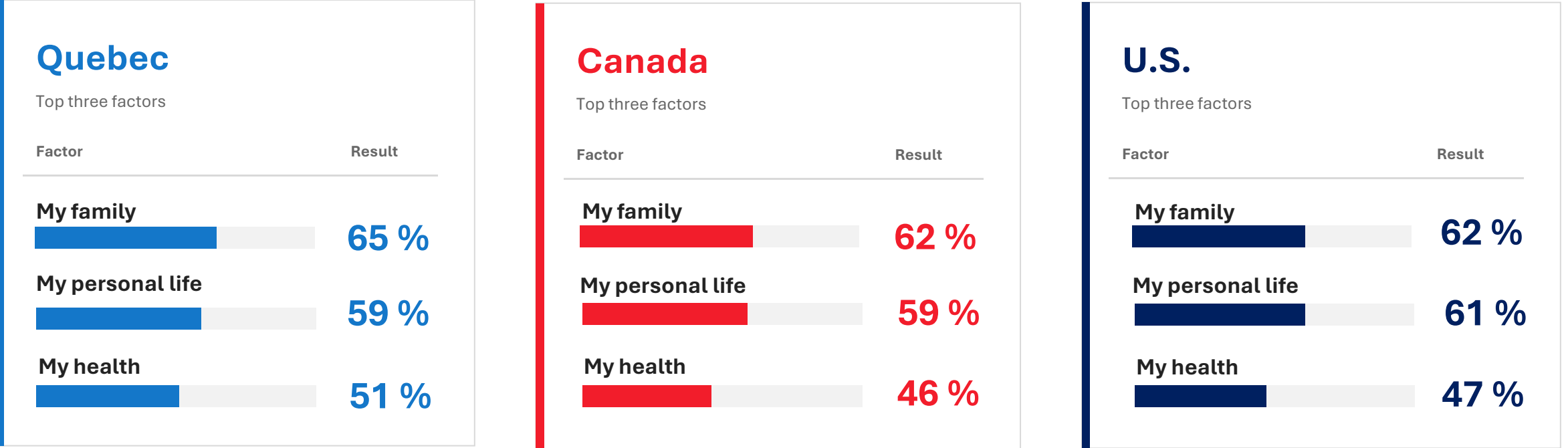
What contributes to happiness in a municipality

In their municipality, Canadians first associate happiness with very tangible conditions: feeling safe, having access to green spaces and enjoying a high quality of neighbourhood life. Municipal happiness therefore depends not only on services, but also on feeling good in one’s community.



What contributes to personal happiness

Before leisure, travel or professional life, personal happiness rests first on close relationships and personal living conditions. In Canada, Quebec and the United States, family, personal life and health rank as the top contributors to happiness.



Key takeaway

Self-reported happiness is rooted first in the personal sphere: family relationships, life balance and health matter more than professional life, leisure or travel.

Note: Question asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026, among 1,528 Canadians. Respondents could select up to three responses; the total may therefore exceed 100%. Results reflect self-reported perceptions.

2



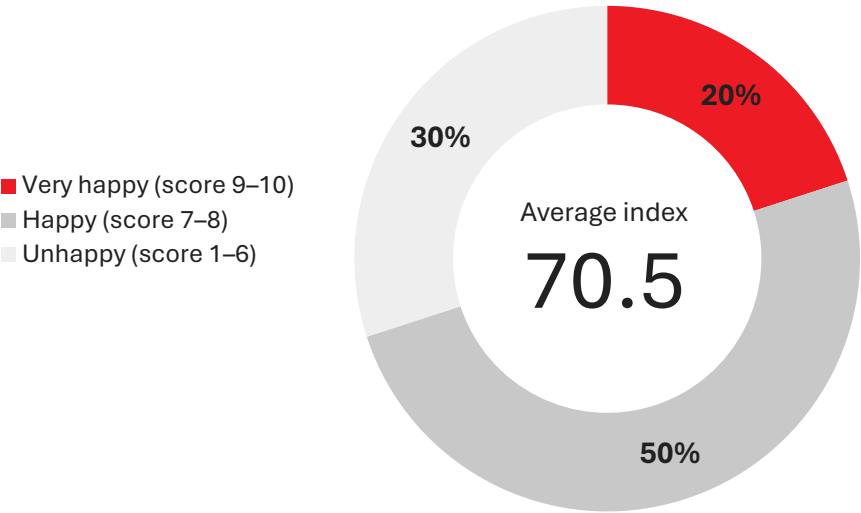
Happiness level among Canadians

Happiness level among Canadians

Canadians give their happiness an average score of **70.5 out of 100**.
A majority says their happiness level remained the same (52%) or improved (25%). However, 23% say it deteriorated, a proportion that is down compared with 2025.

