



**Skwxwú7mesh  
Úxwumíxw**

Squamish Nation



# **Eshíhkw'iws Chet**

We are all related

A census of the **Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumíxw**

**March 28, 2023**

Data Report:  
Our Jobs, Income,  
and Schooling

Produced by Big River Analytics  
& Tiskwat Consulting

# Acknowledgements

Chet kw'enmantúmi (we thank you), Skwxwú7mesh Members, for your high levels of participation in Eshíhkw'íws Chet - a census of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.

We'd also like to thank the enumerators, who helped collect all the data for this project, for their hard work and efforts to make this project a success, Elder Vanessa Campbell for her advice and sharing her knowledge and insights, and to the Nation staff who made this work possible.



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# Introduction

Skwxwú7mesh people have used data to steward territory, exercise governance, undertake planning, and assure well-being since time immemorial. This function of governance has been disrupted over the past two hundred years, and today, much of the data generated about Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw is not controlled by Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw or reflective of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw priorities and worldviews.

Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw undertook a census to ensure the Nation and Members have quality data relevant to their lives and decisions, and to inform major planning initiatives and program design. The guiding vision was for this project to enhance self-determination, rebuild and reinforce connections between family and kin, and leave a legacy of both useful information and new skills and understanding to support Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw in years to come. The project was named Eshíhkw'íws Chet – “we are all related” – by Elder Vanessa Campbell.

*“All of us, everywhere on our Land, our families, our friends,  
we are all related...”*

*it's best that we advise each other...  
All Squamish people need to say something.”*

**— Elder Vanessa Campbell**

The result of Eshíhkw'íws Chet is a dataset representing the perspectives of roughly one in three Members: all generations are well-represented, and the voices of men, women, and gender-diverse people, Members on- and off-reserve, and Members near and far from Skwxwú7mesh Territory are all included. Use of the data is guided by a set of policies and protocols to ensure people's privacy and the protection and security of the data.

This is one of 9 reports that summarize the data collected through Eshíhkw'íws Chet. There is one full report including all sections, and then 8 mini-reports by topic area:

- Who Did We Hear From
- Our Identity, Culture, and Language
- Our Territory, Lands, and Waters
- Our Housing
- Our Jobs, Income, and Schooling
- Our Health and Wellness
- Our Experiences of Cultural Safety
- Our Rights, Governance, and Administration

## Method, Limitations, and Interpretation

Eslhíhkw'íws Chet gathers the voices of roughly 1 in 3 Skwxwú7mesh Members. Although we tried to hear from everyone, we could not reach all Members and some Members chose not to participate. This means that some voices might be over- or under-represented. Data collection relied on a friends-and-family approach, and household heads could answer on behalf of everyone in the home. This means that we were more likely to hear from people who receive information from the Nation or whose friends and family receive information from the Nation. It also means that we heard from more female respondents than other genders, as they are more likely to be a head of their household.

To protect individuals' privacy and confidentiality, we do not report if fewer than 11 people responded a certain way to a question, or if fewer than 21 people responded to a question overall. This means that some charts, figures, and tables do not sum to 100%. Additionally, too few respondents identifying as two-spirit, non-binary, or gender identities other than male and female participated to report results for those gender identities.

Responses to questions in the census were analyzed for all respondents, as well as examined consistently by gender, location, and age, and by other groupings where relevant. Only notable differences across these population groups are reported; if there are no notable differences, summary statistics representing all respondents are presented.

The questionnaire was designed to collect a core set of data from all participants, including individuals who were represented by a household head. The remainder of the questionnaire, organized by modules on specific topics, was self-directed. This means that the response rates and demographic profiles of respondents change throughout this report depending on whether the question was part of the core questionnaire or one of the modules. The total number of respondents is reported for each figure and chart, unless it is suppressed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents. Additional analysis is possible to make inferences about the characteristics of all Skwxwú7mesh Members or to make comparisons with other populations, groups, or governments, but this was not the purpose of this particular report.

Finally, data collection was targeted towards Members and any individuals living on-reserve. If a non-Member living on-reserve was living in a household with Skwxwú7mesh Members, they could participate in the whole survey. If a non-Member living on-reserve did not have any Skwxwú7mesh Members living in their household, we collected basic demographic information and information about renters and tenants on their property, but they are otherwise not included in the analysis in this report.

See the full report *Honouring Members' Voices: Data Report from the 2022 Skwxwú7mesh Census* for a more detailed description of method.

# Our Jobs, Income, and Schooling

Employment, education, and income are interrelated factors that contribute to a person and family's social conditions past, present, and future. Eshíhkw'íws Chet asked respondents to provide information about their current employment status, educational attainment, and household income, their goals in these areas, and what has – and does – enable and impede their related goals.

## Key Findings

Most respondents are employed, and those who want to and can work, have work. Only 6% of respondents are unemployed and looking for work. The median household income among respondents is \$30,000-\$40,000 per year. Close to half of respondents indicate that they have completed some form of post-secondary or trades training.



## Employment

Most respondents are employed (67%), and those who are not employed generally selected "not applicable" (primarily people ages 0-19) or retired (primarily people over the age of 60). Most employed respondents are working full-time (75%) and one in ten (11%) are self-employed. Among unemployed respondents, 28% are looking for work and close to half (43%) are on disability or other assistance. In other words, most respondents who want to and can work, have work, and only 6% of respondents are unemployed and looking for work (Table JIS.1).

