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Canadian

NEW OPTOMETRISTS 

2025 NEW ODS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian New ODs started in April 2020 during the height of the pandemic as a Facebook community to connect new grads and help them navigate changes brought about by pandemic restrictions. Today, we have grown to a group of over 1100 members.

The 2025 Canadian New ODs Workforce Report aims to present the current state of the optometric profession for new graduates in Canada. The survey was conducted between January and February 2025 on SurveyMonkey, which was sponsored by OSI. Special acknowledgement to Dr. Abraham Yuen for his contributions. Participants from the 2013-2024 graduating classes were invited to take part. This survey was designed to:

1. Help new optometry graduates make informed career decisions
2. Provide practice owners with insights to enhance recruitment strategies
3. Understand the evolving optometric profession in Canada.

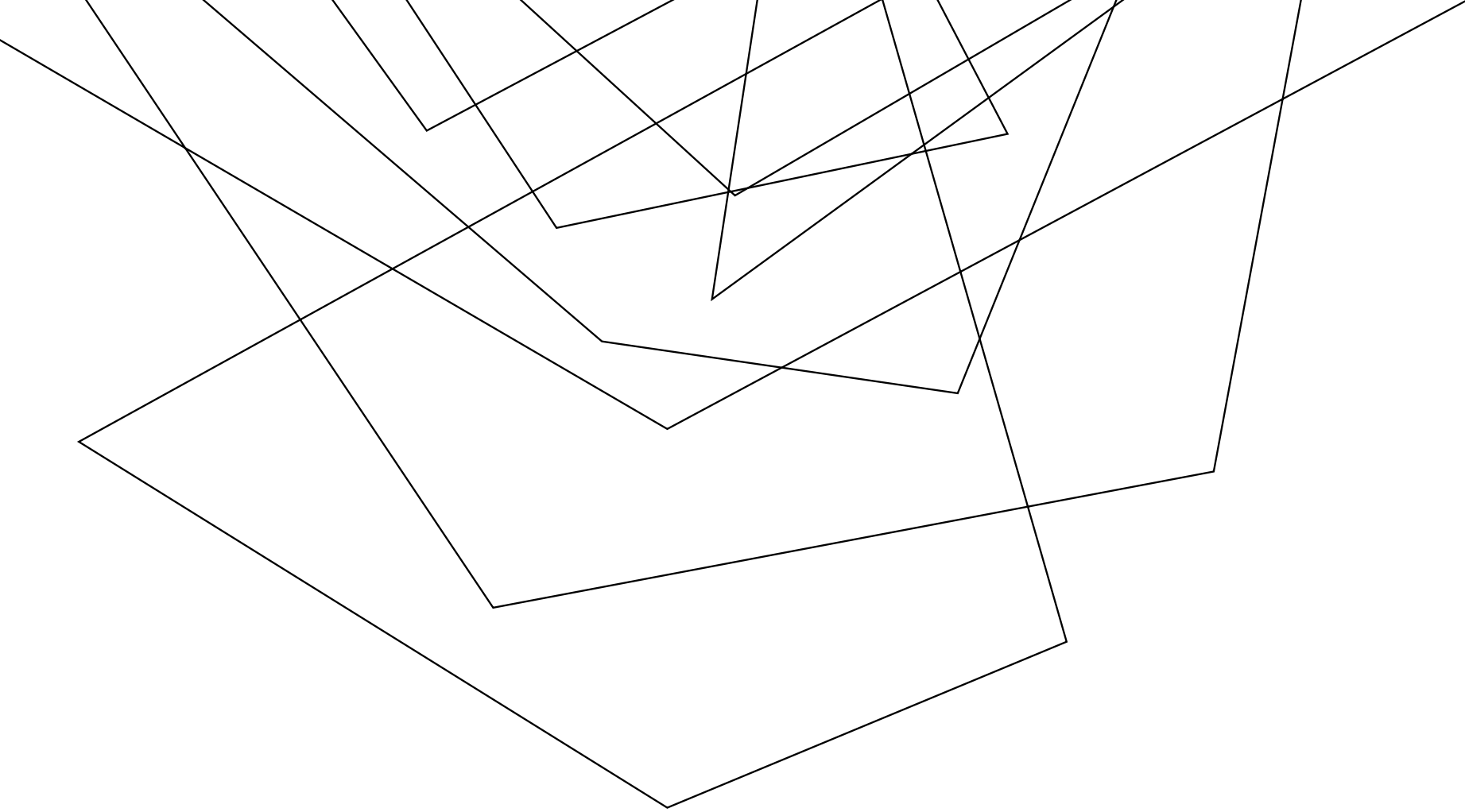
The survey does this by increasing income transparency across Canadian provinces and communities, analyzing the work – life balance of a Canadian optometrist, analyzing future landscape of optometry and new graduates' career aspirations, identifying key factors influencing new graduates' employment decisions, and comparing debt distribution between Canadian and American optometry students.

Enjoy,

Dr. Wynn Nguyen O.D.

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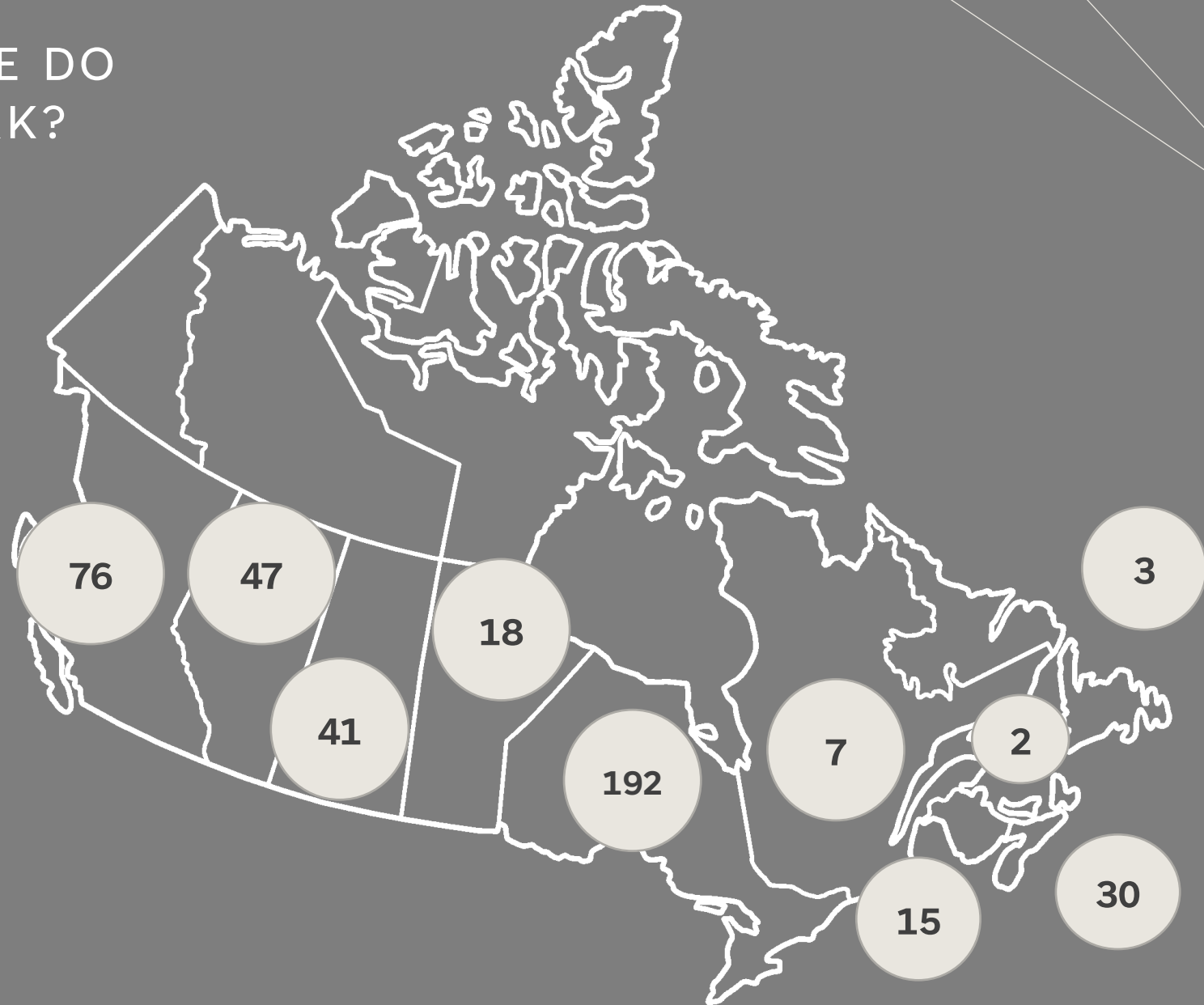


DEMOGRAPHICS

Q: IN WHAT PROVINCE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK?

N=431

192	ONTARIO
76	BRITISH COLUMBIA
47	ALBERTA
41	SASKATCHEWAN
30	NOVA SCOTIA
18	MANITOBA
15	NEW BRUNSWICK
7	QUEBEC
3	NEWFOUNDLAND
2	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

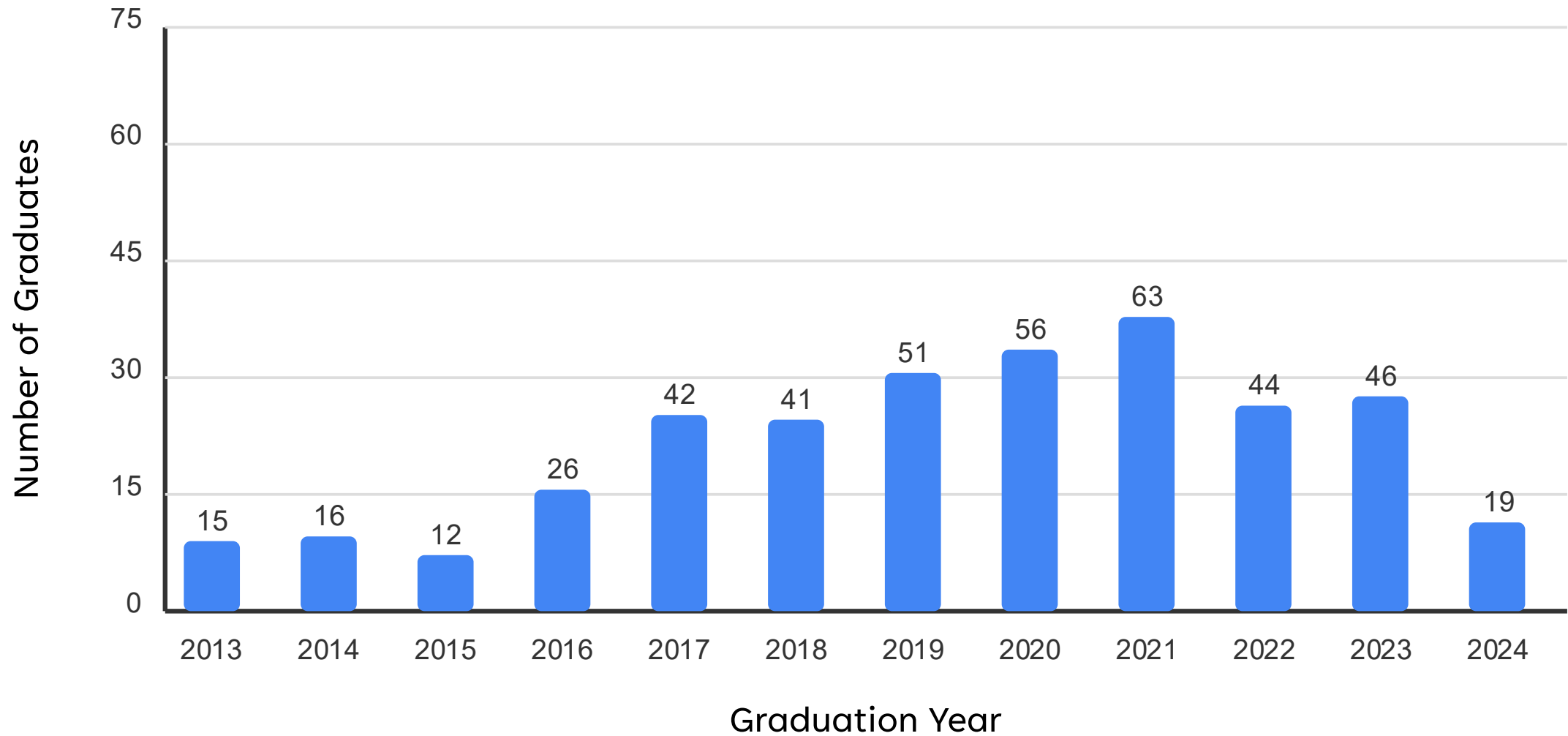


Q: WHICH SCHOOL DID YOU GRADUATE FROM?

