

FEDERAL ACTION PLAN



**EDMONTON
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
PRIORITIES
FOR THE 2025
CANADIAN
ELECTION**

March 2025

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Potential for a Stronger Canada**

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A Call to Action

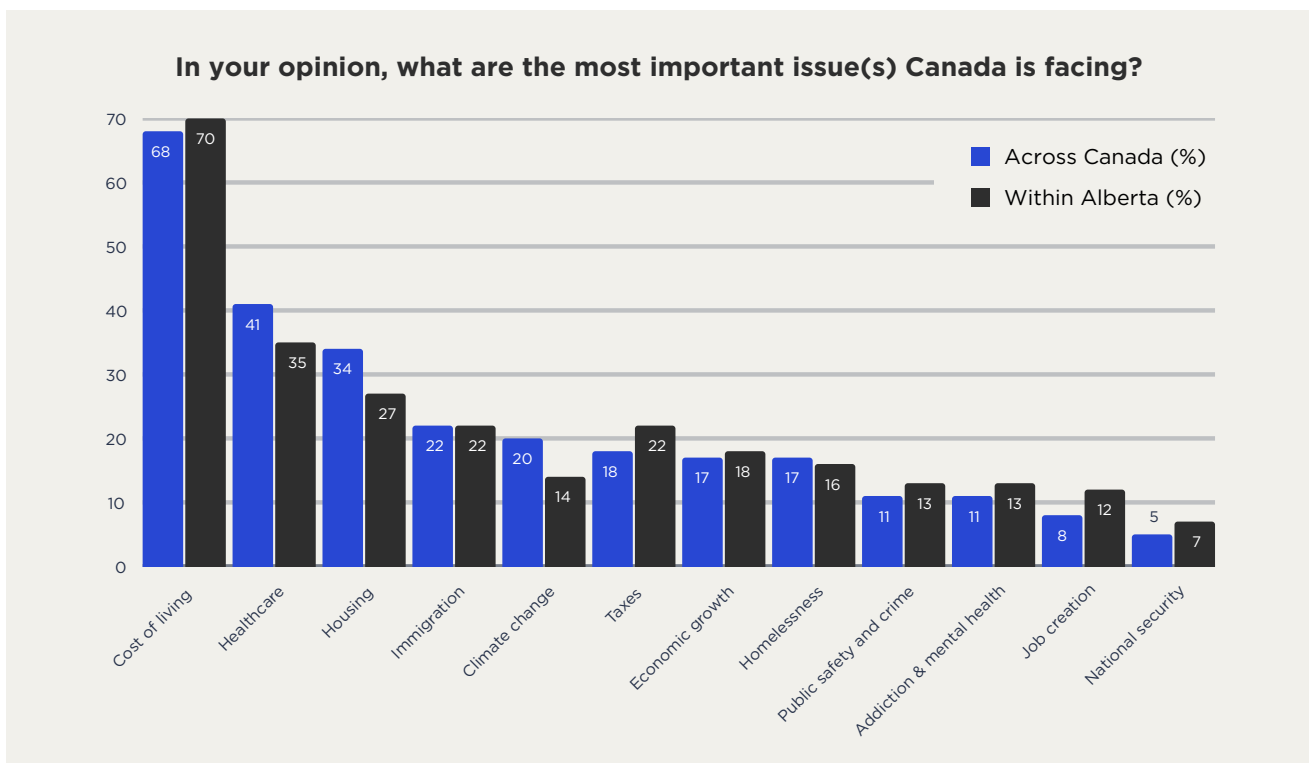
Unlocking Edmonton's Potential for a Stronger Canada

Edmonton is home to more than 1.2 million people and was the fastest-growing major city in Canada in 2024, with over 100,000 new residents choosing to make this region their home.¹ As a hub of innovation and industry, Edmonton supports 38,000 businesses that collectively employ 862,000 Albertans² and contribute an impressive \$110.85 billion³ to Canada's GDP each year.