Almost all respondents that are unemployed and looking for work are younger workers, under 39 years of age. Improved transportation, better networking, and enhanced education and training are noted by respondents as investments that would support connecting unemployed respondents to the labour force.

**Table JIS.1: Employment Status**

Response	Count	Percent
Employed, full time	484	37.00%
Employed, part-time (less than 35 hours/week)	164	12.54%
Unemployed, on disability or other assistance	114	8.72%
Unemployed, not looking for work	76	5.81%
Unemployed, looking for work	73	5.58%
Prefer not to say	12	0.92%
Other	42	3.21%
Not applicable	188	14.37%
Retired	149	11.39%

**Note:** Question: "Are you currently working? Please select all that apply." This question had 1,308 respondents.

Most employed respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their job (83%), though this share is higher among those with full-time employment (85%) than those who are employed part-time (75%). More than half of respondents (57%) felt an increase in pay would improve their satisfaction with their job. More opportunities to advance their career (28%) and improvements to emotional and mental safety (20%) in their workplace are also popular responses. Interest in work with purpose is also common among respondents, with 17% saying they would be more satisfied with work that serves their Nation or community and 12% want more meaningful work (Table JIS.2).

**Table JIS.2: What Would Increase Employed Respondents' Satisfaction with Their Job**

Response	Count	Percent
Better pay	73	57.48%
More opportunities for advancement	36	28.35%
Improved emotional and mental safety	26	20.47%
Work that serves my Nation or community	22	17.32%
More flexible hours	18	14.17%
Location of work	16	12.60%
More meaningful work	15	11.81%
Work that better matches my skills	15	11.81%
Better job security	14	11.02%
Supervisor(s) or co-workers that I get along with	13	10.24%
Other	17	13.39%
None, I am completely satisfied at work	19	14.96%

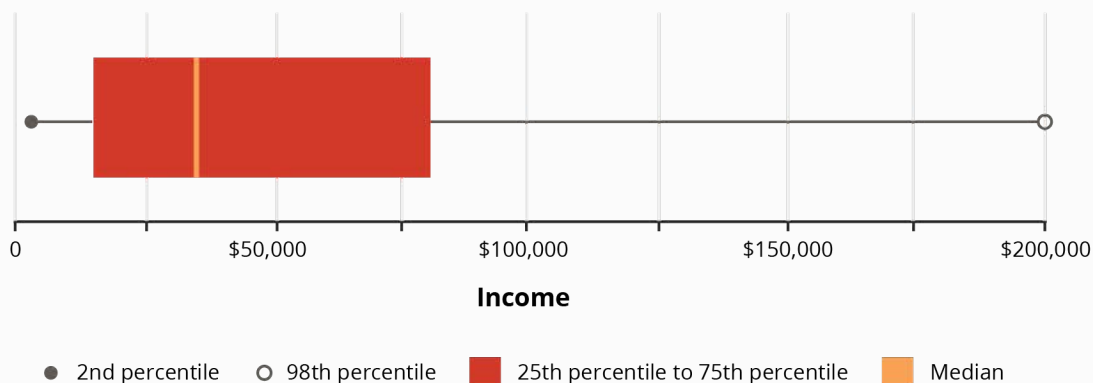
**Note:** Question: "What would make you more satisfied with your job? Please select all that apply." This question had 127 respondents.

## Income & Financial Stability

The median household income among respondents is \$30,000-\$40,000 per year. Figure JIS.1 presents the distribution of respondents' yearly total household income as a box-and-whisker plot. This type of plot shows the full range of responses (from \$0-\$200,000), the median, and the range within which half of all responses lay (the red box). Among respondents who chose to share their household income information, less than one third (29%) live in a household that makes \$20,000 or less per year and about one quarter (26%) live in a household that makes \$70,000 or more per year.



**Figure JIS.1: Income Distribution**



**Note:** Question: "For the year ending December 31, 2021 (last year), how much was your total household income before taxes?" This question had 742 respondents. Income distribution is calculated based on all respondents who reported income, rather than all respondents who answered the question. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents chose not to share information about their income.