N=343



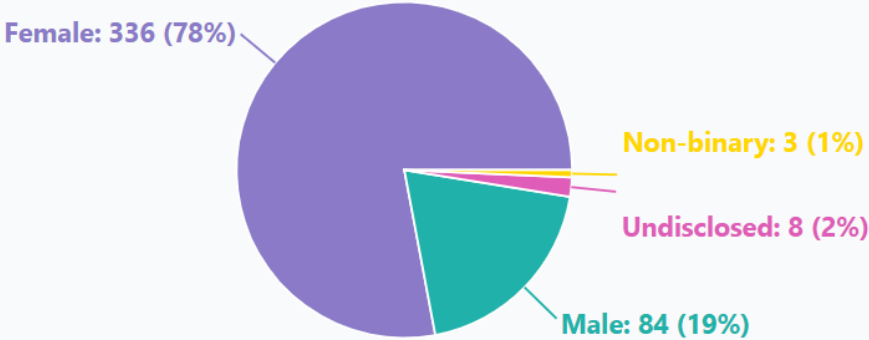
YEAR OF GRADUATION



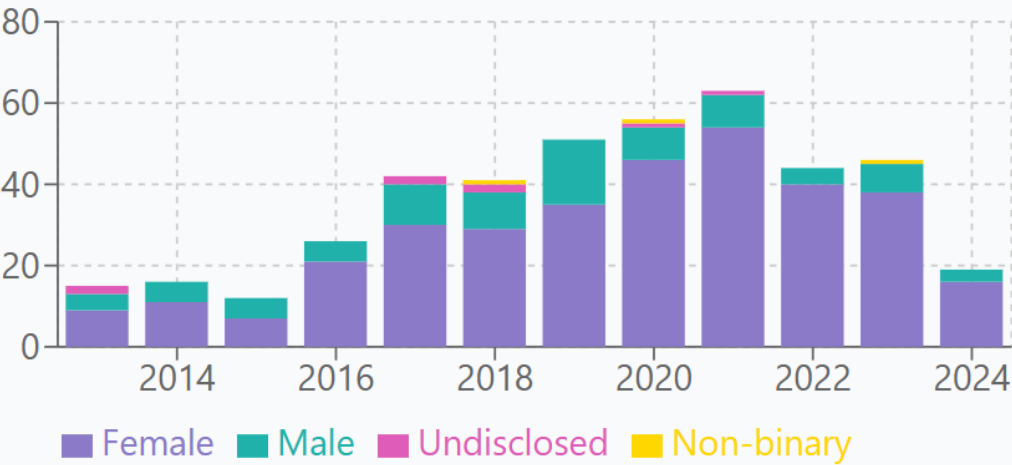
Gender Distribution

Total Respondents: 431

Overall Gender Distribution



Gender Distribution by Graduation Year



Key Insights

78%

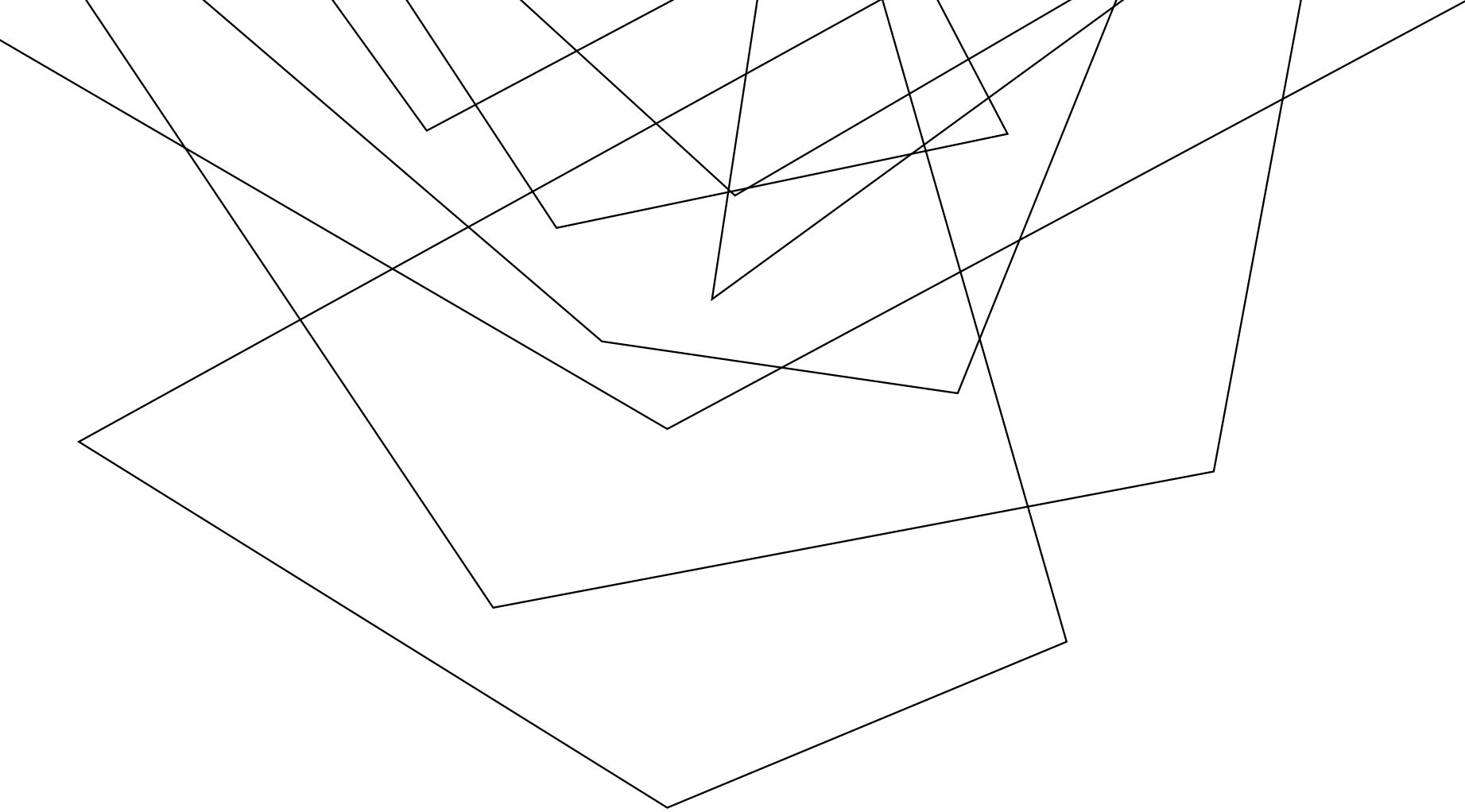
of respondents identify as female

4:1

female to male ratio overall

+15%

increase in female representation in recent graduates (2020-2024 vs 2013-2019)

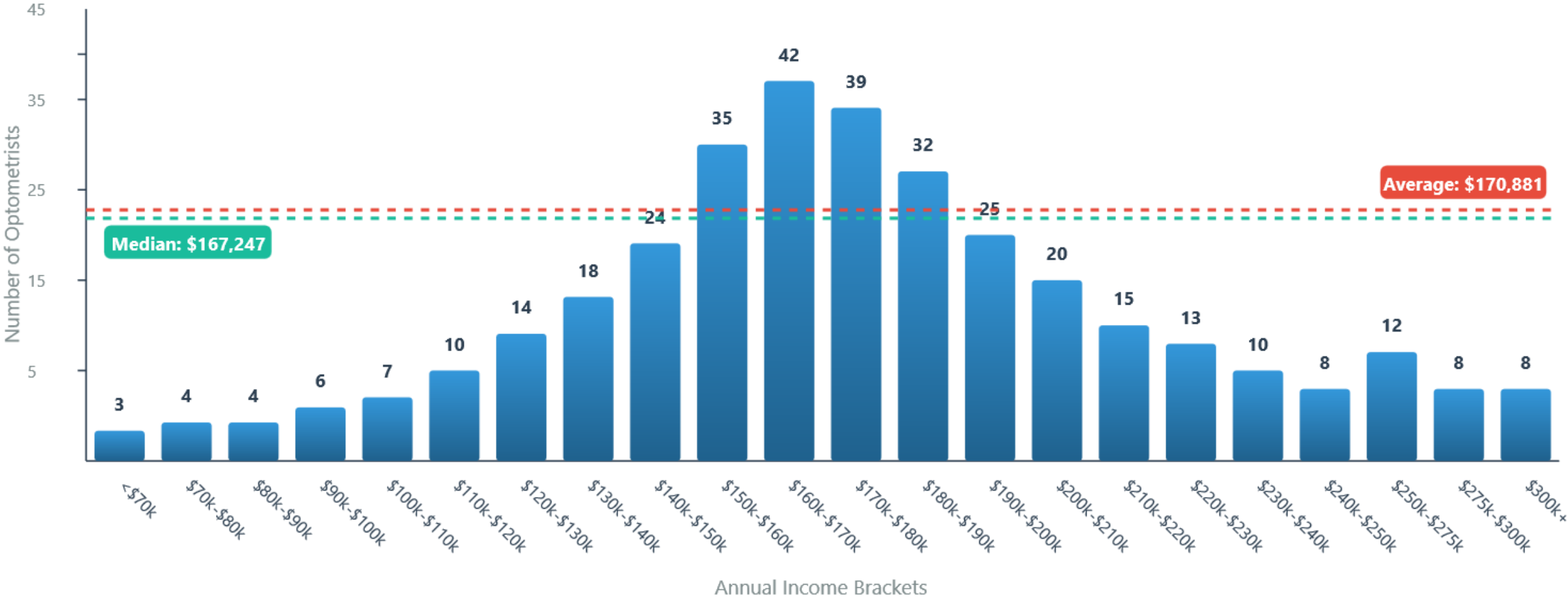


INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Canadian Optometrist Income Distribution