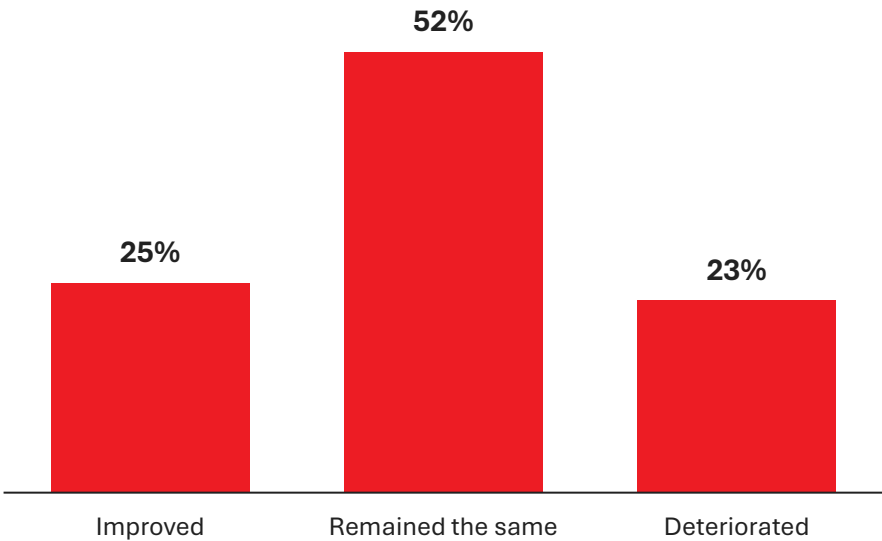
Overall, how happy would you say you are? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means ‘Not at all happy’ and 10 means ‘Extremely happy.’

Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 63,710



In the past year, would you say that your level of happiness has improved, remained the same or deteriorated?

Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 63,710

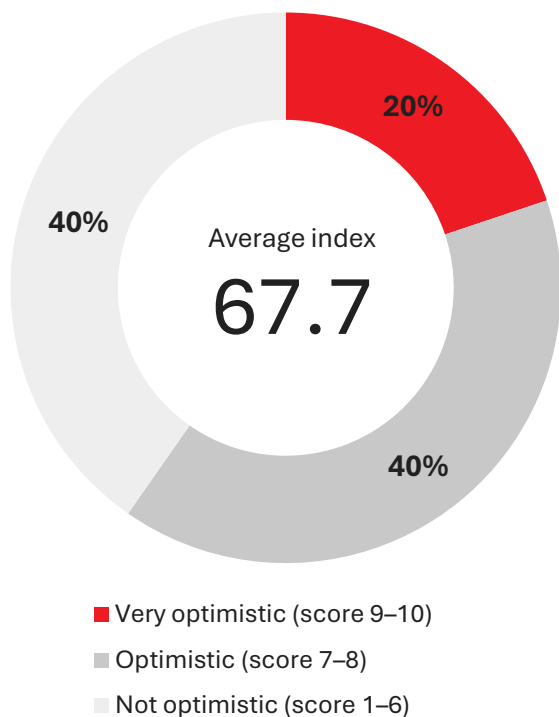


Optimism among **Canadians** and main contributors to happiness

Canadians give their **optimism about their personal future** an average score of **67.7 out of 100**.
Notably, 40% of Canadians are not optimistic about their future. Family ranks first among the factors that contribute most to happiness.

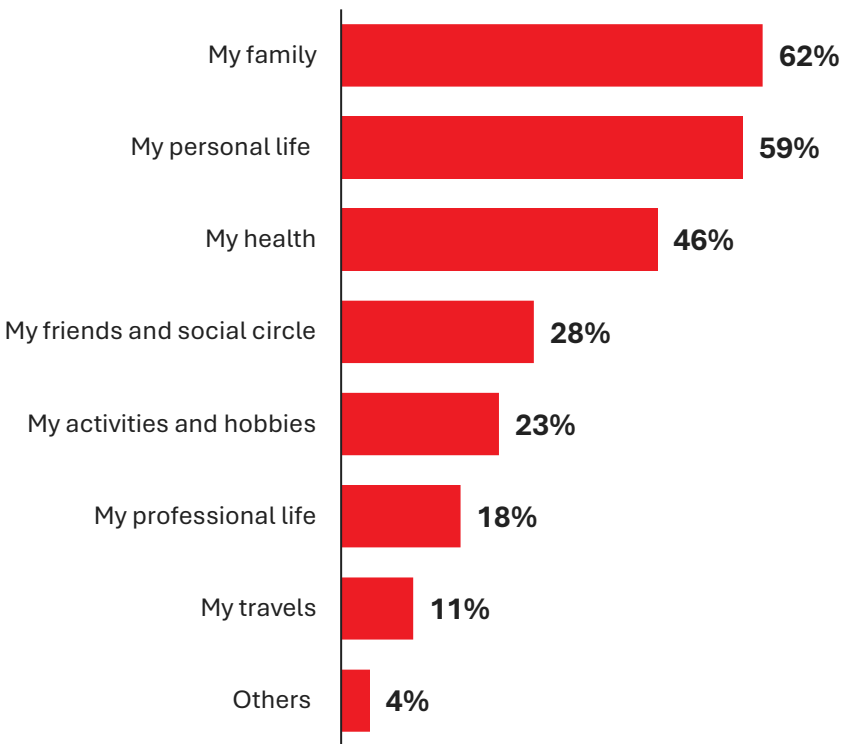
On a scale of 1 to 10, how optimistic are you about your personal future?

Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 1,528



Which of the following contribute the most to your personal happiness?
Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 1,528



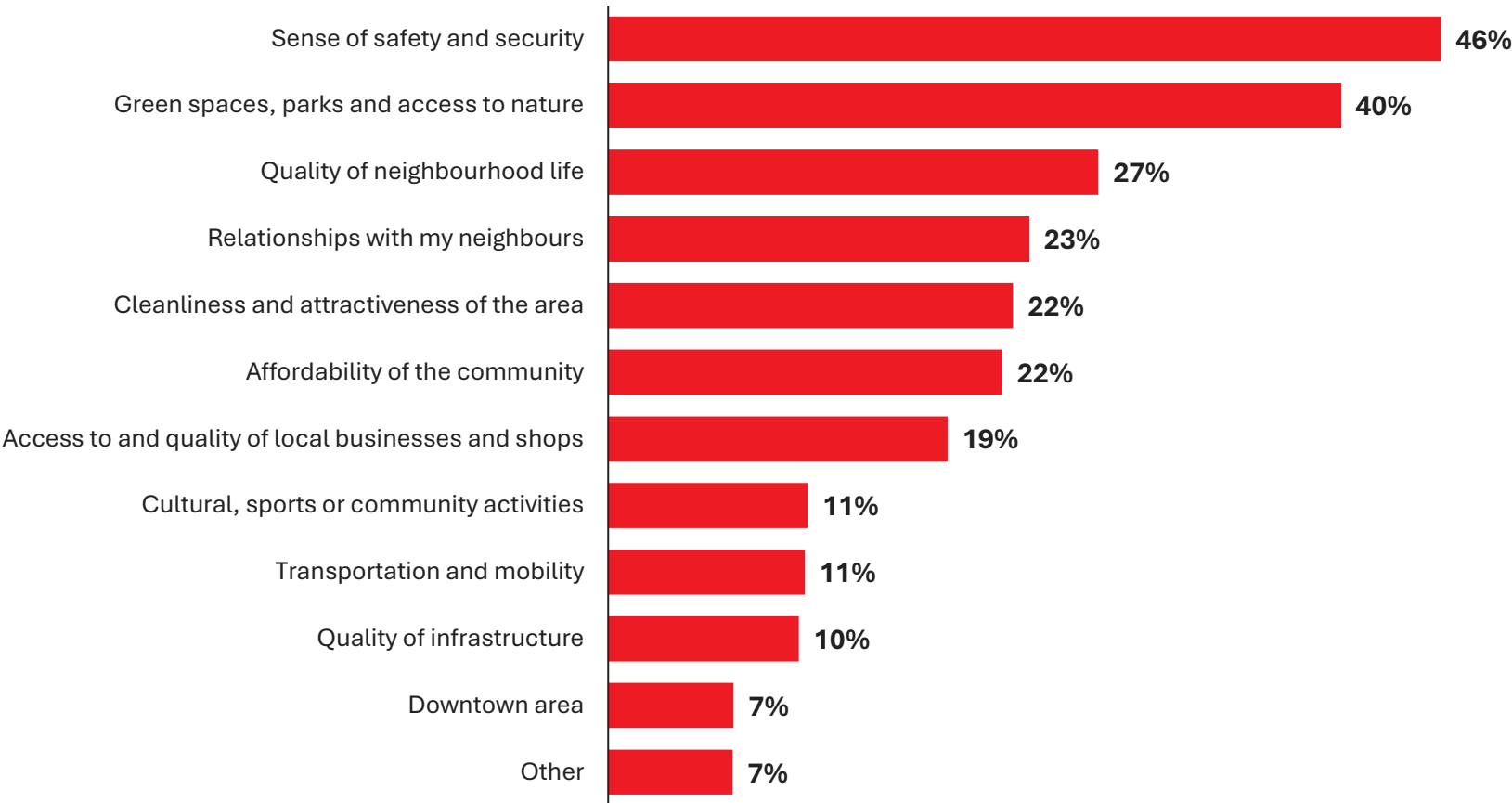
*These questions were asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1,528 Canadians. / Because respondents could select more than one response, the total may exceed 100%.