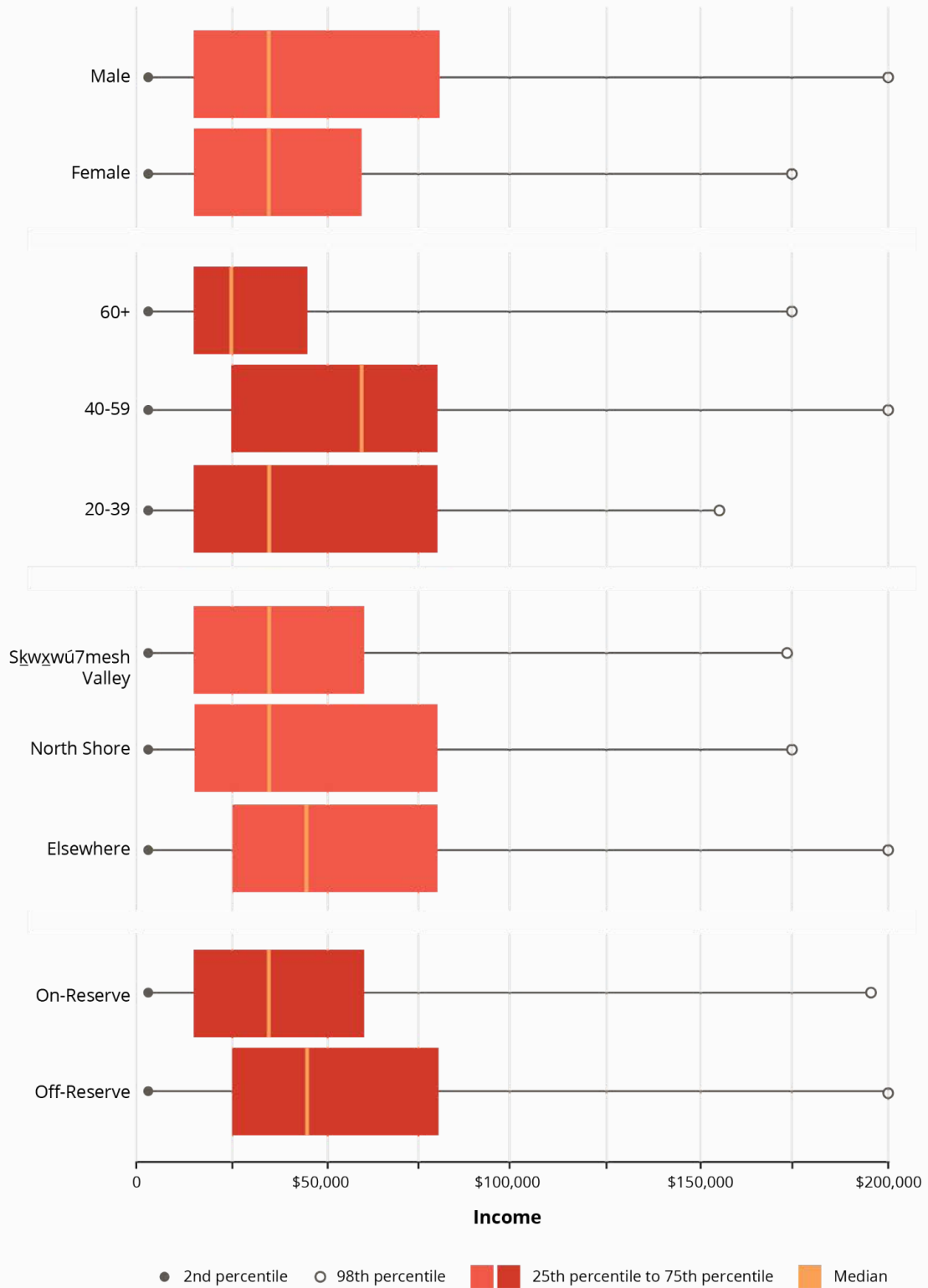
Figure JIS.2 shows how incomes vary across respondents' gender, age, and location. Respondents living on the North Shore have similar median yearly household incomes as those living in the Skwxwú7mesh Valley (both \$30,000-\$40,000), whereas those living elsewhere have a slightly higher median income (\$40,000-\$50,000).

Older adults (ages 40-59) tend to have a higher median income (\$50,000-\$70,000) than Elders (ages 60 and over) (median income of \$20,000-\$30,000) or young adults (ages 20-39) (median income of \$35,000-\$45,000). Among employed respondents, differences across age groups are smaller, with older adults still having a median income of \$50,000-\$70,000, compared to working Elders and young adults earning a median annual income of \$40,000-\$50,000.

There is little difference in terms of median income across genders, though there are more male respondents with high incomes than female respondents: 13% of male respondents have an income greater than \$120,000 and 8% of female respondents have a similarly high income.

The median income for respondents living off-reserve (\$40,000-\$50,000) is higher than on-reserve (\$30,000-\$40,000). Additionally, there are more respondents with higher incomes that live off-reserve: 20% of respondents living off-reserve make more than \$90,000 per year and 15% of respondents living on-reserve have a similarly high income.