Strategically located as Canada's most northern big city, Edmonton is the primary service, logistics, and economic centre for northern and remote communities across Alberta, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

This position makes it a critical gateway to the North—supporting supply chains, trade routes, and major infrastructure projects vital to Canada's sovereignty and economic resilience.

Edmonton is also at the forefront of Canada's emerging clean energy economy. The Edmonton region is recognized as a global leader in hydrogen development, leveraging its abundant natural gas reserves, skilled workforce, and existing infrastructure to position itself as a clean fuel export hub. With the right regulatory and trade supports, Edmonton's hydrogen economy could drive billions in investment and create thousands of high-quality jobs.



¹ Dustin Cook, "Edmonton Region Posts Largest Population Gain in Canada over Past Year: StatCan," Edmonton Journal, February 28, 2024, [Edmonton Chamber of Commerce](#).

² City of Edmonton, Participation Rate, Open Performance Edmonton, accessed March 21, 2025, [Edmonton Chamber of Commerce](#).

³ Edmonton Global, The Edmonton Region, accessed March 21, 2025, [Edmonton Chamber of Commerce](#).

However, this immense potential is at risk of being constrained. Edmonton’s business community continues to face challenges related to affordability, housing availability, and an uncompetitive taxation environment. Businesses are navigating mounting uncertainty around trade, regulatory delays, and access to new markets.

Canada’s broader economic outlook has also become increasingly concerning. Labour productivity has declined for six consecutive quarters,⁴ while unemployment continues to rise.⁵ The country cannot afford to leave high-potential regions like Edmonton under-leveraged.

Improved trade infrastructure—particularly access to tidewater—is essential to Edmonton’s and Canada’s long-term success. Our abundant natural resources, including energy and agriculture, require efficient, reliable pathways to global markets. Without them, Canada risks falling behind in an increasingly competitive global economy.

That’s why the Edmonton Chamber is calling for a Canada-First agenda.

One that removes barriers to trade and investment, prioritizes pro-growth policies, and champions entrepreneurship. To drive real GDP growth, we need a federal government that recognizes Edmonton’s unique economic position and acts decisively to unleash the full power of our people, industries, and innovation.



In your opinion, what are the most important issue(s) for Canadians?

-  Cost of Living
-  Healthcare
-  Housing
-  Immigration
-  Climate Change

⁴ Statistics Canada, "Labour Productivity, Hourly Compensation and Unit Labour Cost, Fourth Quarter 2023," The Daily, March 5, 2024, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240305/dq240305b-eng.htm>.

⁵ Statistics Canada, "Labour Force Survey, February 2024," The Daily, March 8, 2024, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240308/dq240308a-eng.htm>.

ABOUT

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce inspires the growth of our business community and the profitability of our member-businesses by being their most innovative and dedicated advocate, connector, and service-support provider.

The Chamber represents 2,000 businesses, job creators, and community leaders; 100,000 employees; 30% of Edmonton households and host world class advocacy events that shape policy for create wealth. We know that prosperity isn't built in boardrooms—it's built in shop floors, on construction sites, in restaurants, and in tech hubs across this city.

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce (ECC) is older than the City of Edmonton itself. Since 1889, we have informed, mobilized, and championed the business community. We are a pillar of Edmonton's economic landscape, advocating for businesses, facilitating connections, and ensuring that our members have the resources they need to thrive.