Main contributors to **Canadians'** happiness in their municipality

A sense of safety and security, green spaces and quality of neighbourhood life contribute most to Canadians' happiness in their municipality.

Which of the following contribute the most to your happiness in your municipality? Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 1,528



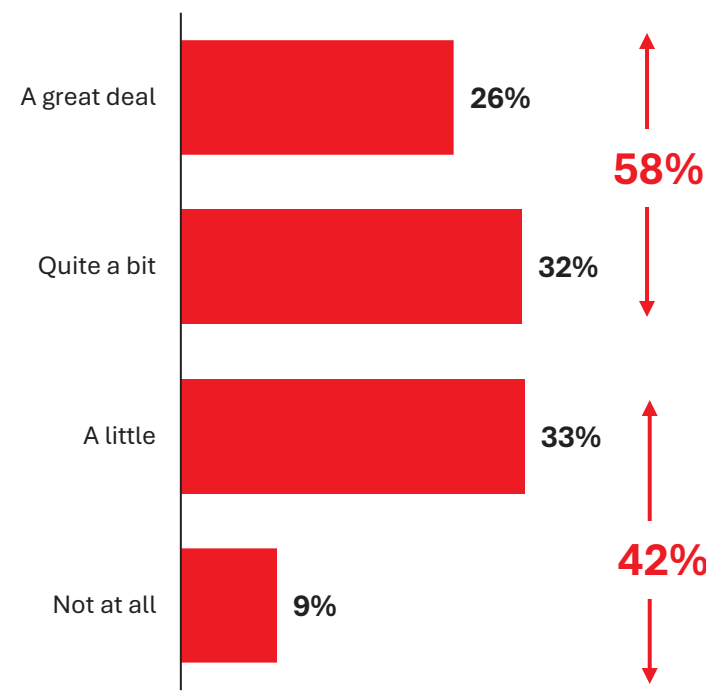
*This question was asked as part of Leger's Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1,528 Canadians. / Because respondents could select more than one response, the total may exceed 100%.

Impact of the cost of living on **Canadians'** happiness

Nearly six in ten Canadians say the cost of living affects their happiness. It is also the factor placing the greatest pressure on happiness, ahead of physical and mental health.

To what extent is the cost of living currently affecting your happiness?

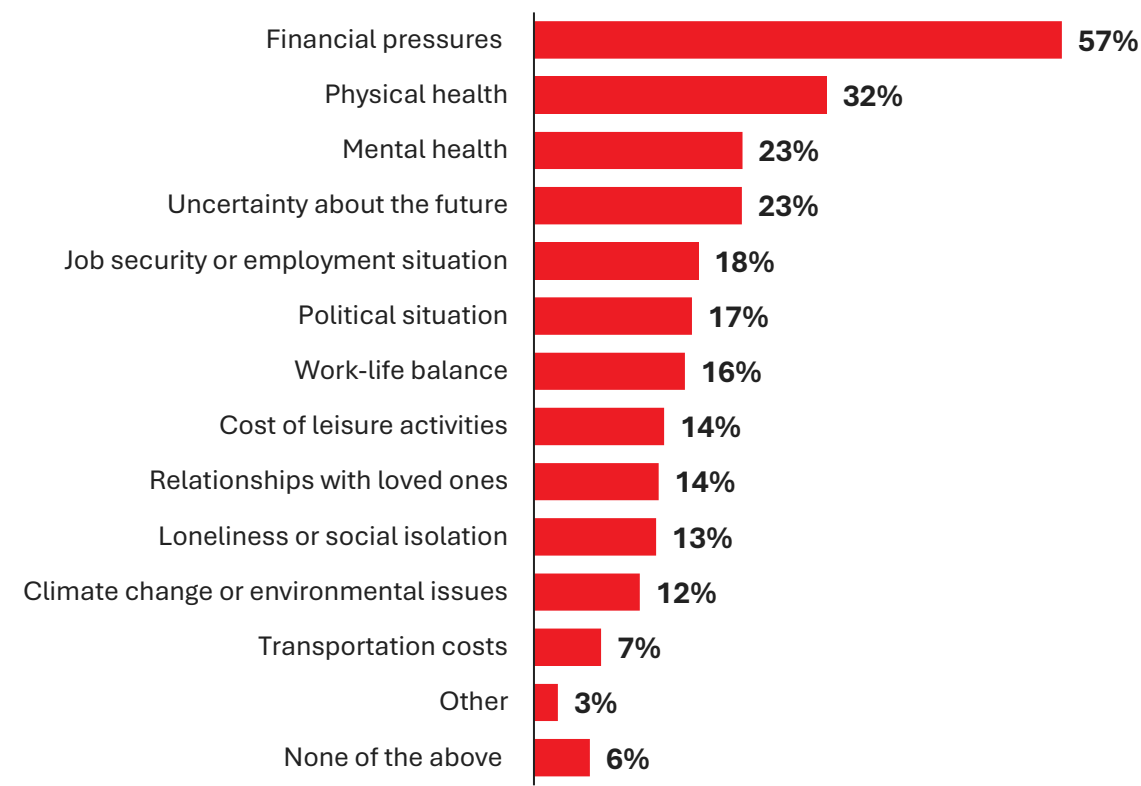
Base: All respondents : Canada, n= 1,528



Which of the following place the most pressure on your happiness?

Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents: Canada, n=1,528



*This question was asked as part of Leger's Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1 528 Canadians.

3



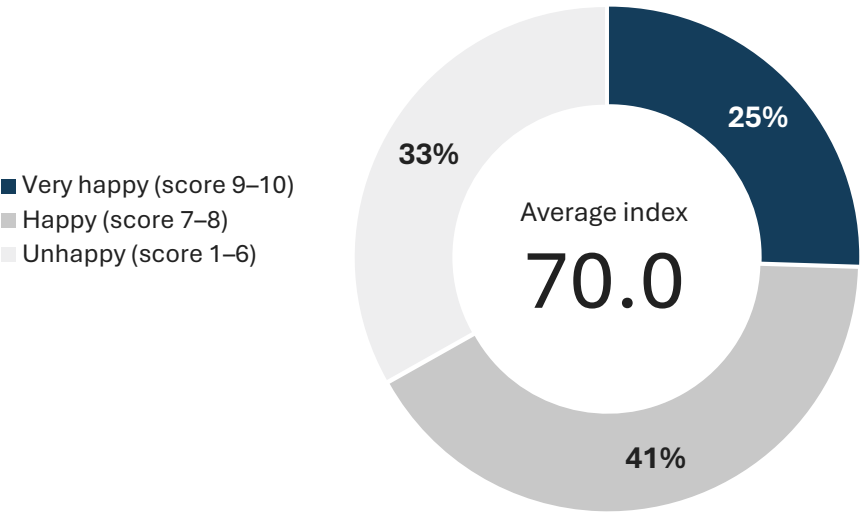
Happiness level among Americans

Happiness level among Americans

Americans give their happiness an average score of 70.0 out of 100.
Nearly one-third say their happiness improved over the past year, while 45% say it remained the same and 26% say it deteriorated.

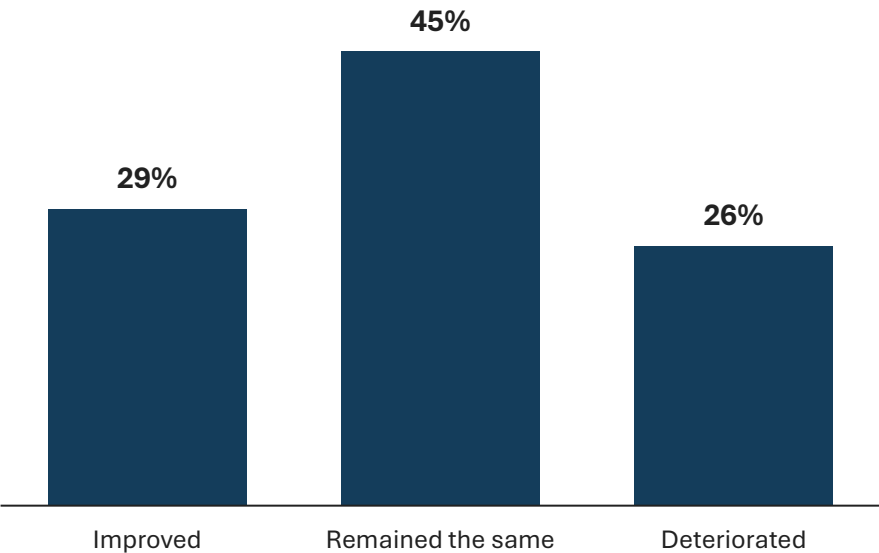
Overall, how happy would you say you are? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means ‘Not at all happy’ and 10 means ‘Extremely happy.’

Base: All respondents : United States, n= 6,480



In the past year, would you say that your level of happiness has improved, remained the same or deteriorated?