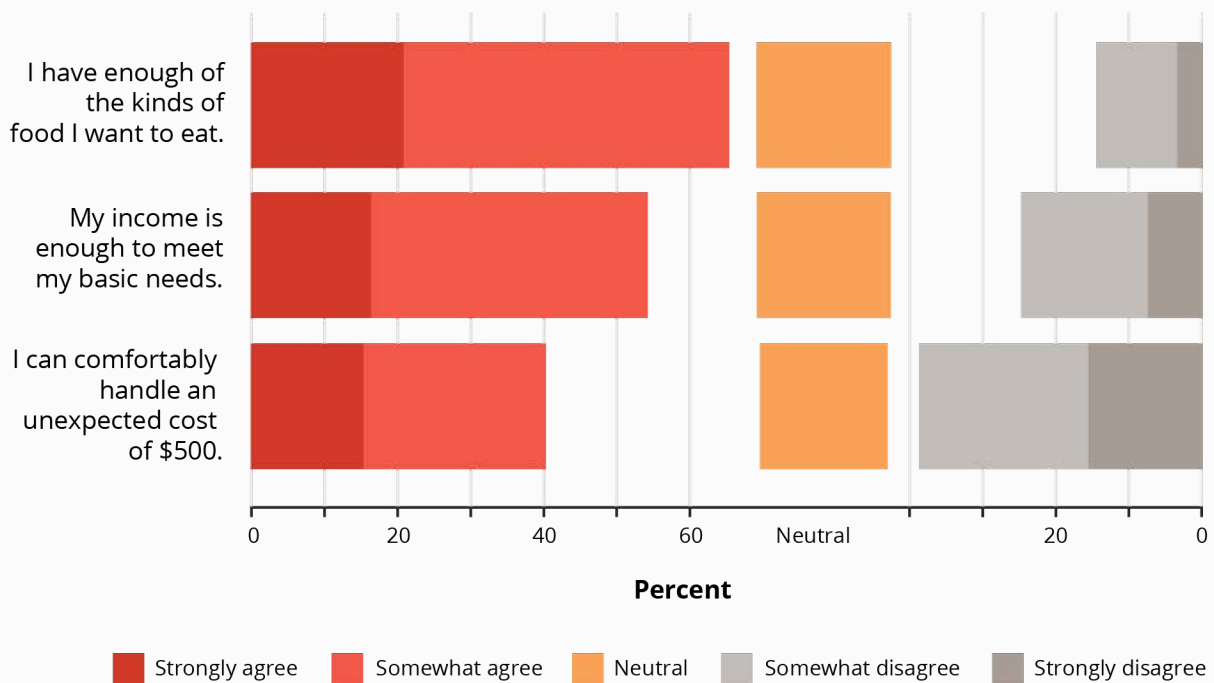
**Figure JIS.2: Income Distribution, Gender, Age, Location, On- and Off-Reserve**



**Note:** Question: "For the year ending December 31, 2021 (last year), how much was your total household income before taxes?" This question had 742 respondents. Income distribution is calculated based on all respondents who reported income, rather than all respondents who answered the question. 125 respondents chose not to respond.

More than half of all respondents (55%) indicate that their household income is enough to meet their basic needs (e.g. transportation, housing, food, clothing, utilities), and fewer than half (41%) agree or strongly agree they could comfortably absorb an unexpected cost of \$500 (Figure JIS.3). Most respondents (66%) agree or strongly agree they have access to the foods they want to eat. These findings tend not to vary much across age groups.

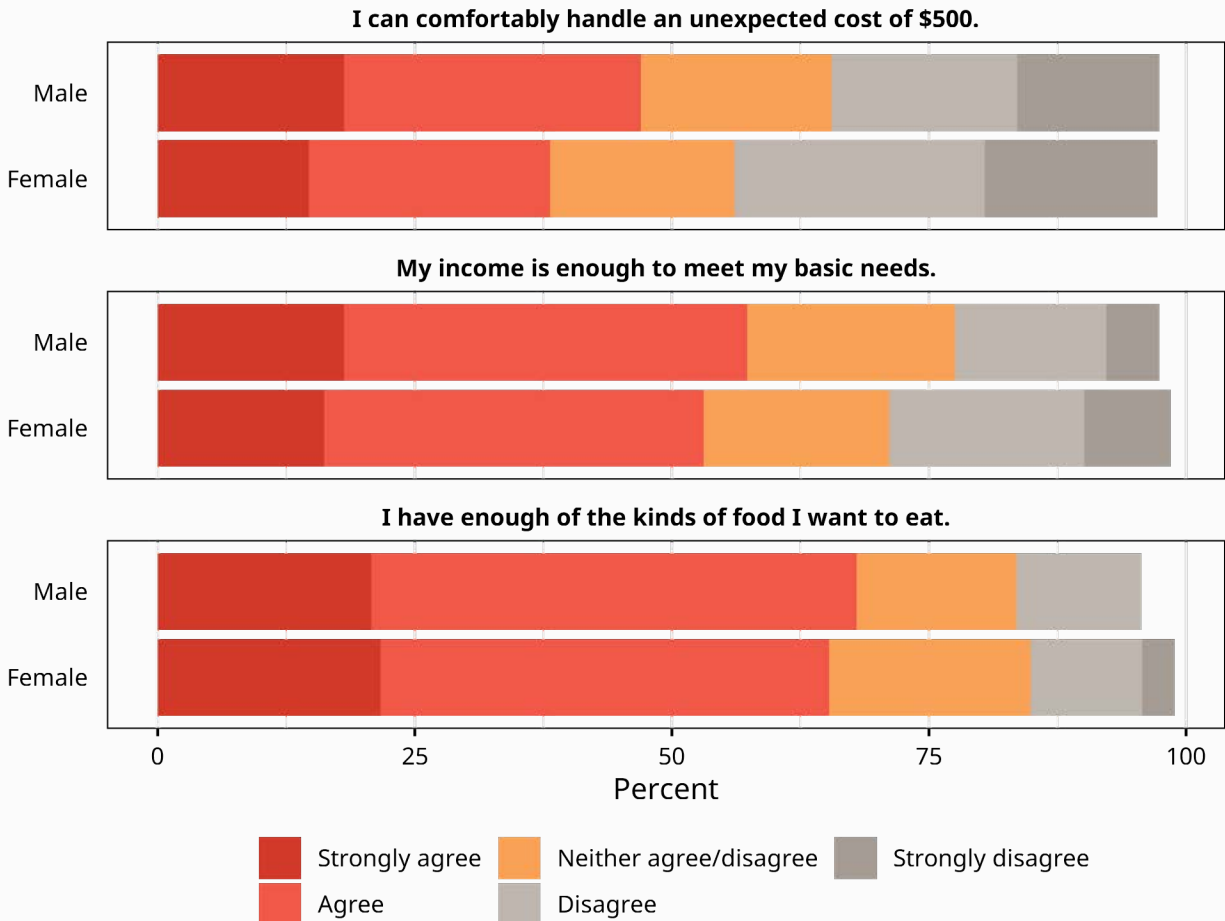
**Figure JIS.3: Measures of Financial Stability**