National Average Annual Income

\$170,881



National Average Income
\$170,881

Daily Average Income
\$813.39 per day

Provincial Income Breakdown



Income by Community Size



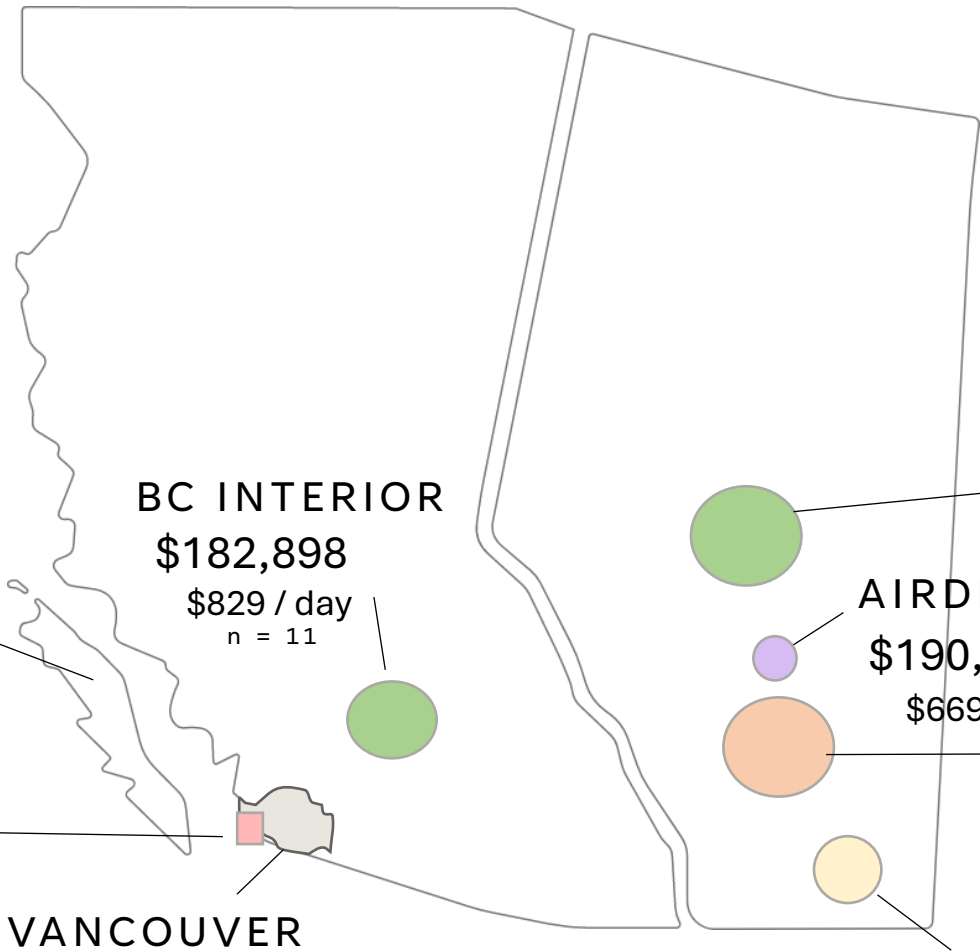
2024 INCOME BY REGION: ROCKIES



BRITISH COLUMBIA
\$170,546
\$814 / day
n = 67



ALBERTA
\$169,186
\$865 / day
n = 41



VANCOUVER ISLAND
\$178,421
\$875 / day
n = 7

VANCOUVER
\$136,006
\$764 / day
n = 12

GREATER VANCOUVER
\$163,860 n = 25
\$730 / day n = 23

BC INTERIOR
\$182,898
\$829 / day
n = 11

EDMONTON
\$169,966 n = 6
\$722 / day

AIRDRIE
\$190,519 n = 5
\$669 / day

CALGARY
\$157,417 n = 8
\$697 / day

LETHBRIDGE
\$157,017 n = 5
\$852 / day

2024 INCOME BY REGION: PRAIRIES



SASKATCHEWAN

\$200,386 n = 35

\$963 / day

SASKATOON

\$193,795 n = 14

\$952 / day

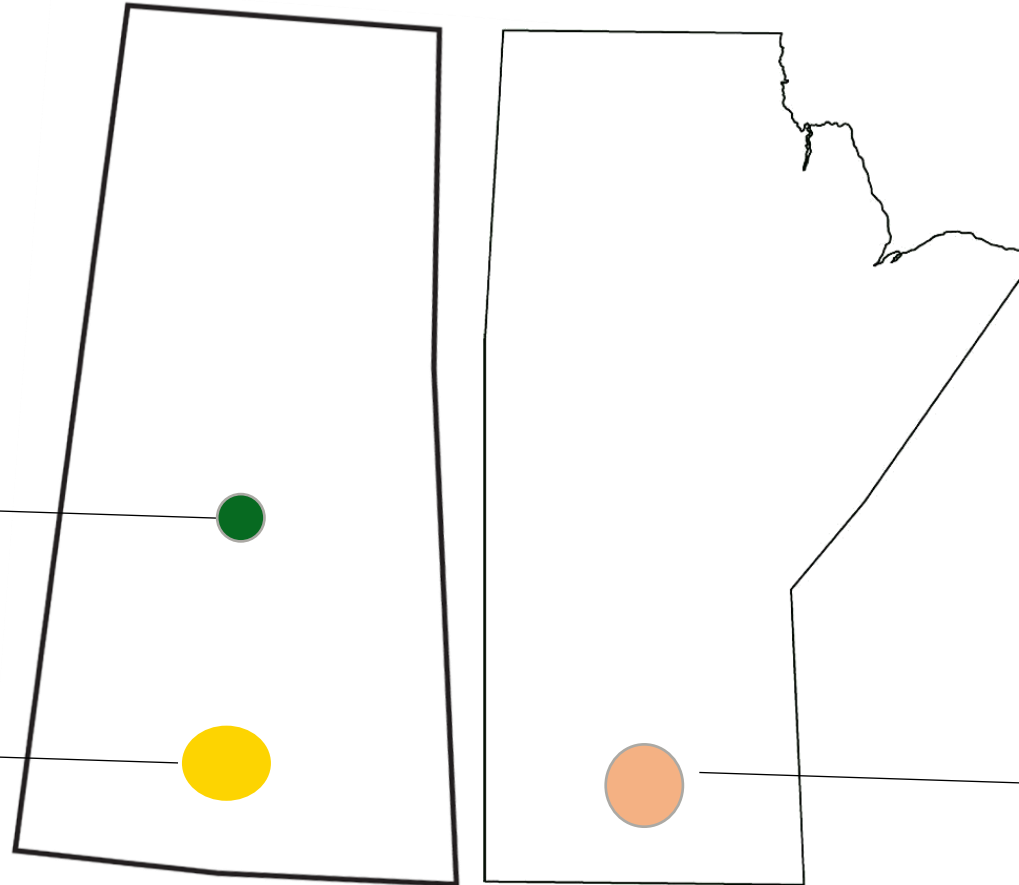
n = 10

REGINA

\$199,586 n = 10

\$910 / day

n = 3



MANITOBA

\$159,920

\$786 / day

n = 14

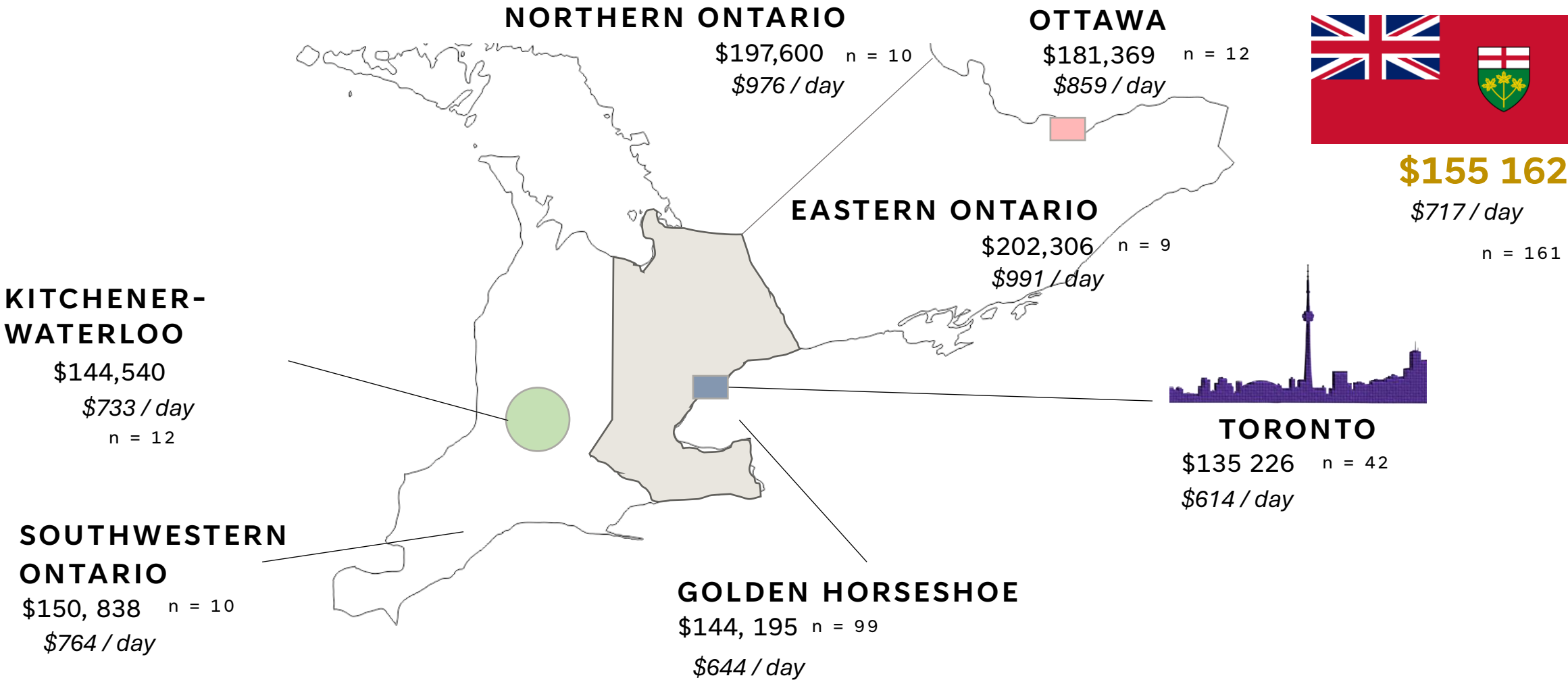
WINNIPEG

\$143,668 n = 13

\$989 / day

n = 8

2024 INCOME BY REGION: ONTARIO



2024 INCOME BY REGION: EASTERN CANADA



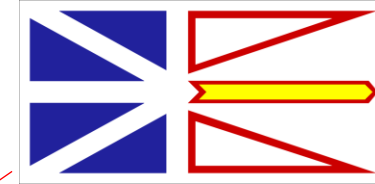
QUEBEC
\$197,576

\$1027 / day
n = 5



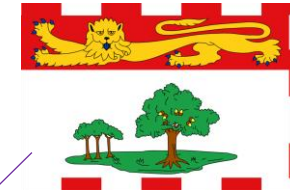
NEW BRUNSWICK
\$229,805

\$1128 / day
n = 14



**NEWFOUNDLAND
& LABRADOR**

\$206,410 n = 3
\$1004 / day



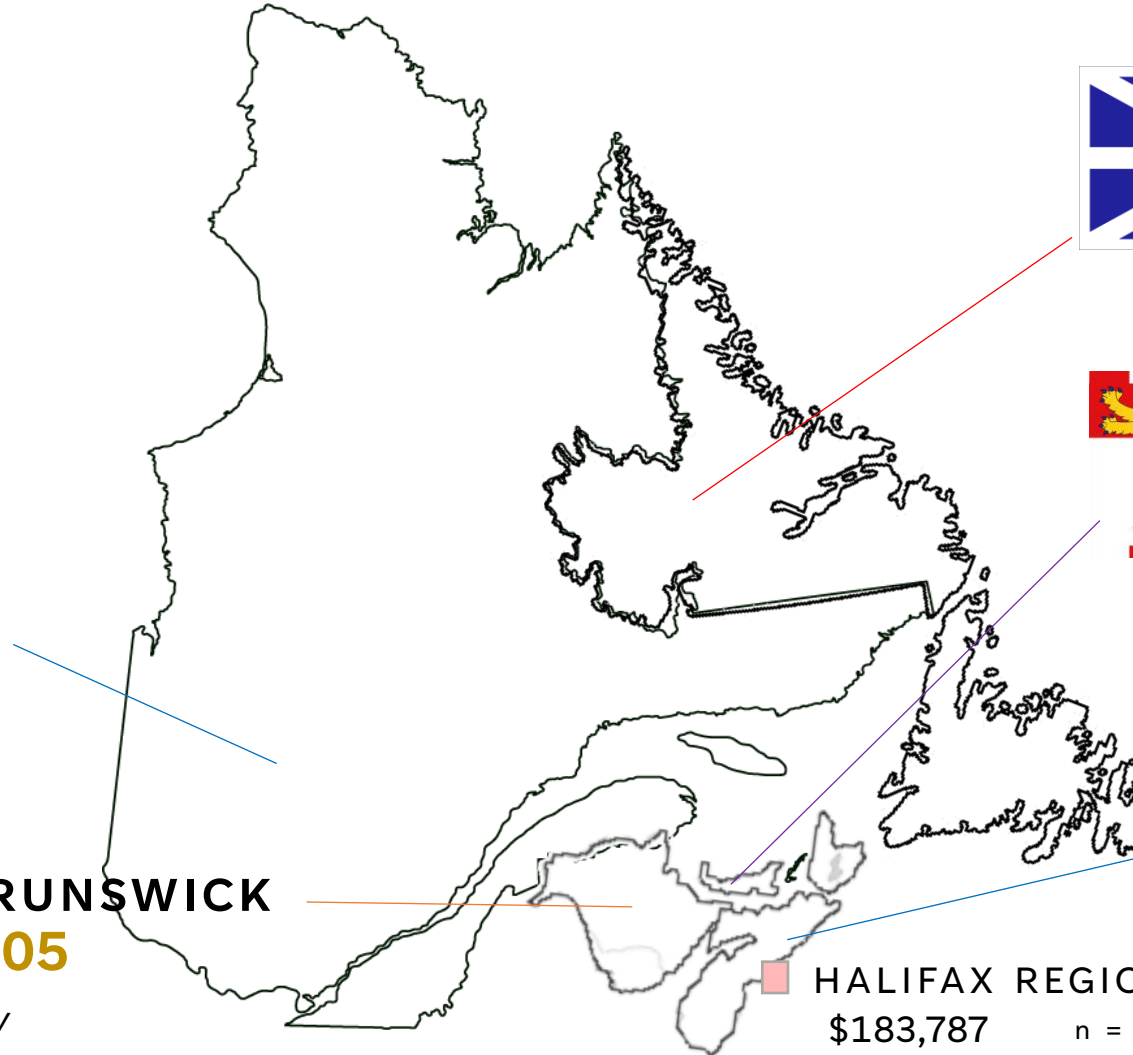
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

\$250,616 n = 2
\$1129 / day



NOVA SCOTIA

\$185,106 n = 27
\$922 / day



HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

\$183,787 n = 11
\$779 / day n = 7

Optometrist Income by Province and Community Type

Average Daily and Annual Income (CAD)

■ Daily Income

■ Annual Income

(n) = Sample Size

Alberta

Rural (<10,000)	\$804.91 (3)	\$173,666 (3)
Small City (10k-100k)	\$1,011.88 (6)	\$170,202 (11)
Medium City (100k-500k)	\$720.31 (5)	\$160,863 (6)
Large City (500k-1M)	\$1,211.49 (2)	\$196,728 (5)
Metropolitan (>1M)	\$1,091.70 (11)	\$172,026 (14)

British Columbia

Rural (<10,000)	\$1,000.26 (2)	\$186,790 (7)
Small City (10k-100k)	\$1,004.12 (8)	\$182,617 (17)
Medium City (100k-500k)	\$733.18 (14)	\$161,234 (16)
Large City (500k-1M)	\$611.40 (5)	\$138,429 (9)
Metropolitan (>1M)	\$828.05 (10)	\$179,054 (14)

Ontario

Rural (<10,000)	\$856.89 (8)	\$165,328 (11)
Small City (10k-100k)	\$885.07 (21)	\$186,385 (27)
Medium City (100k-500k)	\$626.07 (34)	\$144,371 (39)
Large City (500k-1M)	\$652.70 (23)	\$157,933 (31)
Metropolitan (>1M)	\$651.39 (28)	\$142,506 (49)

Saskatchewan

Small City (10k-100k)	\$978.67 (4)	\$230,868 (6)
Medium City (100k-500k)	\$971.58 (16)	\$204,888 (24)

New Brunswick

Rural (<10,000)	\$639.59 (2)	\$193,764 (3)
Small City (10k-100k)	\$1,131.43 (8)	\$230,792 (10)

Nova Scotia

Rural (<10,000)	\$1,028.24 (9)	\$175,187 (11)
Small City (10k-100k)	\$1,026.40 (5)	\$223,515 (4)
Medium City (100k-500k)	\$848.08 (5)	\$180,157 (9)

Manitoba

Large City (500k-1M)	\$816.92 (8)	\$143,668 (13)
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Newfoundland and Labrador

Small City (10k-100k)	- (-)	\$214,615 (2)
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Prince Edward Island

Combined (Rural Small City)	\$1,128.90 (2)	\$250,615 (2)
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Québec

Medium City (100k-500k)	\$885.82 (2)	\$205,500 (2)
Metropolitan (1M)	\$1,274.77 (2)	\$223,439 (2)

Notes:

Excluding data points with a sample size of 1
Annual income excludes 2024 graduates

