



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Tax Stress Survey 2026: One in four Canadians report cutting back on essentials due to tax stress

TORONTO, ON – February 23, 2026 - A new Canadian Tax Stress Survey 2026 (n=210) suggests tax season is increasingly a cash-flow stress test for Canadians, with many worrying they will owe money and can't afford to pay, and a significant share reporting real-life impacts like cutting back on essentials and losing sleep.

Key findings (n=210)

- **About 1 in 3 respondents** expect they will **owe money** when they file, and **about 1 in 5** are **uncertain about the outcome**, a sign that many Canadians are heading into tax season without clear visibility on what they'll owe.
- **53%** say tax stress is driven by **worrying they'll owe money and can't afford to pay (111 of 210)**.
- **24%** report **cutting back on essentials** like groceries, rent, or utilities due to tax stress (**51 of 210**).
- **21%** report **lost sleep or persistent worry** due to tax stress (45 of 210).
- If they owe, the most common plan is to **set up a payment arrangement (27.14%)**, while **21.43%** say **they don't know yet** how they'll cover a tax bill.

Comparative table: headline stats (n=210)

Measure	Result
Expect to owe money when they file	~1 in 3
Not sure what will happen when they file	~1 in 5
Worried they'll owe money / can't afford to pay	53% (111/210)
Cut back on essentials due to tax stress	24% (51/210)
Lost sleep/persistent worry due to tax stress	21% (45/210)
If owing, plan to set up a payment arrangement	27.14%
"I don't know yet" how they'll cover a tax bill	21.43%

“Behind tax stress is often a cash-flow reality, Canadians are worried about a bill they can't absorb. The earlier someone seeks clarity, the more options they typically have.” **Gillian Goldblatt, Partner, Licensed Insolvency Trustee, msi Spergel Inc.**

About Spergel

Spergel is a Canadian Licensed Insolvency Trustee firm that helps individuals and families explore practical solutions to manage and reduce debt, including consumer proposals, bankruptcy, and credit counselling options. Spergel provides confidential, judgment-free support and offers free consultations to help Canadians understand their rights, next steps, and the path to financial stability.

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