**Note:** Question: Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements: “My income is enough to meet my basic needs; I have enough of the kinds of food I want to eat; I can comfortably handle an unexpected cost of \$500.” This question had 788 respondents. Suppressed responses: “Prefer not to say”.

Overall, there is a larger share of male respondents, compared to female respondents, who can handle an unexpected cost of \$500 (47% vs. 38%), who have enough income to meet their basic needs (57% vs 53%), and who have enough of the kinds of food they want to eat (68% vs. 65%). These findings align with the income distribution being slightly higher among male respondents than female respondents (Figure JIS.4).

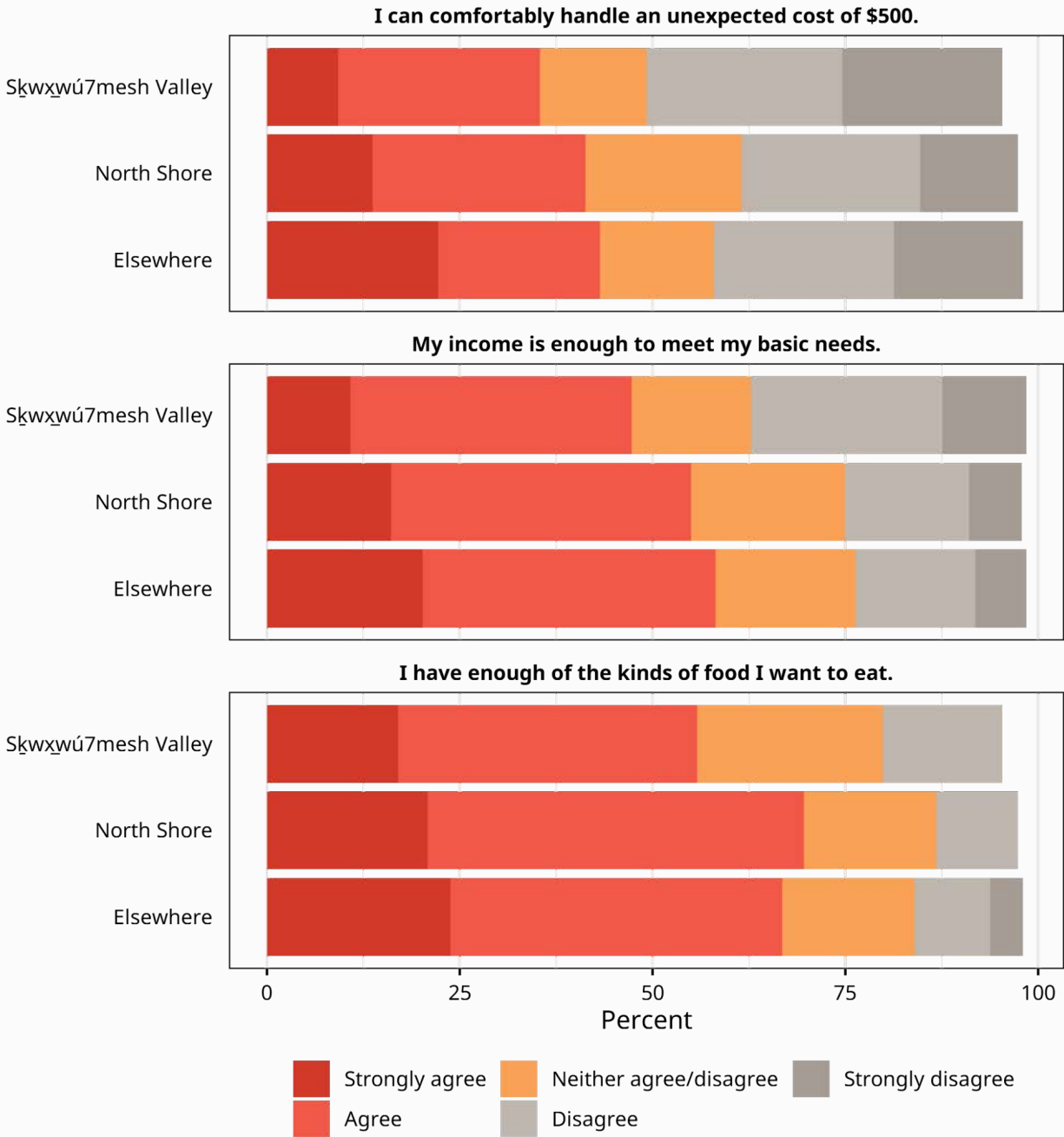
**Figure JIS.4: Measures of Financial Stability, Gender**



**Note:** Question: Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements: “My income is enough to meet my basic needs; I have enough of the kinds of food I want to eat; I can comfortably handle an unexpected cost of \$500.” This question had 788 respondents. Suppressed responses: “Prefer not to say”. Some responses to “strongly disagree” have been suppressed due to low response rates.