Key Findings

1. Small cities consistently offer higher incomes

Small City

Rural

Metropolitan

Medium City

2. Atlantic provinces show highest average annual incomes

Prince Edward Island

New Brunswick

Saskatchewan

Nova Scotia

3. Province-community combinations with highest incomes

Daily: **QC Metropolitan (\$1,274)**

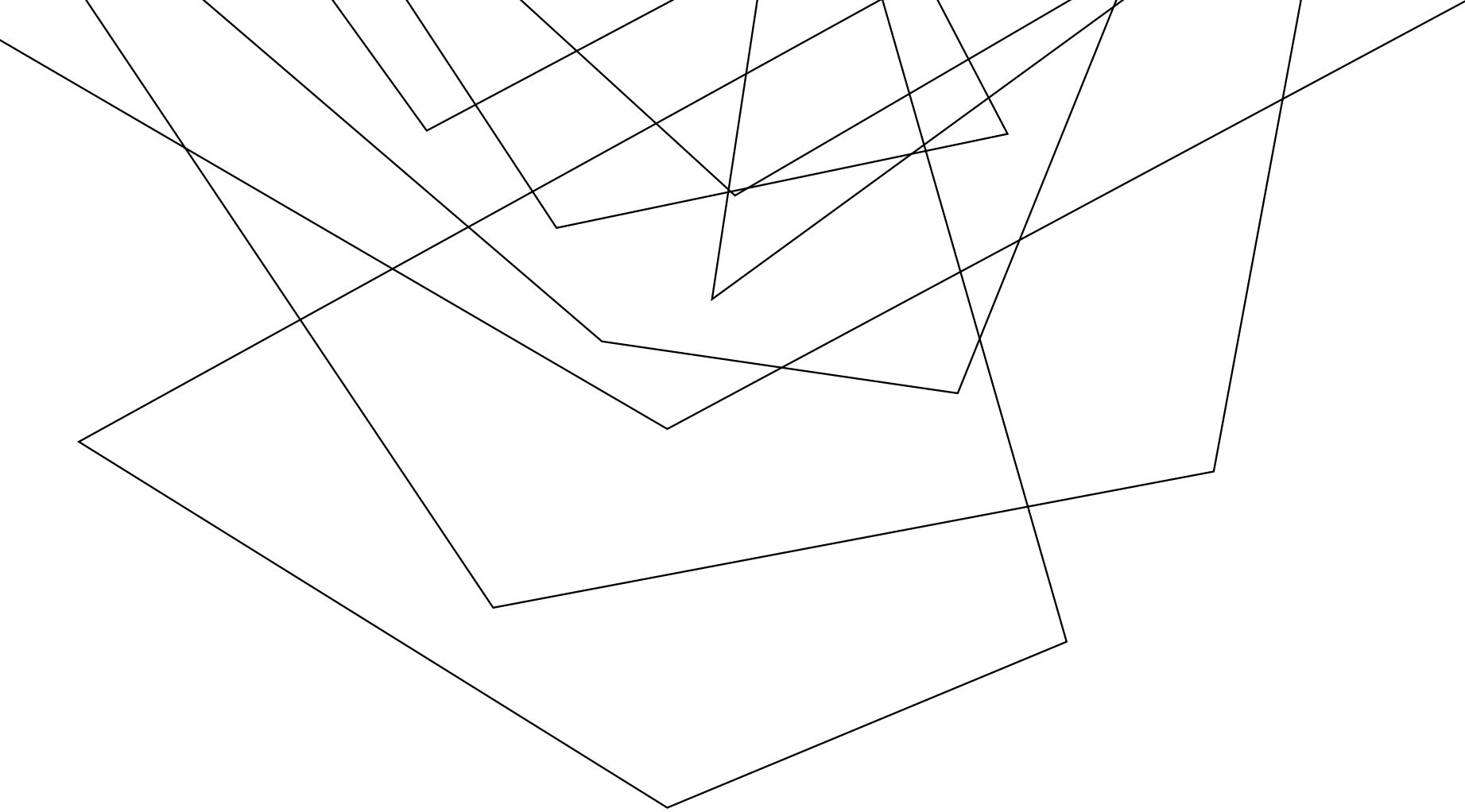
→ **AB Large City (\$1,211)**

→ **PEI Combined (\$1,128)**

Annual: **PEI Combined (\$250,615)**

→ **SK Small City (\$230,868)**

→ **NB Small City (\$230,792)**

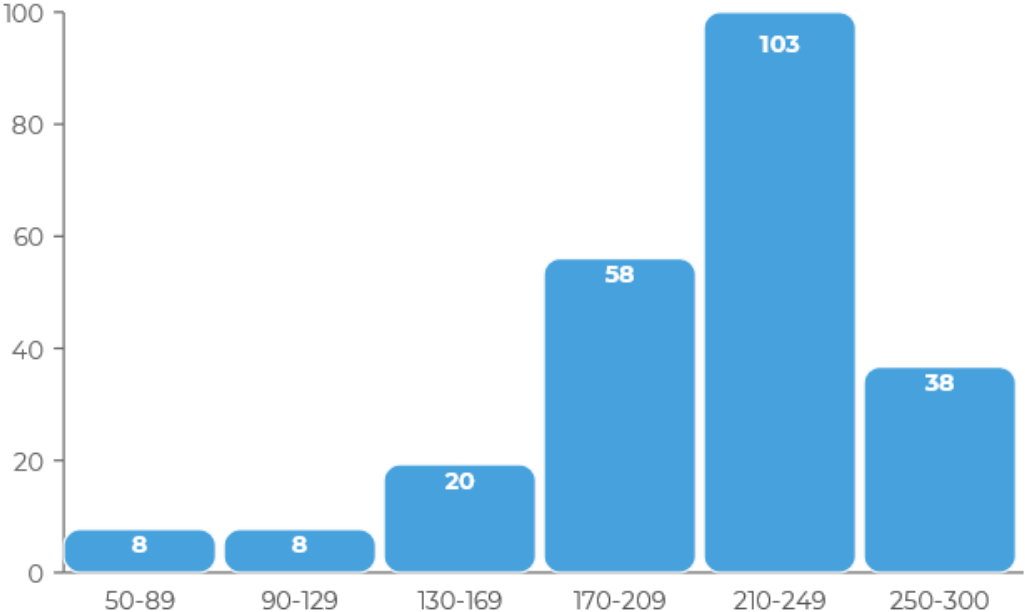


WORK – LIFE BALANCE

Work - Life Balance of Canadian Optometrists

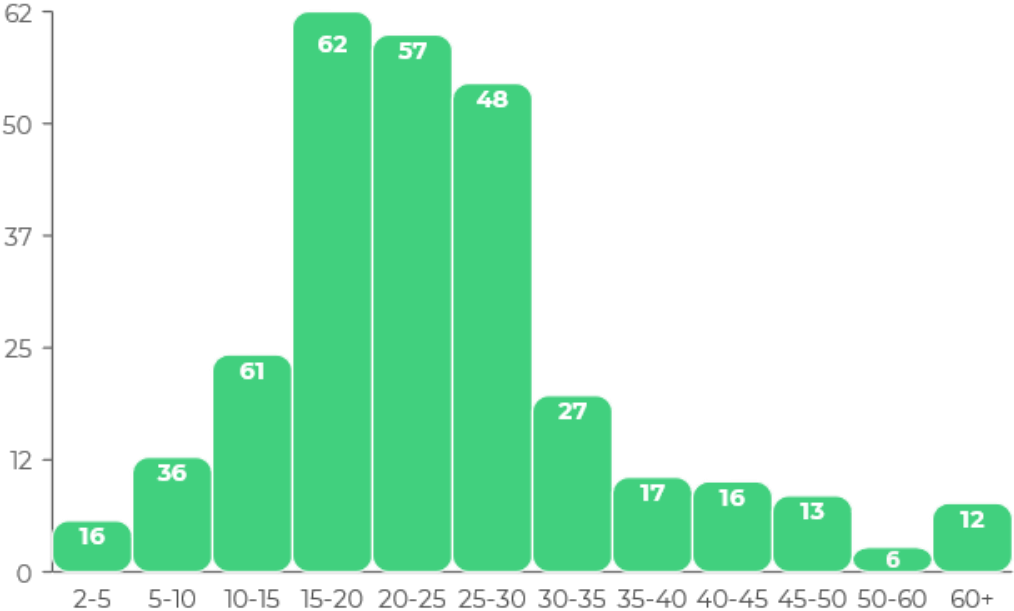
Days Worked Per Year

Average: 209.24 days (n=235, excluding 0 values)



Vacation Days Taken

Average: 26.24 days (n=371, excluding 0 values)



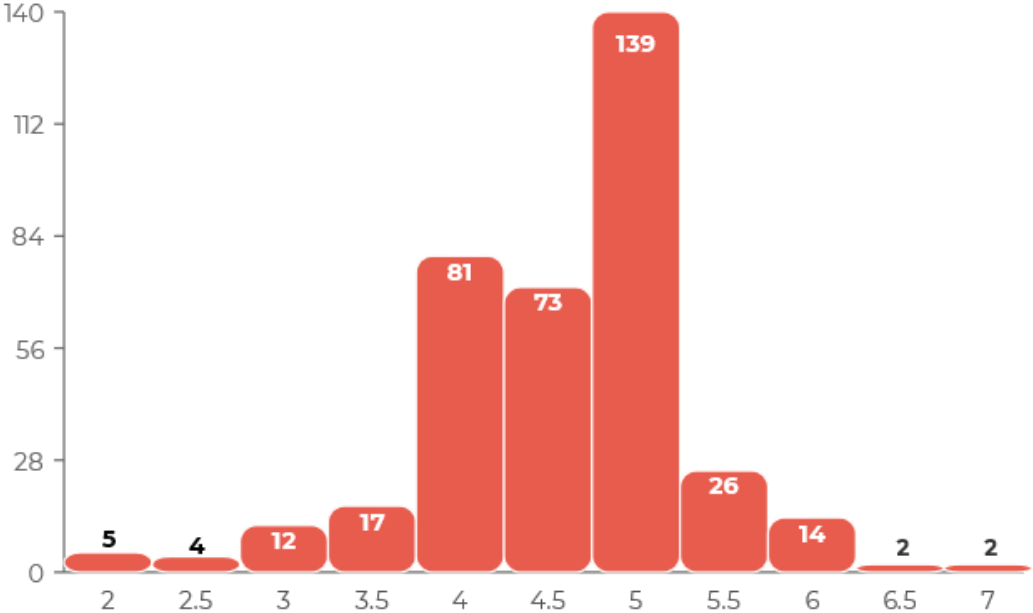
Key Insights:

- Most optometrists (103) work 210-249 days per year. The standard Canadian work year is 252 days.
- 15-20 days is the most common vacation range (62 respondents)

Weekly Work Patterns of Canadian Optometrists

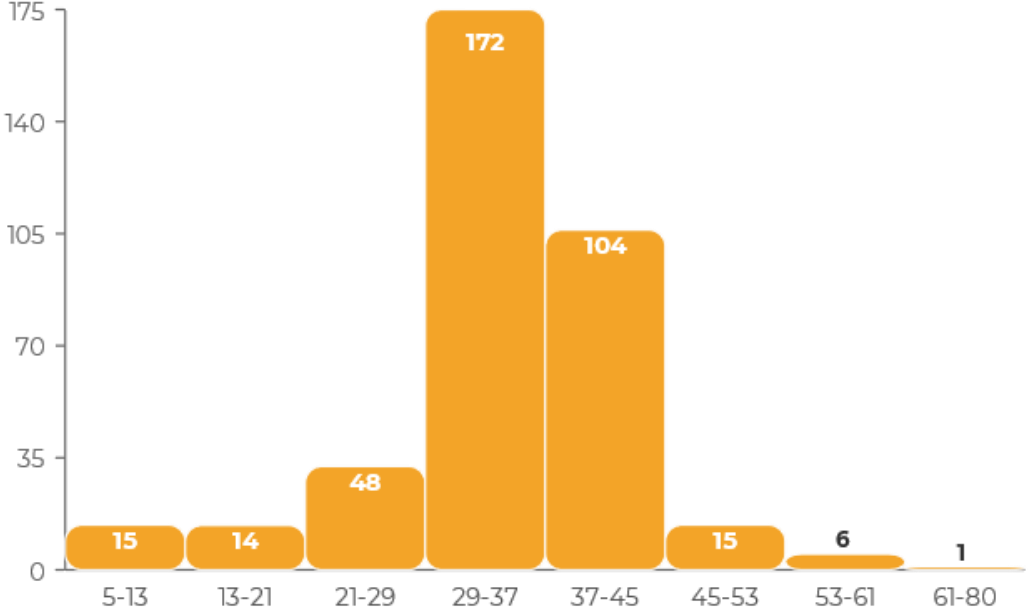
Days Worked Per Week

Average: 4.57 days (n=375)



Patient Hours Per Week

Average: 33.99 hours (n=375)



Key Insights:

- 5 days per week is the most common work schedule (139 respondents)
- Most optometrists (172) see patients for 29-37 hours per week

Abstract geometric lines in black on a white background, forming various overlapping polygons and shapes.

ASSOCIATESHIP VS OWNERSHIP

Optometrist Daily Income Comparison

Average Daily Income

● **\$1014.66**

Owners (66 respondents)

● **\$766.28**

Associates (282 respondents)

Owner Premium: \$248.38 (32.4%)