Base: All respondents : United States, n = 6,480

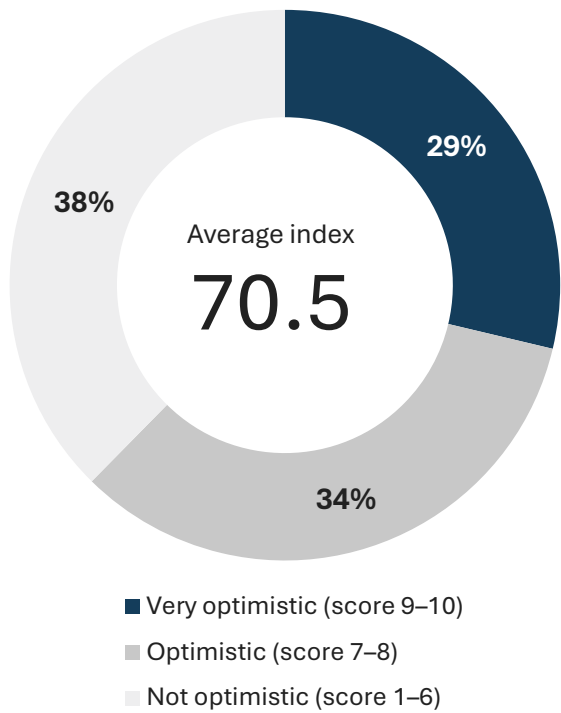


Optimism among Americans and main contributors to happiness

Americans give their optimism about their personal future an average score of 70.5 out of 100. Family ranks first among contributors to happiness, nearly tied with personal life.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how optimistic are you about your personal future?

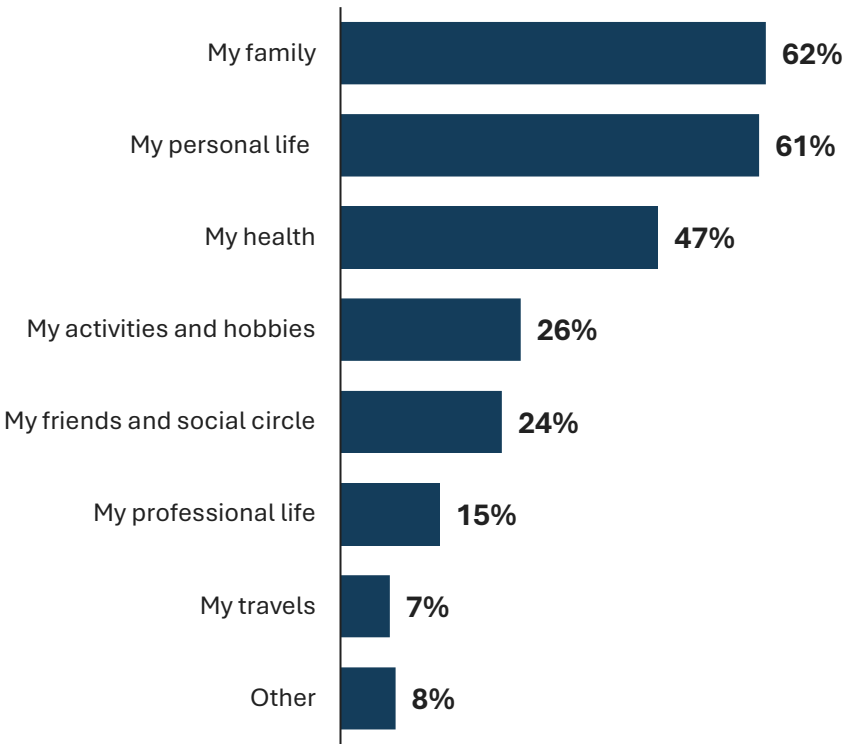
Base: All respondents : United States, n= 1,015



Which of the following contribute the most to your personal happiness?

Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents : United States, n= 1,015