THE GOAL

Strengthen Business and Economic Growth

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce is asking for the Government of Canada to:

-  Create an Investable Economy
-  Advance Canadian Trade Capacity
-  Improve Canadian Productivity
-  Build Critical Infrastructure

Create an Investable Economy

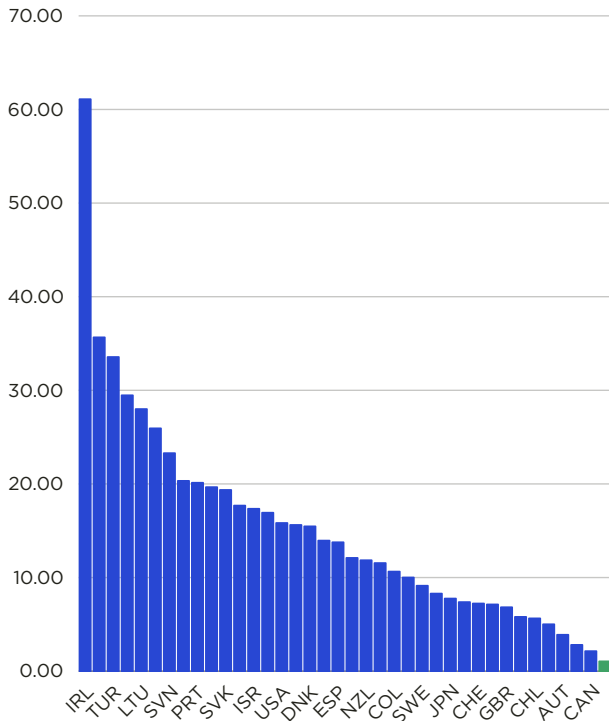
Canada’s economy faces significant challenges, with marginal GDP per capita growth of 2.23% since 2015, the second lowest amongst OECD countries.⁶ More recently, GDP per capita declined by 1.4% in 2024, labor productivity fell by 0.6%,⁷ and Canadians face ongoing inflation concerns.

These pressures have led to a sharp increase in corporate tax revenue to \$120 billion in 2024, primarily due to higher burdens on small and medium enterprises.⁸ Business insolvencies rose by 41%⁹ year-over-year, reflecting the difficulties of operating under rising costs and labour shortages.

Despite these challenges, there is an opportunity for growth. A 2025 poll found that 82% of Albertans believe small businesses are crucial to the Canadian economy, and 81% agree that a strong economy benefits society.¹⁰

To unlock Edmonton’s full economic potential – and that of Canadian businesses – the federal government must demonstrate strong fiscal investment in economic regions¹¹ while advancing policies that foster growth and investment opportunities.

GDP Growth Per Capita (2015-2024), OECD Countries



WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

National Economic Strategy

Canada’s economy needs an overall economic strategy that will align efforts between all three orders of government. Canadian businesses will benefit from overall consistency and streamlined processes to maximize growth and overall profits.

Responsible Government Spending

Businesses need to see a stronger return on investment for their tax dollars. Business owners need to see a financial audit and see the government manage Canada’s debt, which is about \$1.5 trillion.

Overhaul Canada’s Tax System

The government needs to support investment opportunities by ensuring the business taxation plan is simple and fair.

Reduce the federal debt-to-GDP ratio to less than 40 per cent

with a strategy to maintain a downward trend – to compete with comparable global economies and bolster Canada as a strategic and reliable place to invest.

⁶ Tegan Hill and Jake Fuss, “Weak Growth in Canada’s GDP per Person Is a Big Problem,” Fraser Institute, January 13, 2024, <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/weak-growth-in-canadas-gdp-per-person-is-a-big-problem>.

⁷ Statistics Canada, “Labour Productivity, Hourly Compensation and Unit Labour Cost, Fourth Quarter 2023,” The Daily, March 5, 2024, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240305/dq240305b-eng.htm>.

⁸ Department of Finance Canada, “Fiscal Reference Tables – Fall Economic Statement 2023,” Government of Canada, November 21, 2023, <https://budget.canada.ca/fes-eea/2023/report-rapport/anx3-en.html>.

⁹ Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, “Insolvency Statistics in Canada—2023 Annual,” Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, February 2024, <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/br04567.html>.

¹⁰ Canadian Federation of Independent Business, “Albertans Rally Behind Small Businesses Ahead of Provincial Budget,” CFIB, March 5, 2025, <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/media/news-releases/albertans-rally-behind-small-businesses-ahead-provincial-budget>.