Owner Premium by Experience

0-3 years: 4.2%

4-7 years: 18.6%

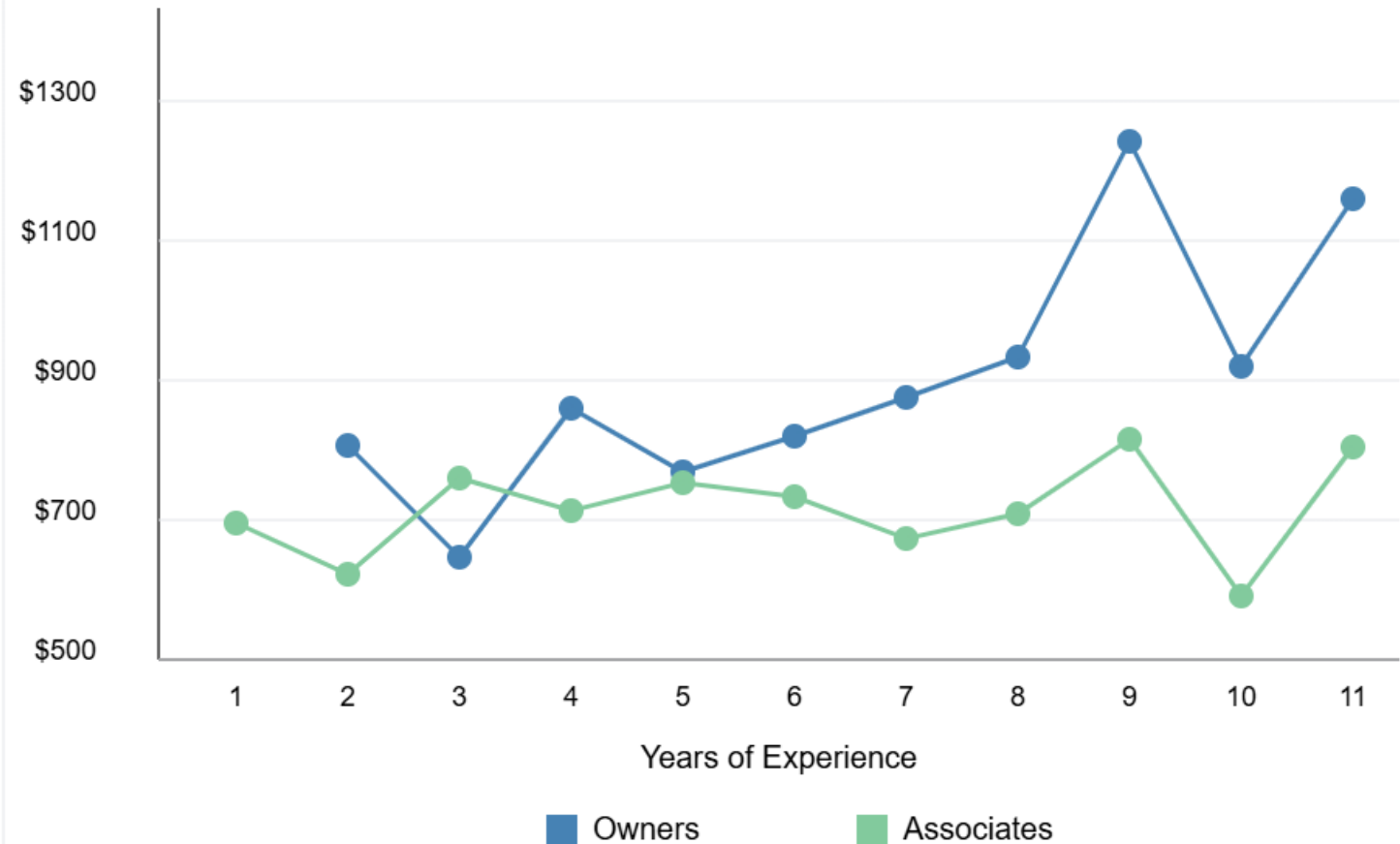
8-11 years: 42.6%

Working Days

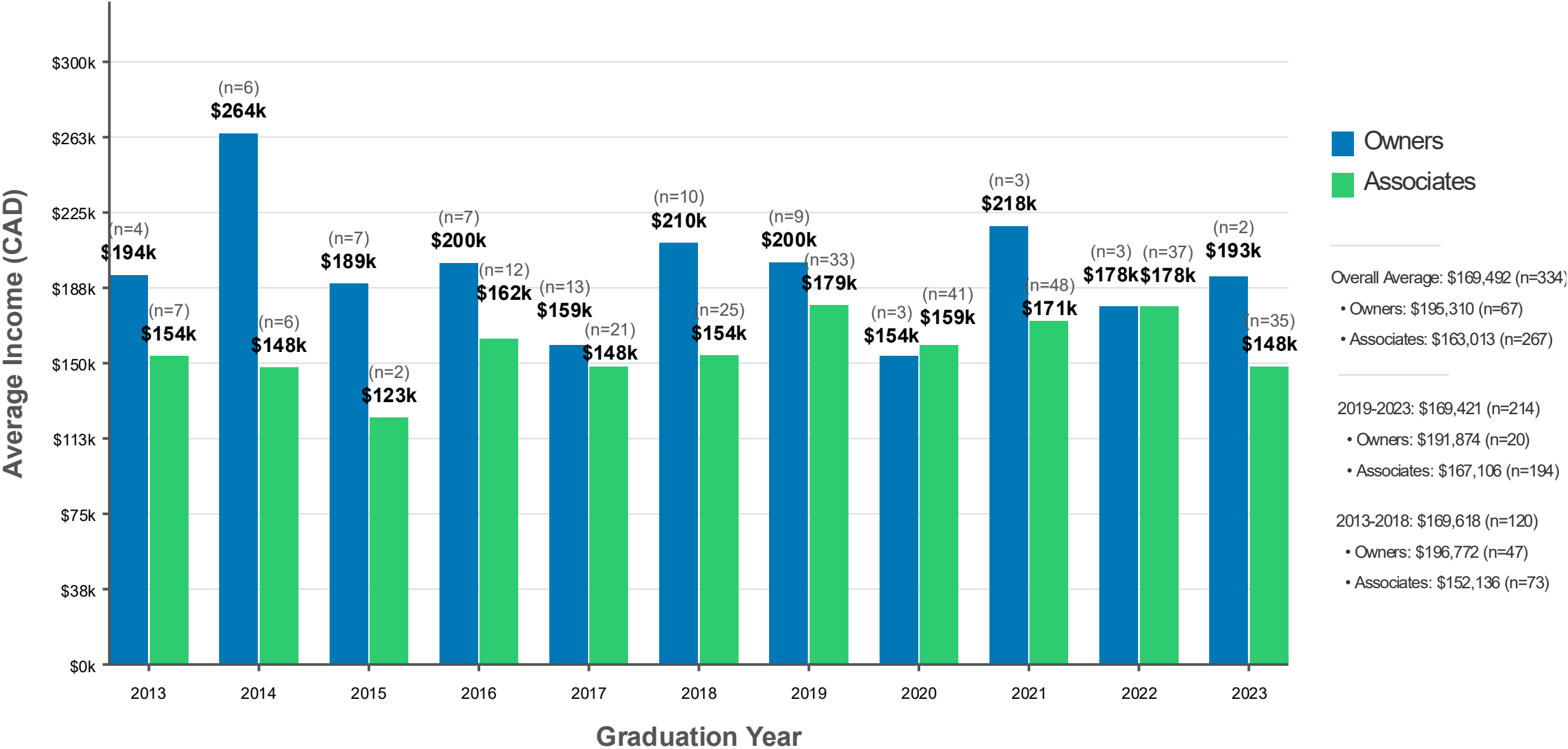
Owners: 213.3 days/year

Associates: 211.7 days/year

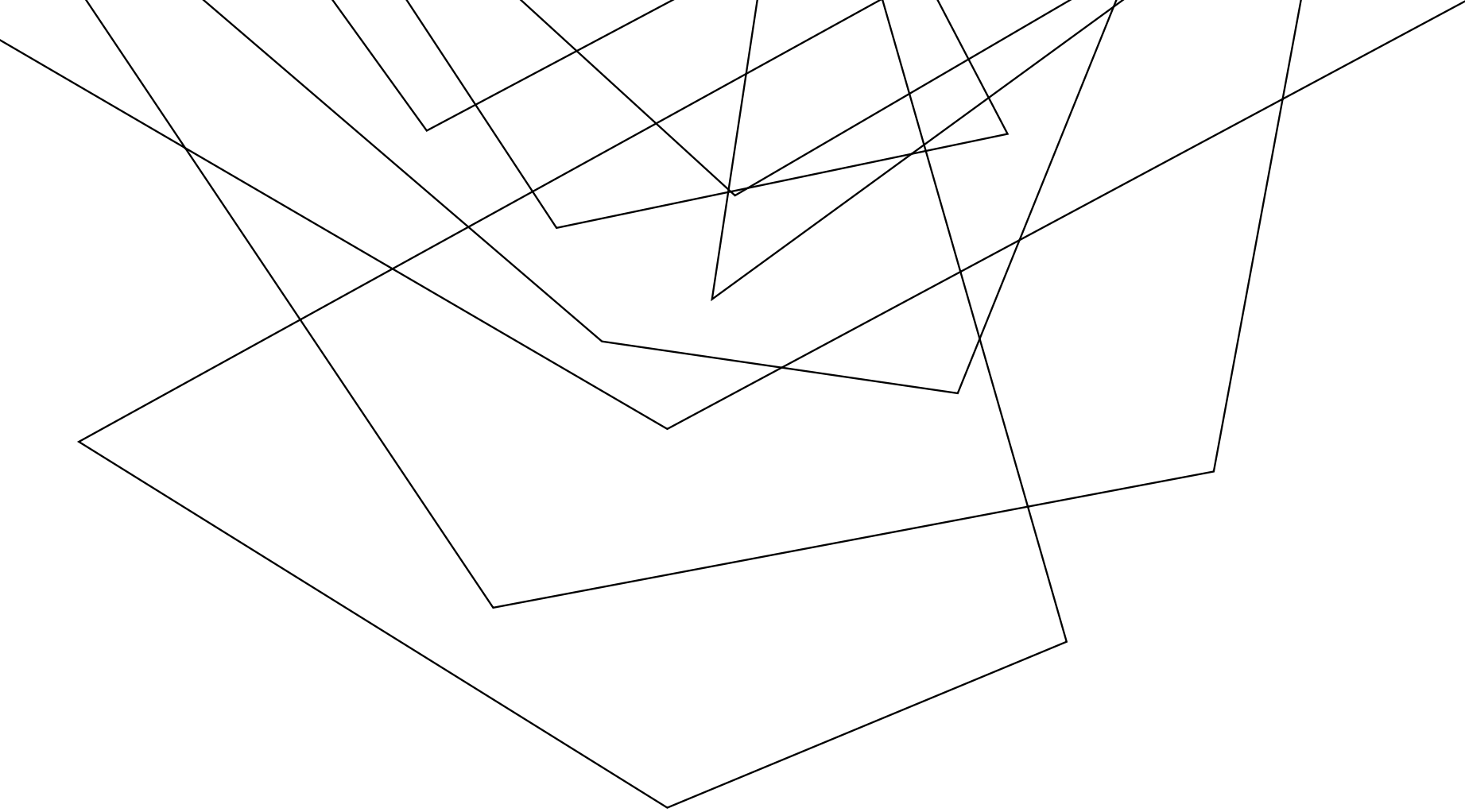
Income by Years of Experience



Average Income by Graduation Year



Note: The averages shown differ from the overall survey average as not all participants indicated whether they were an owner or an associate.

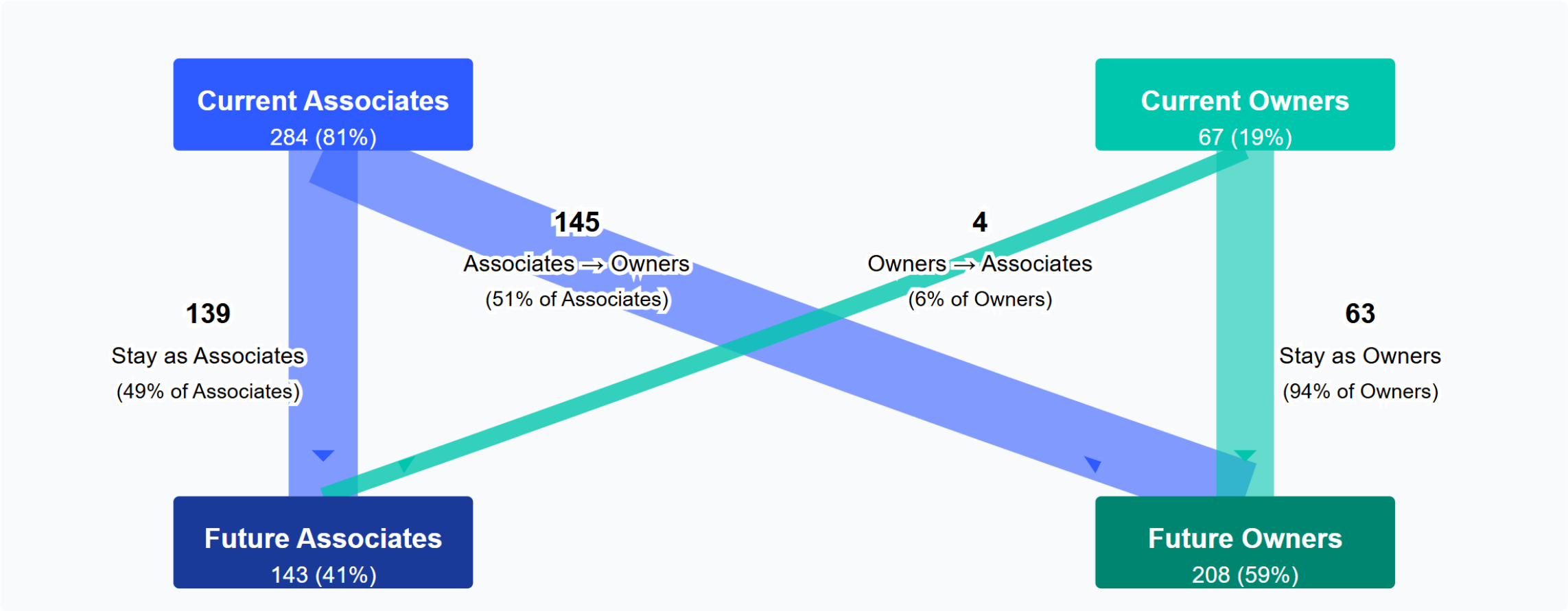


CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Career Transitions: From Present to Future

Survey Questions: "Are you currently an owner or an associate?" vs. "What is your ideal practice modality by the time you retire?"

Career flow showing how optometrists aspire to transition from their current roles by the time they retire

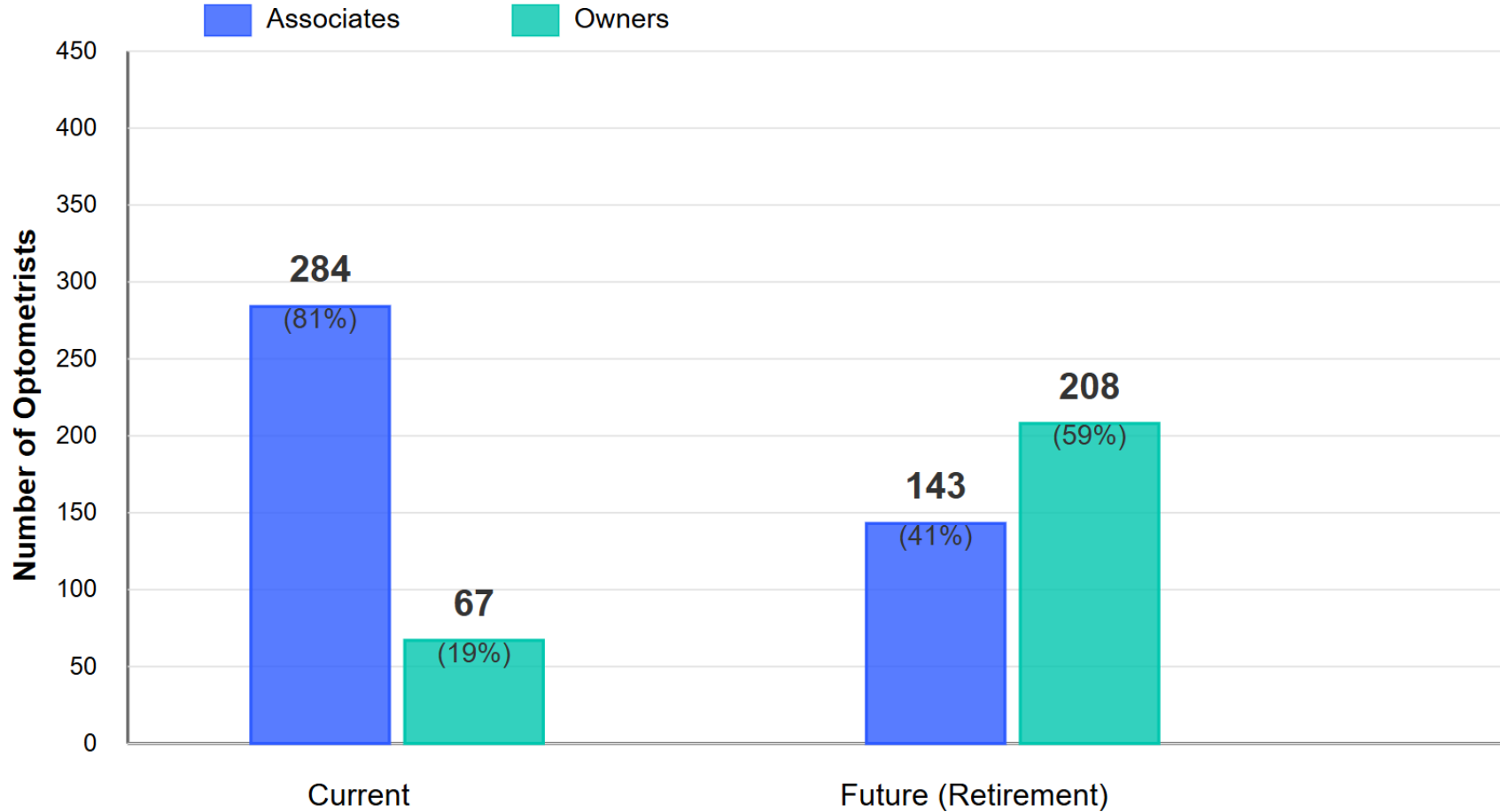


Key Insight: While associates are split nearly evenly in their future plans, almost all current owners (94%) intend to remain owners

Career Aspiration

Survey Questions: "Are you currently an owner or an associate?" vs. "What is your ideal practice modality by the time you retire?"

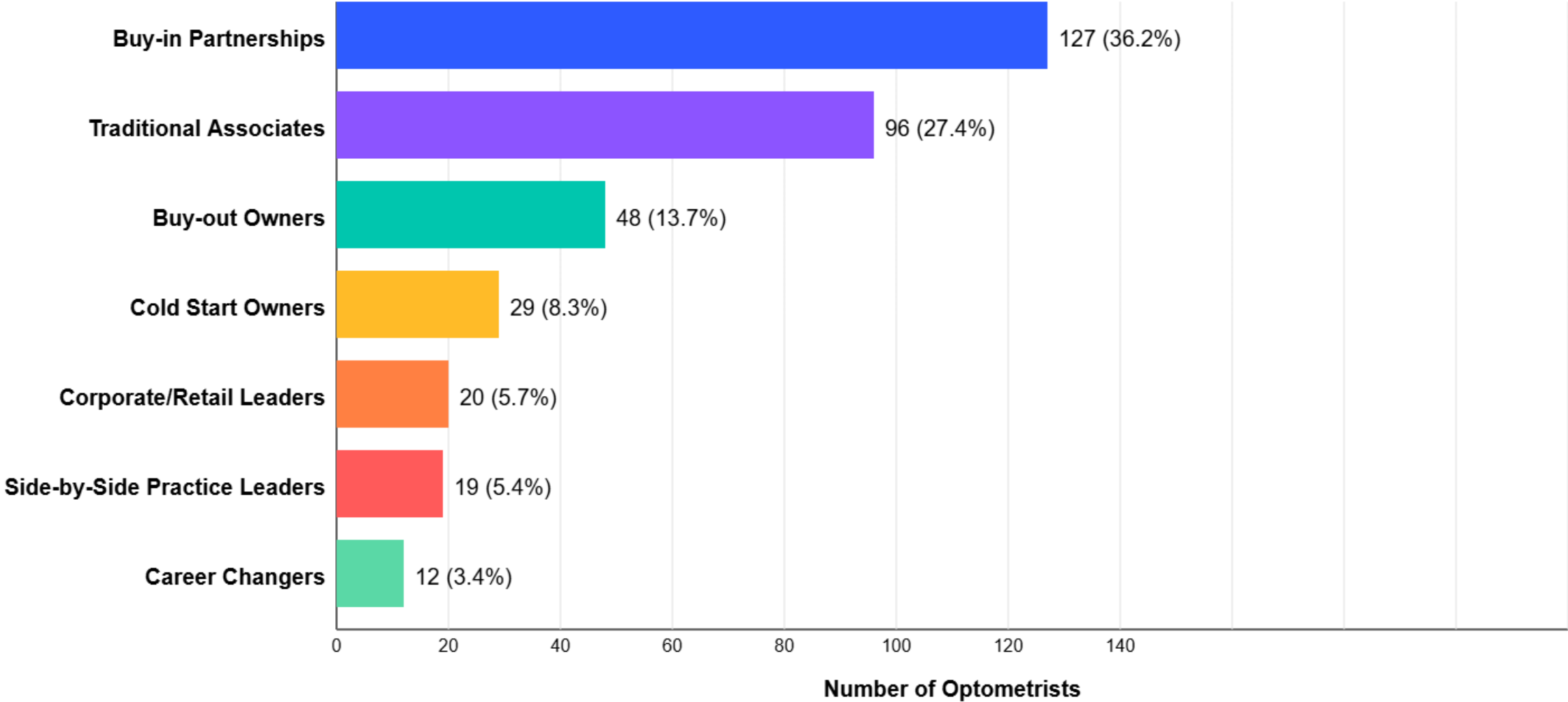
The survey reveals a significant shift from associate-dominated present to a more owner-oriented future



Key Insight: While currently 81% are associates, by retirement 59% aspire to be owners

The Future Landscape of Optometry

Survey Question: "What is your ideal career path over the next 10 years?"