Figure JIS.5 presents those same measures of financial stability, but it compares responses across respondents in different locations. There is a smaller share of respondents living in the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Valley, compared to the North Shore and Elsewhere, who can handle an unexpected cost of \$500 (35% vs. 41% and 43%), who have enough income to meet their basic needs (47% vs. 55% and 58%), and who have enough of the kinds of food they want to eat (56% vs. 70% and 67%). This finding aligns with the income distribution being slightly higher among those living elsewhere.

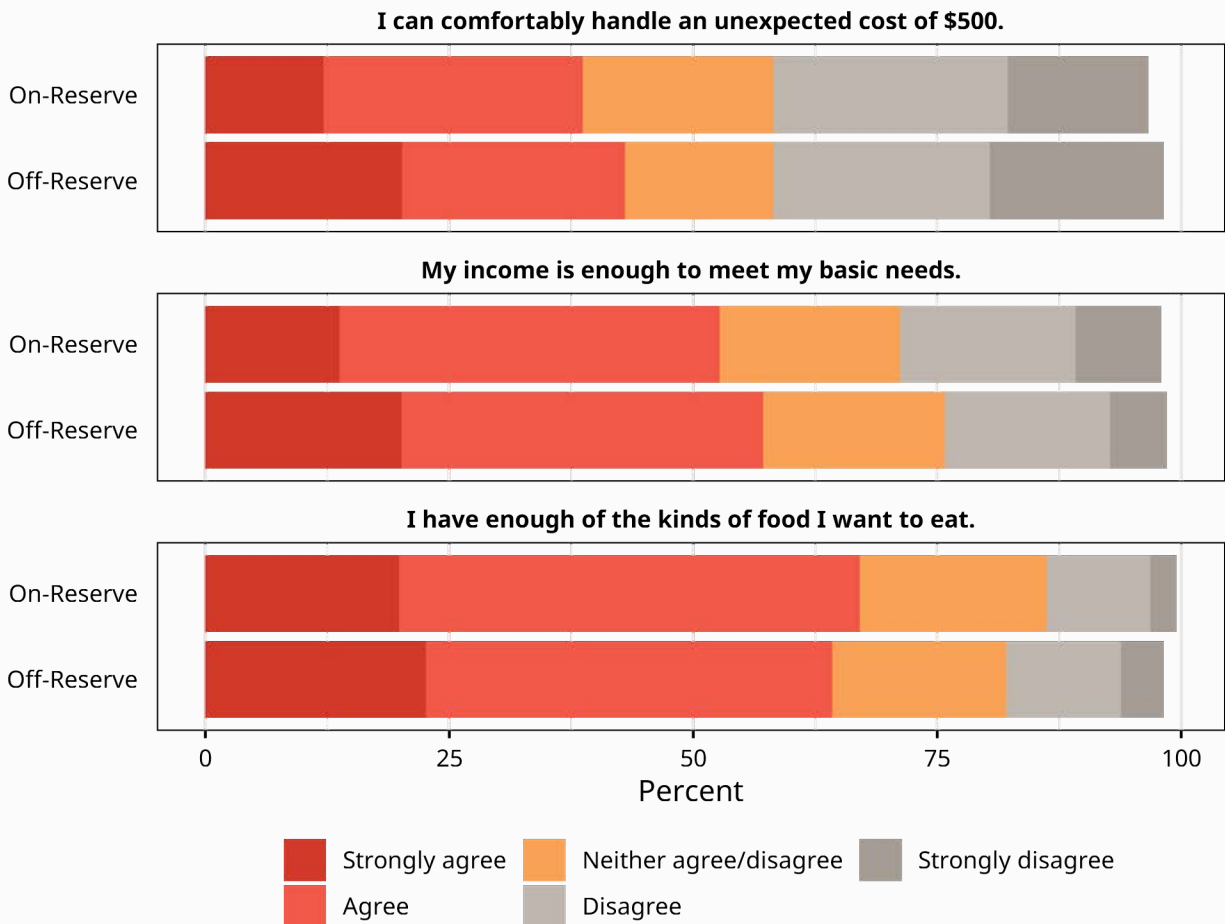
**Figure JIS.5: Measures of Financial Stability, Location**



**Note:** Question: Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements: “My income is enough to meet my basic needs; I have enough of the kinds of food I want to eat; I can comfortably handle an unexpected cost of \$500.” This question had 788 respondents. Suppressed responses: “Prefer not to say”. Some responses to “Strongly disagree” have been suppressed due to low response rates.

Figure JIS.6 presents those same measures of financial stability, but it compares responses across respondents living on- and off-reserve. Respondents living on-reserve responded slightly less positively to both questions directly related to financial stability (39% can handle unexpected costs, compared to 43% off-reserve, and 53% have enough income to meet their basic needs, compared to 57% off-reserve), consistent with differences in the income distribution between respondents living on- and off-reserve, although a larger share indicated that they have enough of the kinds of foods they want to eat (67% on-reserve compared to 64% off-reserve).