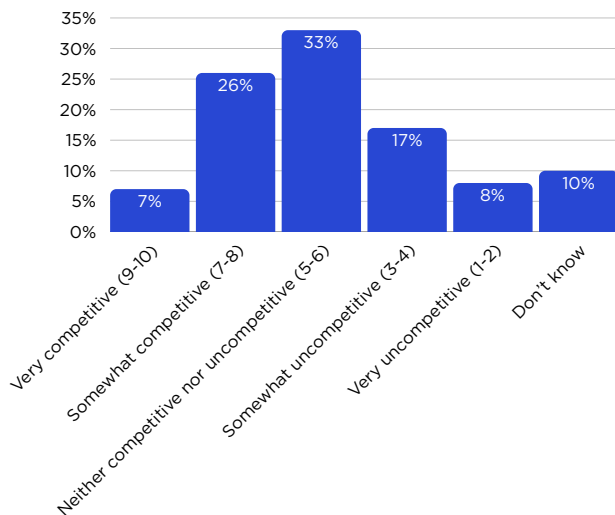
Advance Canadian Trade Capacity

Canada’s economy relies heavily on trade, but businesses struggle to compete globally. Edmonton can help improve Canada’s competitiveness. However, Canada’s trade is overly dependent on the U.S., with exports totalling \$547. billion (77% of total exports) and imports reaching \$373.7. billion (49.5% of total imports) in 2023.¹¹

Diversifying trade and expanding access to global markets is crucial. In Alberta, trade supports 355,500 jobs and over 4,000 businesses.¹² Interprovincial trade barriers also hinder economic growth. Eliminating these barriers could increase Canada’s GDP by 5% and reduce the productivity gap with the U.S. by a third.¹³

The federal government must act to reduce reliance on a single trading partner, cut red tape, and expand market access to restore Canada’s trade advantage. Edmonton is poised to lead this economic expansion.

On a scale of 1-10, how competitive do you feel Canada is as a player in the global market?



¹¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2019005-eng.htm>

¹² Edmonton Global, "Trade," accessed March 21, 2025, <https://edmontonglobal.ca/trade/>.

¹³ Canadian Federation of Agriculture, "Interprovincial Trade Barriers Holding Back Canada's Economy," Canadian Federation of Agriculture, June 28, 2023, <https://cfea-faec.ca/interprovincial-trade-barriers-holding-back-canadas-economy/>.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Diversify Trade Partners

Create opportunities for Canadian businesses to grow and expand to new markets to reduce US dependence on Canadian wealth.

Eliminate Remaining Barriers to Interprovincial Trade

Businesses need all orders of government to prioritize eliminating all remaining barriers to internal trade. These barriers raise costs and slow down business growth.

Implement a Coordinated East-West Resource Strategy

Create a clear plan to move Canada’s resources—like oil, natural gas, uranium, potash, and freshwater—more easily across the country and worldwide.

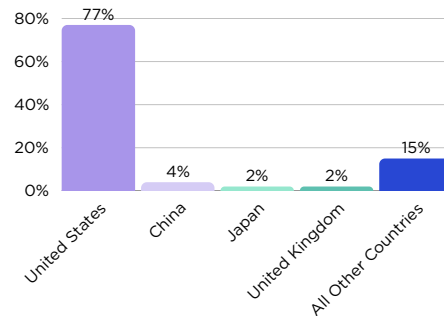
Reduce Regulatory Burden

Between 2006 and 2021, regulatory requirements have increased by 37%.¹⁴ Adding unnecessary regulatory duplication is costing Canadian businesses millions in extra time, impacting our GDP by 1.7% alone.¹⁵

Introduce a Canada-First Procurement Strategy

Supporting domestic businesses and ensure that key projects remain viable despite external economic challenges, such as tariffs, by fostering a resilient and self-sufficient economy.