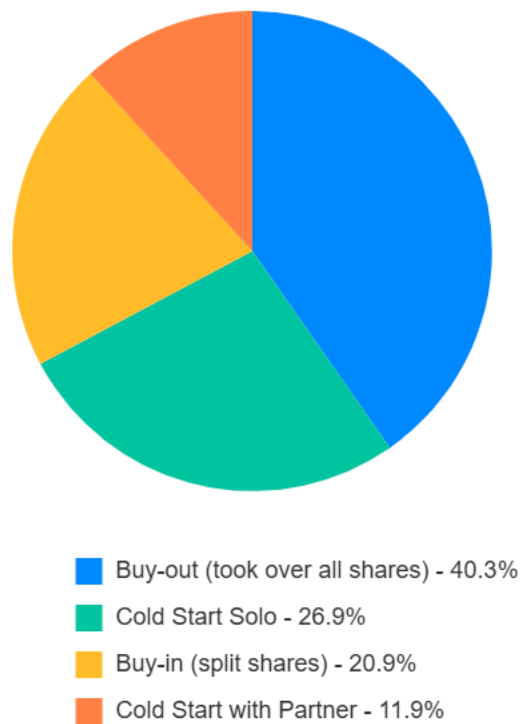
Key Insight: The ideal career path for new graduates over the next 10 years is to buy-in to an existing practice (36.2%), followed by being a traditional associate (27.4%)

Optometrist Path to Ownership Analysis

Survey Questions Used:

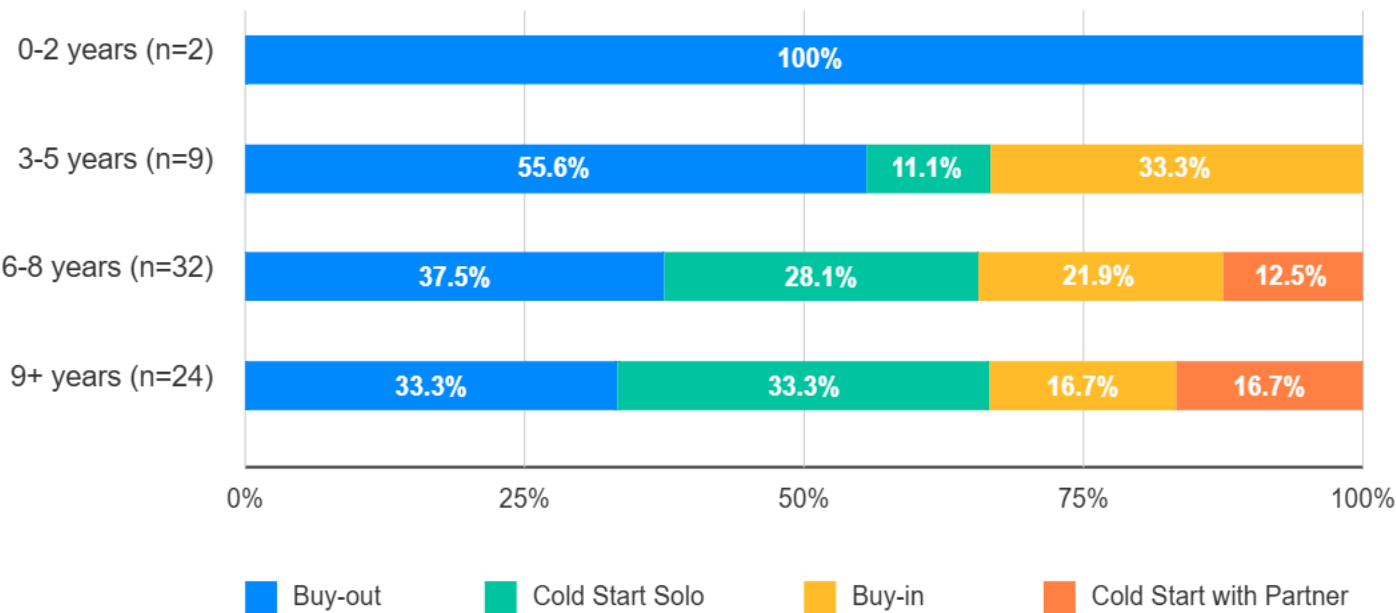
- "Are you currently an owner or an associate?" (filtered for "Owner" responses, n=67)
- "What was your path to ownership?" (categorized into Buy-out, Cold Start Solo, Buy-in, Cold Start with Partner)

Overall Path to Ownership



Path to Ownership by Years Since Graduation

Additional question used: "What year did you graduate?"



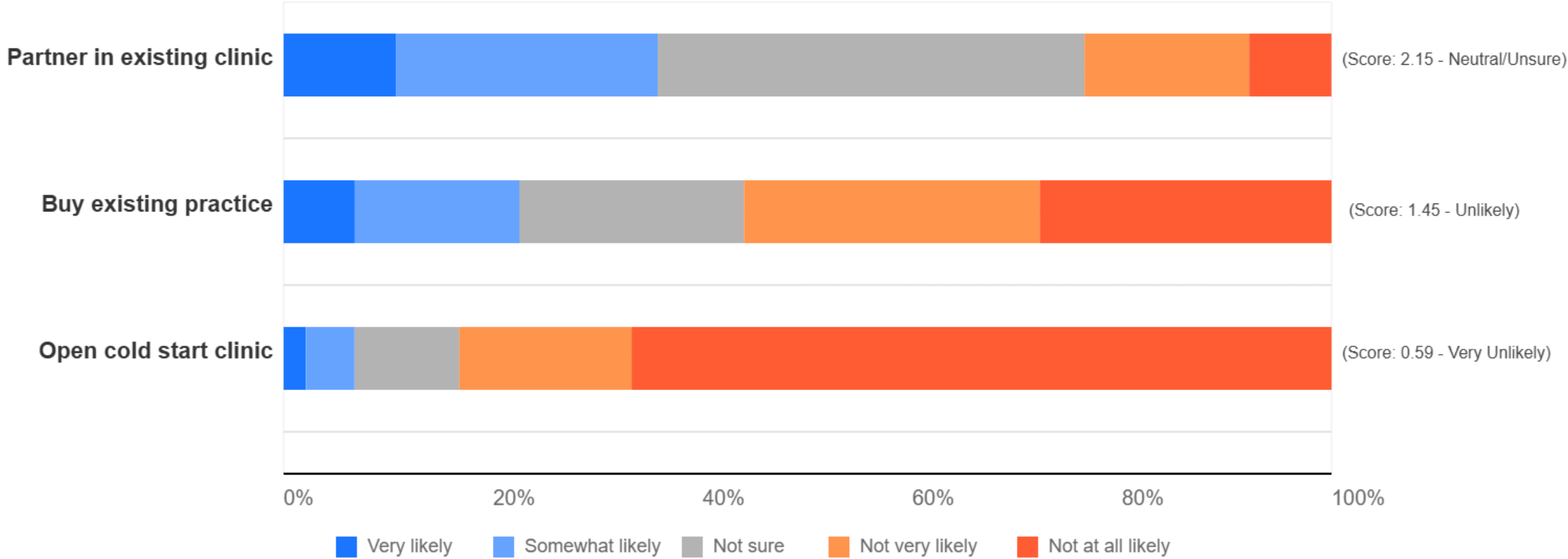
Key Insights:

- Buy-out is the most common path to ownership overall (40.3%), particularly for recent graduates
- The longer optometrists are in practice, the more likely they are to pursue cold starts
- Experienced optometrists (9+ years) show equal pathways for buy-outs and cold starts (33.3% each)

Ownership Pathway Likelihood (Next 5 Years)

Based on survey of associates (n=280)

Q: In the next 5 years, how likely are you to:



Partnership Preferred
35.7% positive response rate (score: 2.15)

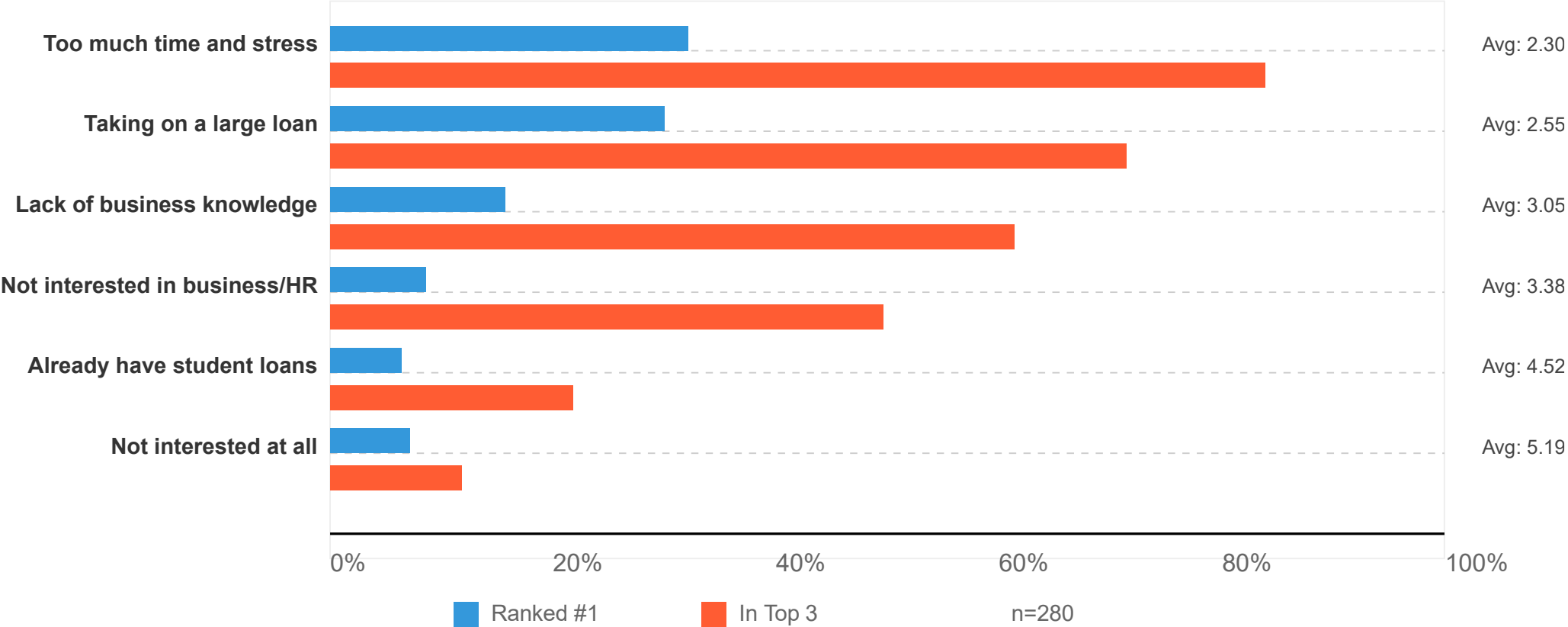
Buying Practice Less Favored
22.5% positive response rate (score: 1.45)

Cold Starts Avoided
Only 6.8% positive response rate (score: 0.59)

Barriers to Practice Ownership

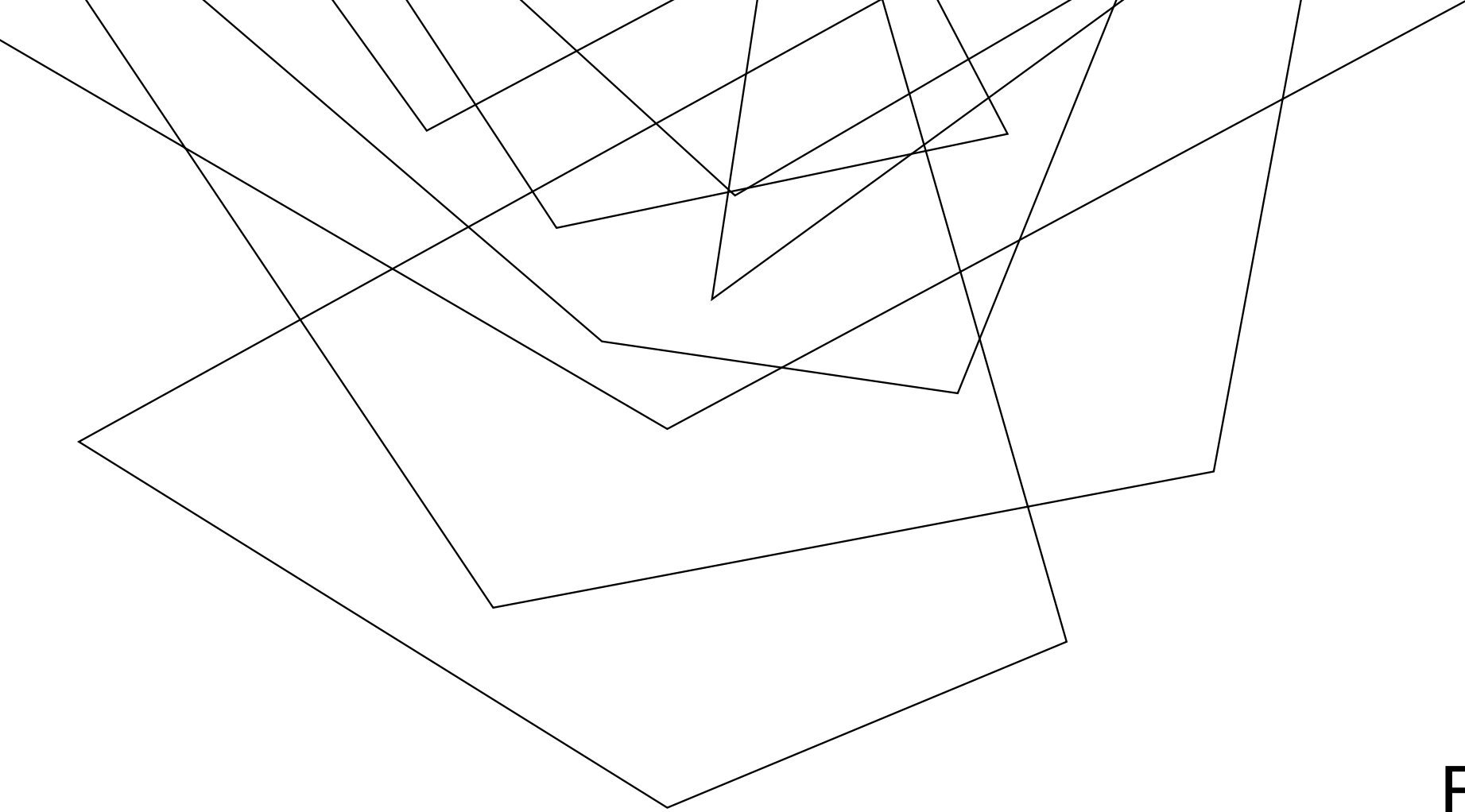
Survey Question: "If you were interested in owning your own clinic or becoming a co-owner with other ODs, what factors might hold you back from pursuing it?
Place in order of importance - 1: Most important, 6: Least important"

Factors Holding Associates Back from Ownership



Key Insights

- Work-life balance (time/stress) is the top barrier with 32% ranking it #1 and 84% including it in their top 3 concerns.
- Financial concerns about taking on large loans are a close second (ranked #1 by 30% and in top 3 for 71% of associates).
- Lack of business knowledge is the third most significant barrier, suggesting an opportunity for educational programs.
- Very few associates (only 7.1% ranked "Not interested at all" as #1) lack interest in ownership