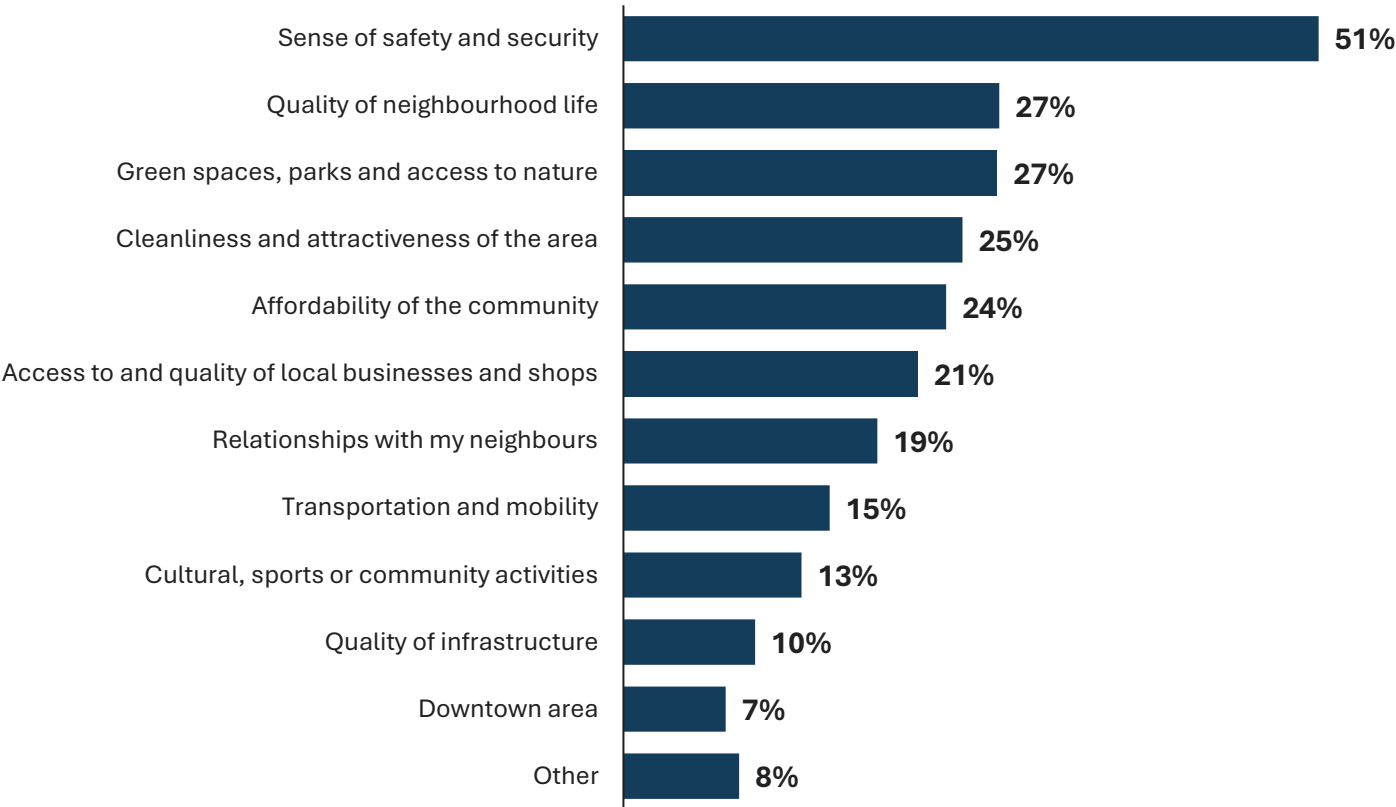
*These questions were asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1,015 Americans.

Main contributors to **Americans'** happiness in their municipality

A sense of safety and security, quality of neighbourhood life and green spaces contribute most to **Americans'** happiness in their municipality.

Which of the following contribute the most to your happiness in your municipality? Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents : United States, n= 1,015



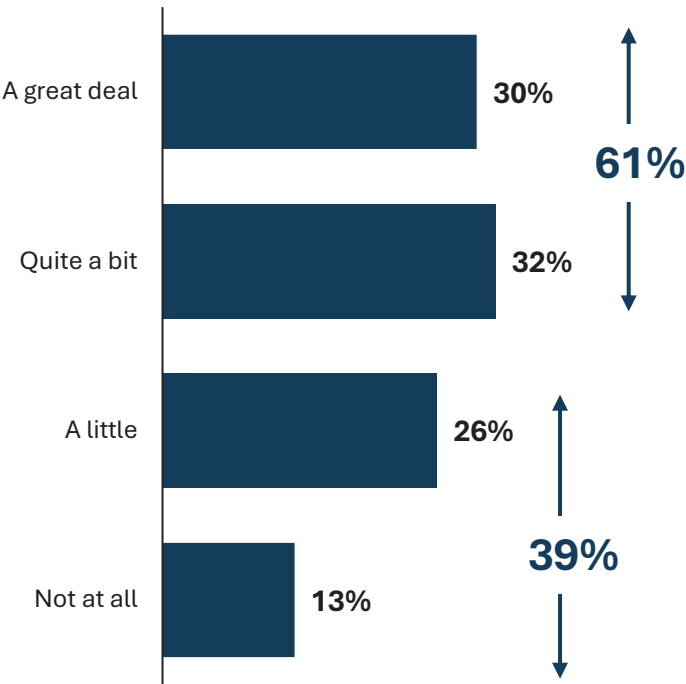
*This question was asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1,015 Americans / Because respondents could select more than one response, the total may exceed 100%.

Impact of the cost of living on Americans’ happiness

For six in ten Americans, the rising cost of living directly affects happiness, outweighing physical or mental health concerns.