**Figure JIS.6: Measures of Financial Stability, On- and Off-Reserve**



**Note:** Question: Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements: “My income is enough to meet my basic needs; I have enough of the kinds of food I want to eat; I can comfortably handle an unexpected cost of \$500.” This question had 788 respondents. Suppressed responses: “Prefer not to say”.

# Education and Training

Close to half (47%) of respondents indicated that they have completed some form of post-secondary or trades training, and 41% reported completing high school or an equivalent. About one in five respondents (22%) reported that none of the potential responses were applicable to them (Figure JIS.7). Post-secondary education is nearly twice as common among female respondents (32%) than among male respondents (18%). A higher share of female respondents, compared to male respondents, have attained post-secondary credentials in the form of a college or university certificate or diploma (32% vs. 18%) and a bachelor’s degree (7% vs. 2%), whereas a higher share of male respondents have an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma (15% vs. 5%).

There are very few notable differences in educational attainment among respondents living on- and off-reserve (Figure JIS.7). One difference relates to the type of post-secondary education, with a slightly higher share of respondents on-reserve reporting completion of college or university certificate or diploma (29% vs. 22%), and a slightly higher proportion of respondents off-reserve reporting completion of a Bachelor’s degree (7% vs. 3%). Twice as many respondents that have received training for cultural work live on-reserve (4%) relative to those living off-reserve (2%).

Similarly, educational attainment is fairly evenly distributed across age groups (Figure JIS.7). A higher proportion of young adults (52%) have completed high school or equivalent, when compared with older adults (42%) and Elders (40%). A slightly higher share of older adults (56%) than young adults (47%) and Elders (53%) have completed some form of post-secondary or trades training.

Among respondents who left post-secondary prior to completing a degree, the most common reasons had to do with time and money: 47% left for financial reasons, 44% left because they got a job or wanted to work, and 38% left due to family responsibilities.

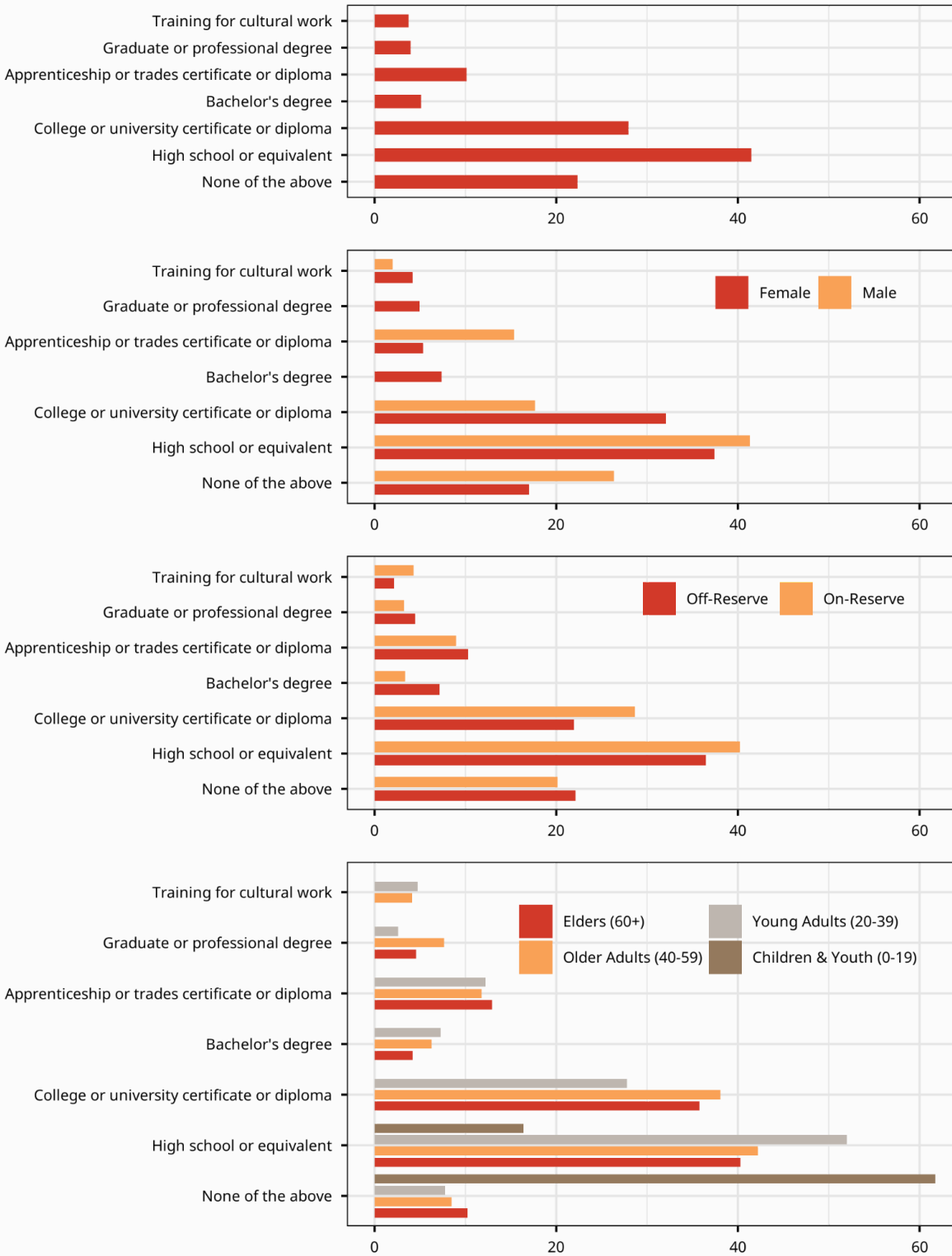
Just over half (53%) of respondents would like to go back to school, and just under a third (30%) are unsure if they would like to go back. Young adults (71%) and Elders (66%) are more interested in going back to school than older adults (53%) (Table JIS.3).