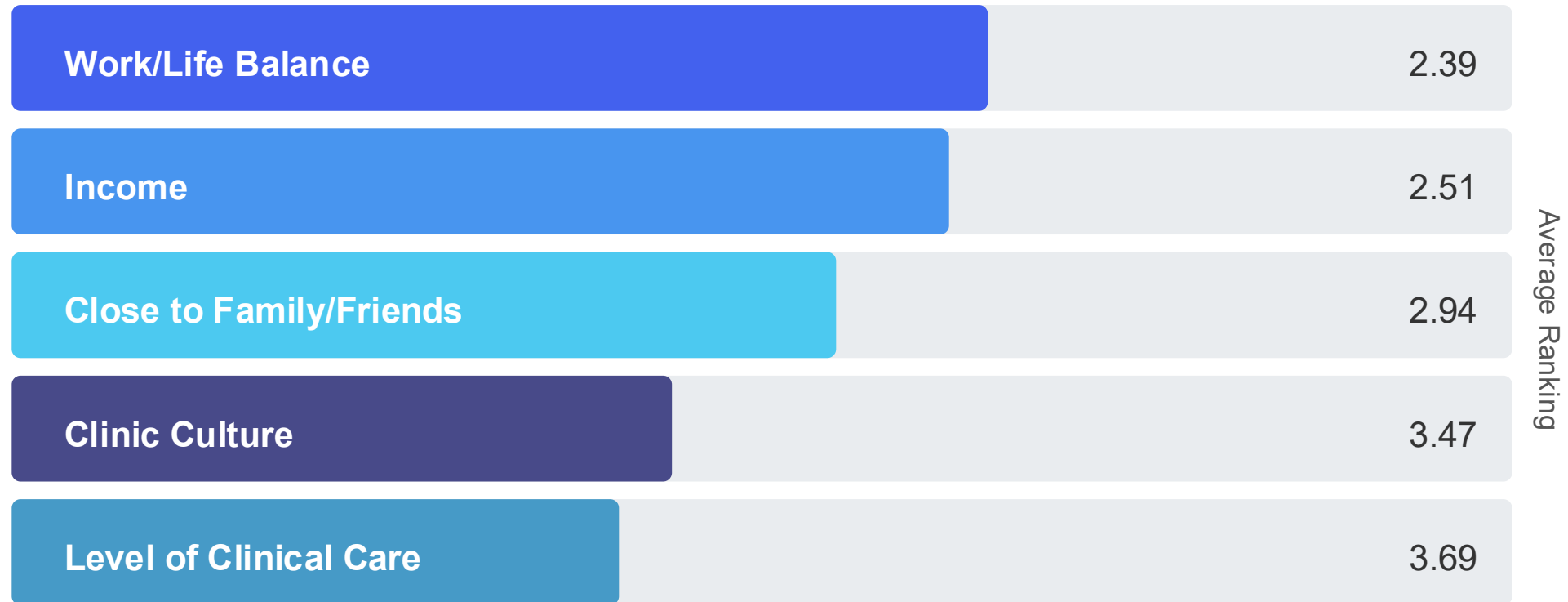


FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

IMPORTANCE FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING WHERE TO PRACTICE

"What are the most important factors when choosing where you practice?"

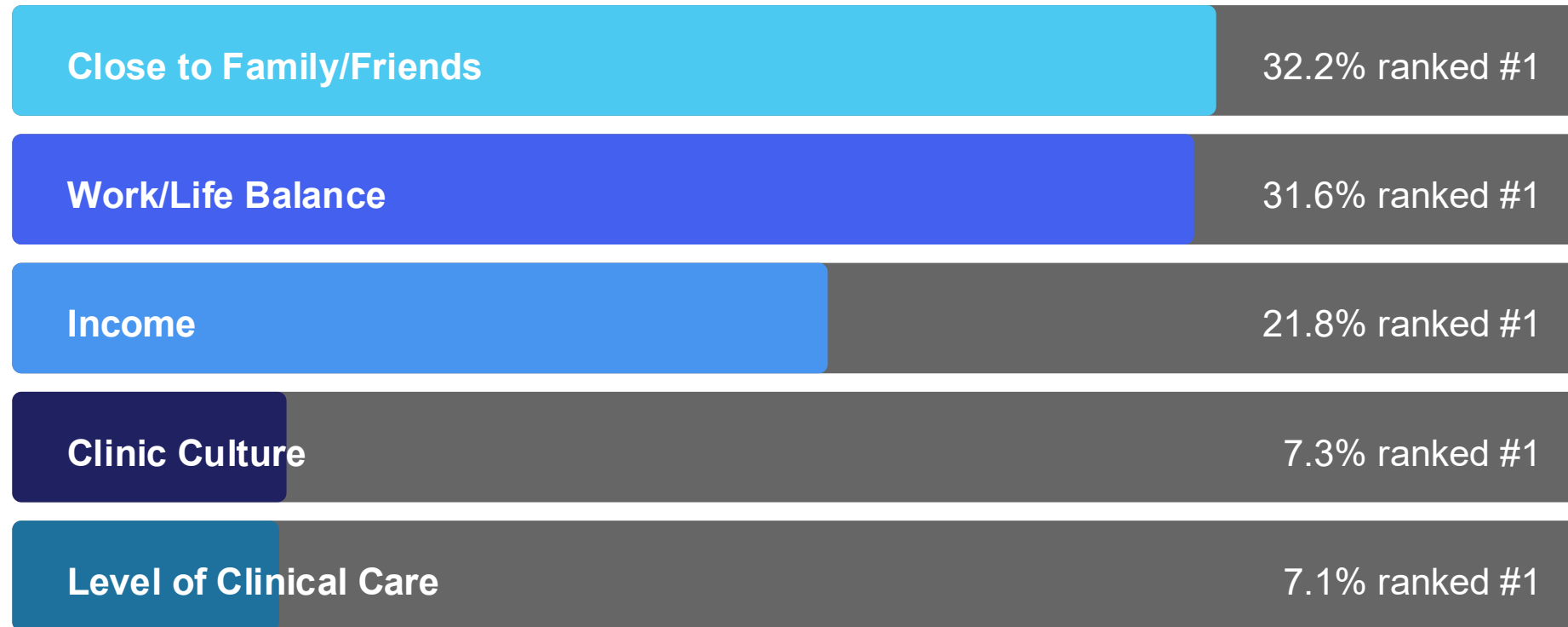
1 = most important 5 = least important



Based on 431 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey | Sponsored by OSI Group

IMPORTANCE FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING WHERE TO PRACTICE

"What are the most important factors when choosing where you practice?"
(percentage of respondents ranking factor as #1 priority)



Based on 431 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey | Sponsored by OSI Group

MOST ENTICING INCENTIVES WHEN CONSIDERING A CLINIC

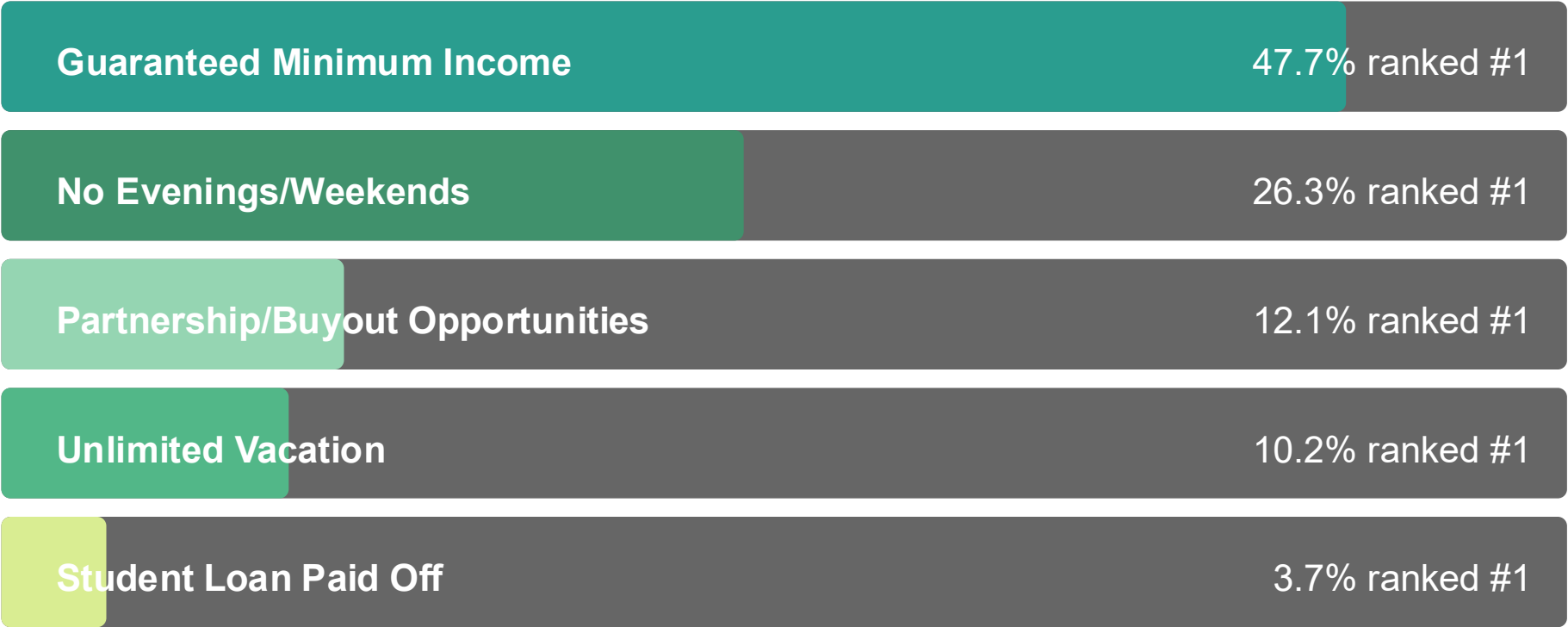
"What incentives are the most enticing when considering a clinic to work at?"
1 = most important 5 = least important



Based on 431 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey | Sponsored by OSI Group

MOST ENTICING INCENTIVES WHEN CONSIDERING A CLINIC

"What incentives are the most enticing when considering a clinic to work at?"
(percentage of respondents ranking incentive as #1 priority)



Based on 431 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey | Sponsored by OSI Group

What other perks do you look for when considering a clinic to work at?

n = 104

1. Flexibility & Autonomy (35)

34%

- Flexible work schedules and hours
- Control over own scheduling
- Autonomy in clinical decision-making
- Freedom to practice own standards

"Freedom to practice the way I want to"

2. Workplace Environment (25)

24%

- Supportive colleagues and staff
- Good relationships with employers
- Respectful workplace attitudes
- Team collaboration opportunities

""Supportive and understand boss&staff"

3. Equipment & Technology (18)

17%

- Modern diagnostic equipment
- OCT and Optomap systems
- Electronic medical records
- Well-equipped examination rooms

"good tech - ex optos" / "Technology in the clinic. EMR."

4. Professional Development (16)

15%

- Mentorship opportunities
- Continuing education allowances
- Conference fee coverage
- Specialty development support

"Mentorship and OD-to-OD support" / "CE allowance"

5. Location & Facilities (15)

14%

- Proximity to home
- Short commute time
- Parking availability
- Workplace amenities (lunch rooms)

"Parking" / "how close it is to home" / "Commute time"

6. Staff Support (12)

12%

- Well-trained support staff
- Administrative assistance
- Low staff turnover
- Referral management

"Well trained staff" / "staff support/training and turnover rate"

7. Financial Benefits (11)

11%

- Bonuses (signing, retention, performance)
- Percentage from optical sales
- Competitive compensation structures

"percentage from glasses/optical sales" / "Signing/retention bonus"

8. Health & Other Benefits (10)

10%

- Extended health coverage
- Paid time off
- Product/service discounts

"Health benefits" / "Ability to opt in to extended medical benefits"

9. Specialty Opportunities (9)

9%

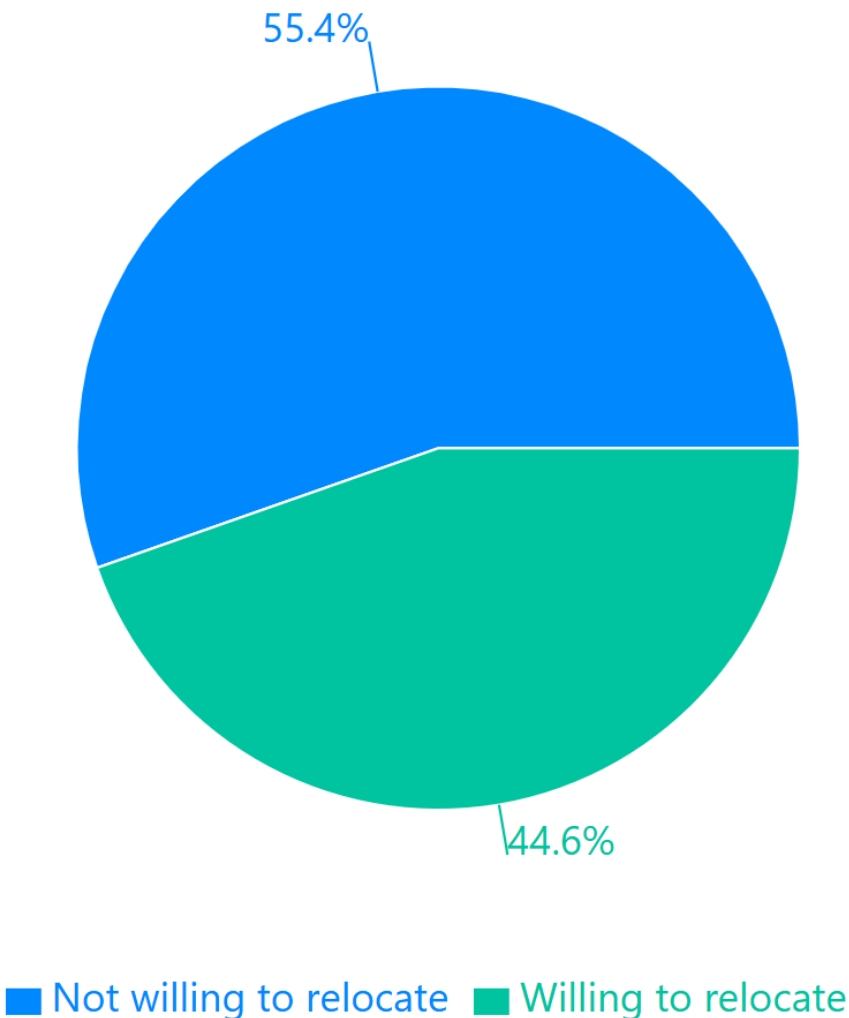
- Ability to develop special areas of practice
- Equipment for specialty services
- Marketing support for specialties

"Specialty practice/development" / "offering specialties"

Willingness to Relocate 300km+

Survey Question: "Is there an income that would entice you to move 300km away or more from your hometown?"