Domestic Exports by Top Trading Partners (2023)



¹⁴ Statistics Canada, Study: Trends in Business Openings and Closures in Canada, Third Quarter 2024, February 10, 2025, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250210/dq250210e-eng.htm>.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, Study: Trends in Business Openings and Closures in Canada, Third Quarter 2024, February 10, 2025, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250210/dq250210e-eng.htm>.

Improve Canadian Productivity

Canada's economy is reliant on the success of small businesses, which account for 98% of all enterprises.¹⁶ However, these businesses face significant challenges in scaling, accessing capital, attracting talent, and competing globally. Few businesses feel competitive on the global stage. The labour market is particularly strained, with employers struggling to find skilled workers. Edmonton's unemployment rate is 7.1%, yet key industries like technology, construction, manufacturing, and healthcare face talent shortages.¹⁷

Canada competes globally for talent, and while immigration has historically fueled growth, outdated credential recognition processes and mismatched immigration pathways hinder access to qualified workers. To drive economic growth, the federal government must help businesses improve productivity, hire and retain skilled workers, and enhance competitiveness.

Canada is losing its competitive advantage. Each year, Canada falls further behind other G7 countries. Canada's stagnant productivity has had far-reaching consequences, affecting workers, small businesses, corporations, and the broader Canadian population. Canadians overwhelmingly agree that a strong economy is crucial for a strong society, as evidenced by recent data from the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, which shows that 79% of Canadians believe economic strength is essential for societal well-being. However, only 39% are confident that Canada is currently on the right path to achieving economic prosperity.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Improve Access to Capital

Small businesses represent 98% of Canadian businesses.¹⁸ Government policies that can support the availability of accessible capital are essential to ensure our economy can grow and succeed while building capacity for business in the future.

Attract Skilled Workers and Recognize Foreign Credentials

Adjusting immigration policies to prioritize economic immigration and focus on industries that need skilled workers, ensuring businesses have access to the labour they need. Improve process for foreign skilled workers to translate their credentials. Skilled labour is a bottle neck for improved economic productivity.

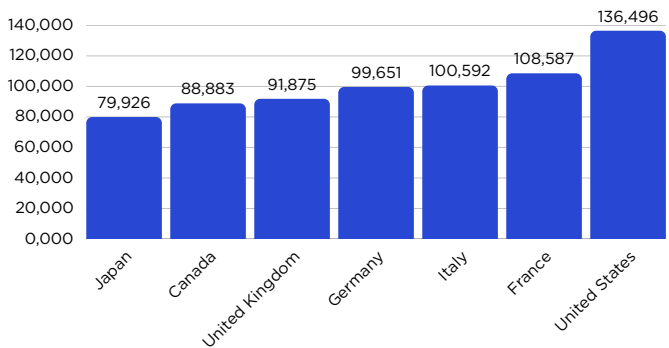
Expand Job Training and Apprenticeships

Canadian businesses would like to see the federal government support and invest in training programs and apprenticeships to prepare workers for future jobs.

Pipeline Access

Alberta's pipeline network is crucial for transporting oil and gas to key markets, with major pipelines like the Enbridge Mainline and Trans Mountain Pipeline playing significant roles in connecting Alberta's energy resources to both domestic and international markets, and recent initiatives aim to enhance this capacity further.

Labour Productivity by Main Economic Activity (5 Year Average, 2018-23)



¹⁶ "Canadian Small Businesses Are Poised for Growth, but New Trade and Customs Rules Are Putting that at Risk." Canadian Chamber of Commerce. March 25, 2024. [https://doi.org/https://chamber.ca/news/canadian-small-businesses-are-poised-for-growth-but-new-trade-and-customs-rules-are-putting-that-at-risk/#:~:text=March%2026%2C%202024:-,Canadian%20small%20and%20medium%2D-sized%20enterprises%20\(SMEs\)%20are%20essential,significantly%20to%20GDP%20and%20employment](https://doi.org/https://chamber.ca/news/canadian-small-businesses-are-poised-for-growth-but-new-trade-and-customs-rules-are-putting-that-at-risk/#:~:text=March%2026%2C%202024:-,Canadian%20small%20and%20medium%2D-sized%20enterprises%20(SMEs)%20are%20essential,significantly%20to%20GDP%20and%20employment)