**Table JIS.3: Desire to Go Back to School, by Age**

Response	Young Adults (20-39)		Older Adults (40-59)		Elders (60+)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	37	71.15%	39	53.42%	23	65.71%
Unsure	15	28.85%	19	26.03%		
No			15	20.55%	12	34.29%

**Note:** Question: “Would you like to go back to school?” This question had 160 respondents. Due to low response rates, “Unsure” and “No” combined for Young Adults; “Yes” and “Unsure” combined for Elders.

**Figure JIS.7: Educational Attainment**



**Note:** Question: "What is the highest level of education you have completed?" This question had 1285 respondents. Some responses have been suppressed due to low response rates.



Of those interested in going back to school, one in three respondents are interested in obtaining a certificate or diploma (not related to the trades) from a university or college (34%), one in three are interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree (32%), and one in three are interested in obtaining a graduate or professional degree such as a Master's, PhD, MD, or DMD (32%) (Table JIS.4). Female respondents are more interested in returning to post-secondary (55%) and graduate or professional degrees (30%), compared to male respondents, 45% of whom are interested in going back to school for post-secondary and 29% of whom would like to go back for apprenticeship or trade certificates or diplomas.

**Table JIS.4: Certifications of Interest When Going Back to School**

Response	Count	Percent
College or university certificate or diploma	47	33.81%
Bachelor's degree	44	31.65%
Graduate or professional degree	44	31.65%
Apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma	22	15.83%
Completing or upgrading high school	20	14.39%
Other	18	12.95%

**Note:** Question: "What type of certification would you like to go back for? Please select all that apply." This question had 139 respondents.

Affordability is the most commonly reported challenge respondents anticipate could prevent them from going back to school: close to half of respondents (44%) are concerned that they would not be able to afford their living expenses when going back to school, nearly one third (32%) are concerned that they would not be able to afford tuition and books (Table JIS.5). Time and attention constraints are another common concern: 28% of respondents are too busy or have no time to study and 29% of respondents have other personal or family responsibilities that could prevent them from going back to school. More than one in five respondents lack confidence in their preparedness (22%) or do not have the prerequisite qualifications necessary to pursue their desired educational path (11%).

**Table JIS.5: Barriers to Going Back to School**

Response	Count	Percent
Cannot afford living expenses	70	43.75%
Cannot afford tuition and books	51	31.87%
Other personal or family responsibilities	47	29.38%
Too busy or no time to study	45	28.12%
Lack of confidence (i.e. do not feel prepared)	35	21.88%
Childcare	20	12.50%
Do not have the prerequisites	17	10.62%
Courses or training available do not match needs or interests	15	9.38%
Illness or disability	14	8.75%
Not enough educational supports	14	8.75%
Challenging to be away from home (e.g. homesick)	11	6.88%
Other	15	9.38%
I don't anticipate difficulties or challenges	16	10.00%

**Note:** Question: "Are there any difficulties or challenges that you anticipate could prevent you from going back to school? Please select all that apply." This question had 160 respondents.

Most respondents (69%) felt that support from their Nation was a top factor that contributed to their success, and nearly half (49%) of respondents indicated they relied on support from their families (Table JIS.6).

**Table JIS.6: Reasons for Educational Success**

Response	Count	Percent
Support from my Nation	122	69.32%
Support from family	87	49.43%
Being able to work while in school	66	37.50%
Supports available at my school	52	29.55%
Being able to study close to home	49	27.84%
Student loans	29	16.48%
Indigenous cultural supports (e.g. Longhouse at UBC)	27	15.34%
Tutoring programs	14	7.95%
Other	14	7.95%

**Note:** Question: “What helped you in your educational journey? Please select all that apply.” This question had 176 respondents.

Support from their Nation was identified as a top success factor for respondents from the North Shore, Skwxwú7mesh Valley, and Elsewhere, although a higher share of respondents from the North Shore (51%) found help from their family contributed to their success compared to those living in the Skwxwú7mesh Valley (36%), and elsewhere (34%) (Table JIS.7).

**Table JIS.7: Reasons for Educational Success, by Location**

Response	North Shore		Skwxwú7mesh Valley		Elsewhere	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Support from my Nation	60	60.0%	23	58.97%	36	61.02%
Support from family	51	51.0%	14	35.9%	20	33.9%
Being able to work while in school	32	32.0%	16	41.03%	18	30.51%
Supports available at my school	32	32.0%	...	...	12	20.34%
Being able to study close to home	29	29.0%	...	...	13	22.03%
Indigenous cultural supports	18	18.0%	...	...	...	...
Student loans	14	14.0%	...	...	13	22.03%

**Note:** Question: “What helped you in your educational journey? Please select all that apply.” This question had 176 respondents. Responses to “tutoring programs” and “other” were suppressed due to low response rates.