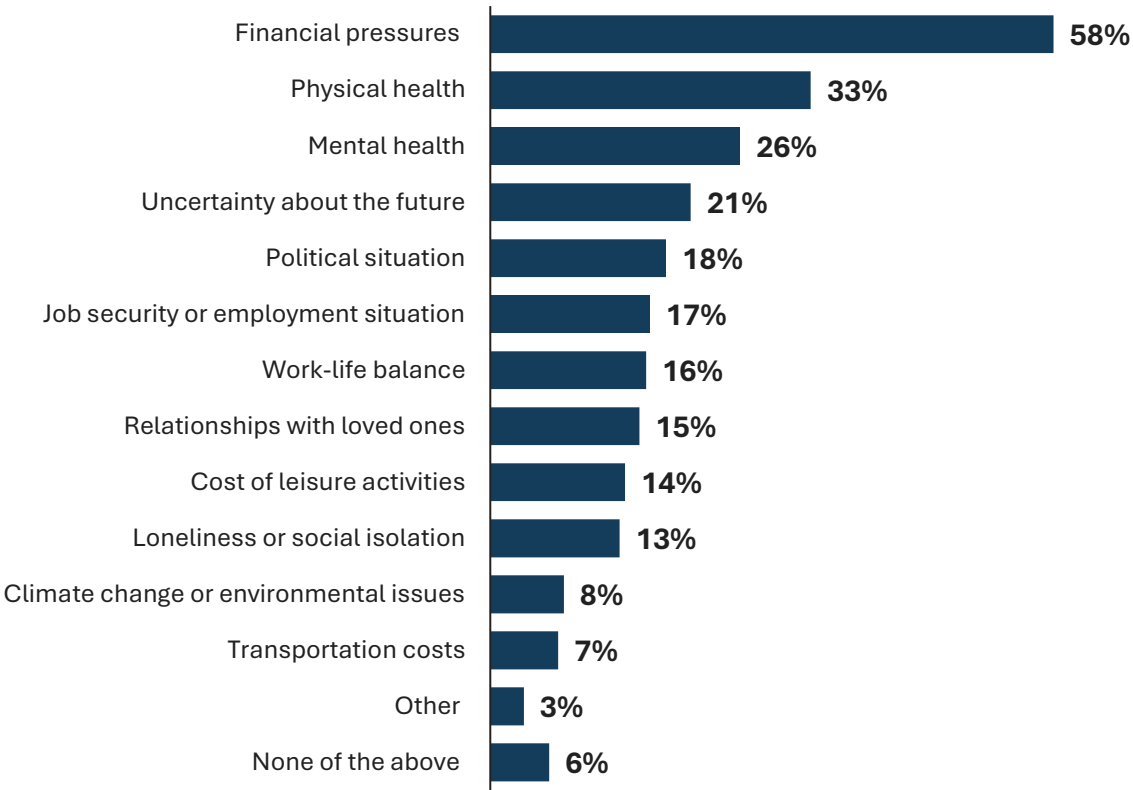
To what extent is the cost of living currently affecting your happiness?

Base: All respondents : United States, n= 1,015



Which of the following place the most pressure on your happiness? Maximum 3 responses*

Base: All respondents : United States, n= 1,015



*This question was asked as part of Leger’s Canadian omnibus survey conducted from June 26 to 28, 2026 among a representative sample of 1,015 Americans

3

Respondent profile

CANADA

(n= 63,710)

Gender



Provinces

British Columbia	Alberta	Manitoba /Saskatchewan	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic provinces
14%	11%	6%	39%	23%	7%

Age

Aged 18 to 34	27%
Aged 35 to 54	32%
Age 55 and over	41%

Education level

High school or less	31%
College	38%
University	31%

Base n=30,830

Men
49%



Women
51%

Aged 18 to 34	25%
Aged 35 to 54	32%
Age 55 and over	44%

High school or less	32%
College	40%
University	28%

Montréal	21%
Montérégie	17%
Capitale-Nationale	12%
Laurentides	8%
Lanaudière	7%
Estrie	6%
Chaudière-Appalaches	6%
Laval	5%
Outaouais	4%
Mauricie	3%
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	3%
Centre-du-Québec	3%
Bas-Saint-Laurent	2%
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	1%
Gaspésie/Îles-de-la-Madeleine	1%
Côte-Nord	1%
Nord-du-Québec	0.1%

UNITED STATES

Base n=6,408

Gender



Age

Aged 18 to 34	29%
Aged 35 to 54	33%
Age 55 and over	38%

Education level

High school or less	37%
College	22%
University	40%

States (1/2)

California	12%
Texas	8%
New York	8%
Florida	7%
Pennsylvania	4%
Ohio	4%
North Carolina	4%
Illinois	4%
Georgia	3%
Michigan	3%
New Jersey	2%
Indiana	2%
Alabama	2%
Tennessee	2%
Washington	2%
Virginia	2%
Massachusetts	2%

States (2/2)

Kentucky	2%
Arizona	2%
Louisiana	2%
Colorado	2%
Oregon	2%
South Carolina	2%
Maryland	2%
Missouri	2%
Minnesota	2%
Nevada	1%
Wisconsin	1%
Arkansas	1%
Oklahoma	1%
Iowa	1%
Mississippi	1%
Kansas	1%
Connecticut	1%
West Virginia	1%

Leger

The Science of People

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