¹⁷ City of Edmonton, Unemployment Rate, Open Performance Edmonton, accessed March 21, 2025. <https://openperformance.edmonton.ca/stories/s/Unemployment-Rate/rdci-fpcw>

¹⁸ Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Key Small Business Statistics - 2023, Government of Canada, November 2023. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/key-small-business-statistics>

Build Critical Infrastructure

For Canada's economy to thrive, strong communities and reliable infrastructure are essential. Edmonton's affordability and connectivity have attracted talent and investment, but housing shortages, public safety concerns, and aging infrastructure now pose challenges. A recent poll found that 68% of Canadians identify affordability as a top concern, and 50% feel public safety has worsened in downtown areas over the past five years.¹⁹

Canada's infrastructure deficit, estimated between \$150 billion and \$1 trillion,²⁰ threatens economic growth and business competitiveness. Decaying infrastructure increases costs for businesses and weakens Canada's ability to attract investment and talent. To remain competitive, Canada must invest in infrastructure that enhances mobility and business connectivity, particularly in hubs like Edmonton. This investment not only creates jobs but also strengthens economic growth by improving access to markets and talent.



WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Invest in Infrastructure

The government needs a long-term plan to fund municipalities and infrastructure projects that are essential to a quality of life for Canadians; roads, transit, housing, and utilities. This will help businesses stay competitive and improve capacity constraints.

Build Affordable Housing

Canada needs to incentivize developers to build the right housing Canada through taxation policies, financial and zoning incentives and partnerships with all levels of government to remove barriers.

Improve Edmonton's Connections to Markets

Moving people and goods through Canada is worth billions. Ensuring these systems are agile and running at full capacity deserves investment. Whether it is global rail and road networks, bridges and airports, Canada's economy will not grow if it difficult to move people or goods.

Make Business Areas Safer

Improving social disorder will improve the economy. The government needs to increase funding for addiction treatment and homelessness support programs. This will make Edmonton's business districts safer, help people in crisis, and create better environments for businesses.

Daycare

Accessible childcare is essential to a thriving economy. It enables parents to participate in the workforce, increases employment rates, and boosts household incomes. High-quality childcare generates strong economic returns, creating jobs and stimulating local economies through increased spending. The federal government must continue to invest in affordable, inclusive, and accessible childcare to ensure all Canadians have the opportunity to succeed.

¹⁹ Angus Reid Institute, "Canada and the Confidence Gap: Crime Concerns Rise, Trust in RCMP and Supreme Court Wanes," March 14, 2024, <https://angusreid.org/canada-crime-rcmp-supreme-court-confidence/>.

²⁰ "Canada Must Climate-Proof Its Infrastructure Investments." International Institute for Sustainable Development. July 9, 2021. <https://doi.org/https://www.iisd.org/articles/canada-must-climate-proof-infrastructure-investments>.

CONCLUSION

A Call to Action

Edmonton businesses are ready to grow the economy, create great jobs, and build a stronger future for Canada—but they can't do it alone. We need a federal government that supports entrepreneurs and makes it easier for businesses to succeed.

This plan lays out practical steps we can take right now to unlock Edmonton's full potential. Whether it's making trade easier between provinces, helping businesses reach new international markets, investing in training workers, or keeping our cities safe and affordable—it's clear what needs to be done.

Now's the time to act. With the right support, we can open new opportunities, help local businesses thrive, and build a more competitive Canada where businesses lead the way.





**To learn more and connect
with the Edmonton
Chamber of Commerce**

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