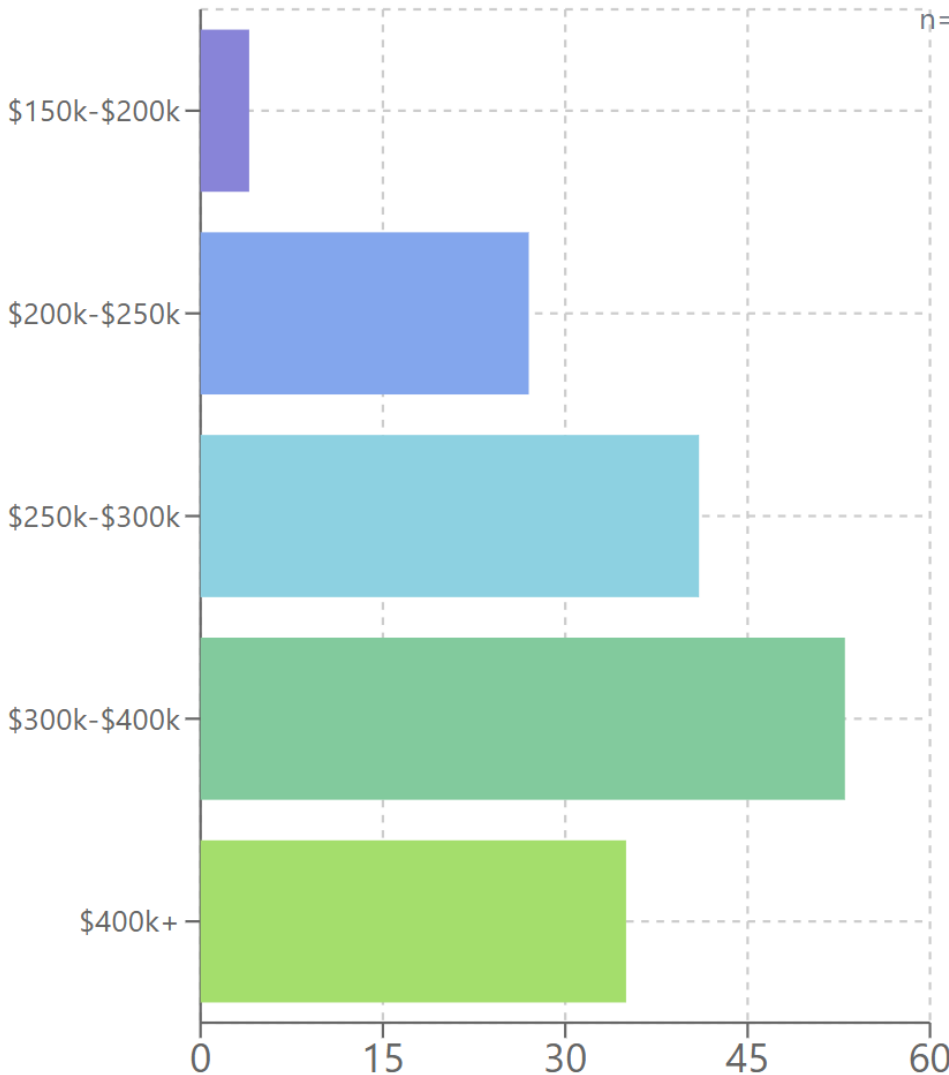
n=354



Income Required to Relocate

Survey Question: "What income would entice you to move 300km away or more from your hometown?"

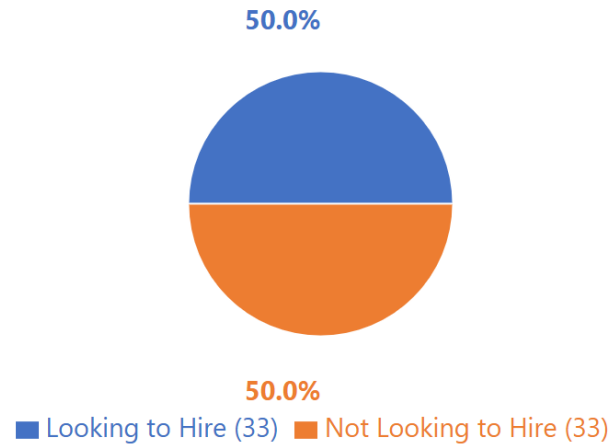
n=160



Daily Minimum Compensation for Associate ODs

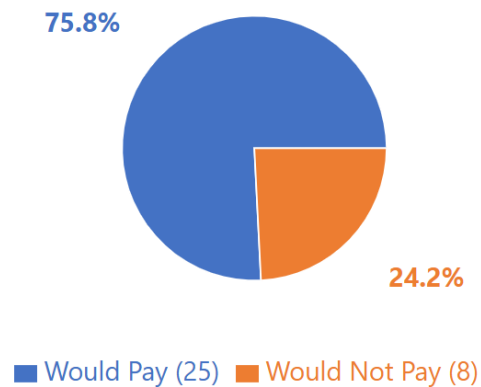
Interest in Hiring Associates

Total owners in survey (n=66)



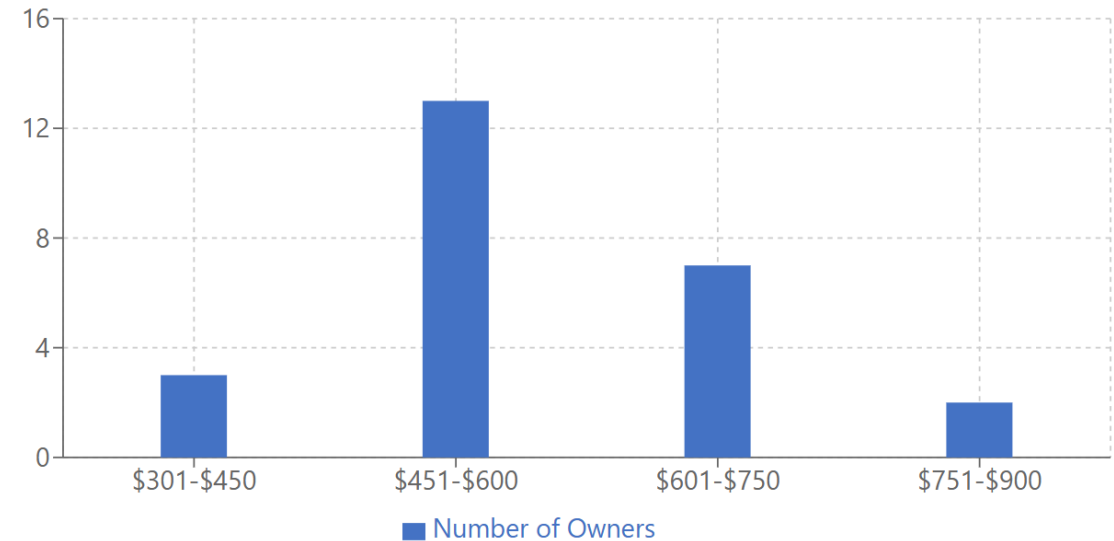
Willingness to Pay Daily Minimum

Among owners looking to hire (n=33)



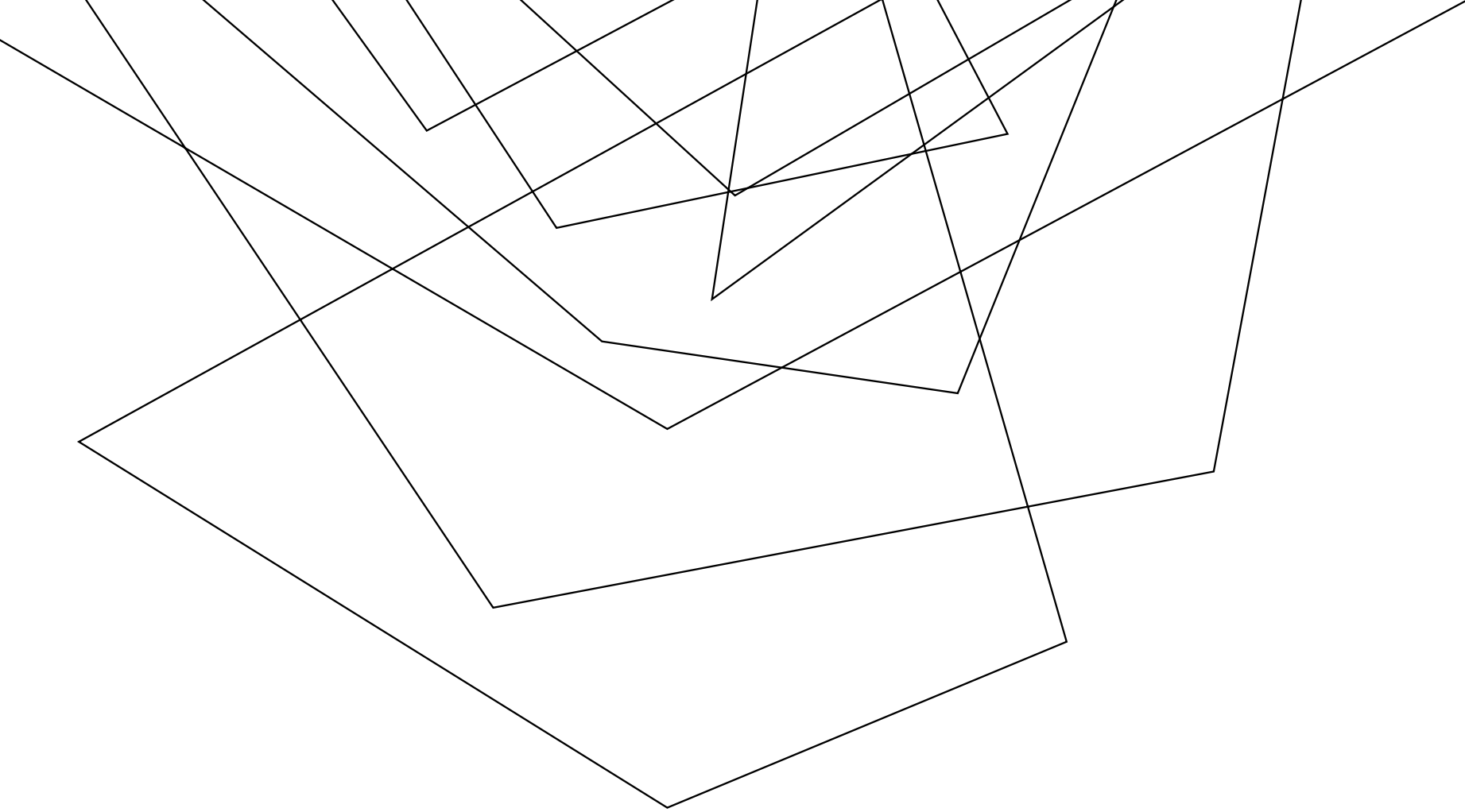
Daily Minimum Payment Amounts

Among owners willing to pay (n=25)



Key Insights

- **Income gap:** Willing owners averaged \$235,003 vs \$125,177 for unwilling owners
- **Vacation time:** Willing owners took more vacation (28.7 days vs 13.5 days)
- **Payment by community size:** Small Cities offer highest average (\$616) vs Metropolitan/Rural areas (\$526)
- **Provincial variation:** BC (89%) and Alberta (100%) owners most willing to pay vs Ontario (58%)

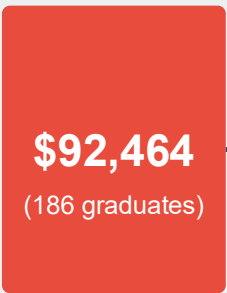


DEBT DISTRIBUTION

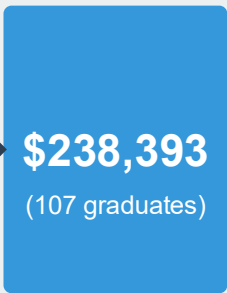
OPTOMETRY SCHOOL DEBT: CANADA VS USA

AVERAGE DEBT

CANADIAN SCHOOLS



AMERICAN SCHOOLS



2.58×

DEBT DISTRIBUTION

CANADIAN SCHOOLS

\$0-\$99,999: 59% (110)

\$100K-\$199K: 35% (65)

\$200K+: 6% (11)

AMERICAN SCHOOLS

\$0-\$99,999: 10% (11)

\$100K-\$199K: 22% (24)

\$200K+: 67% (72)

KEY INSIGHTS

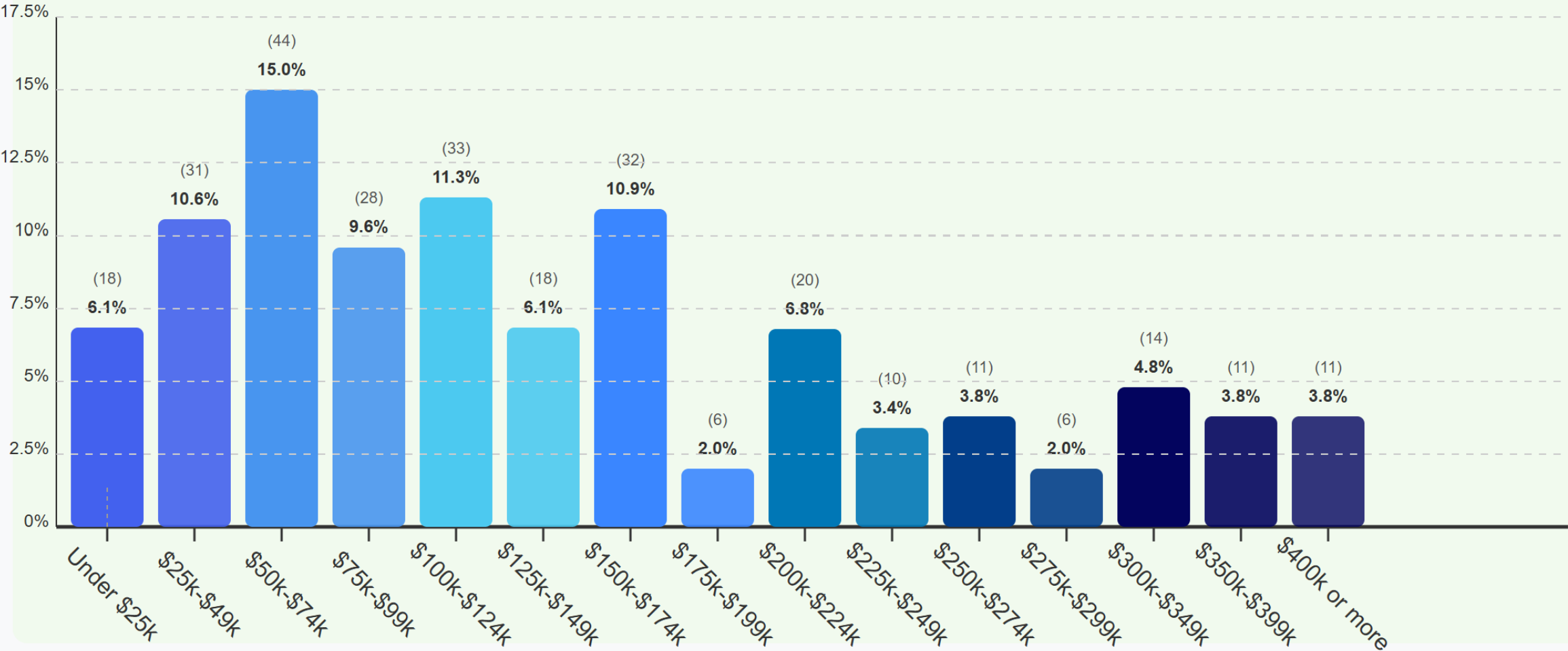
- 94% of Canadian graduates have debt under \$200,000
- No Canadian graduates reported debt of \$400,000+

- 67% of American graduates have debt exceeding \$200,000
- 10% of American graduates (11) reported debt of \$400,000+



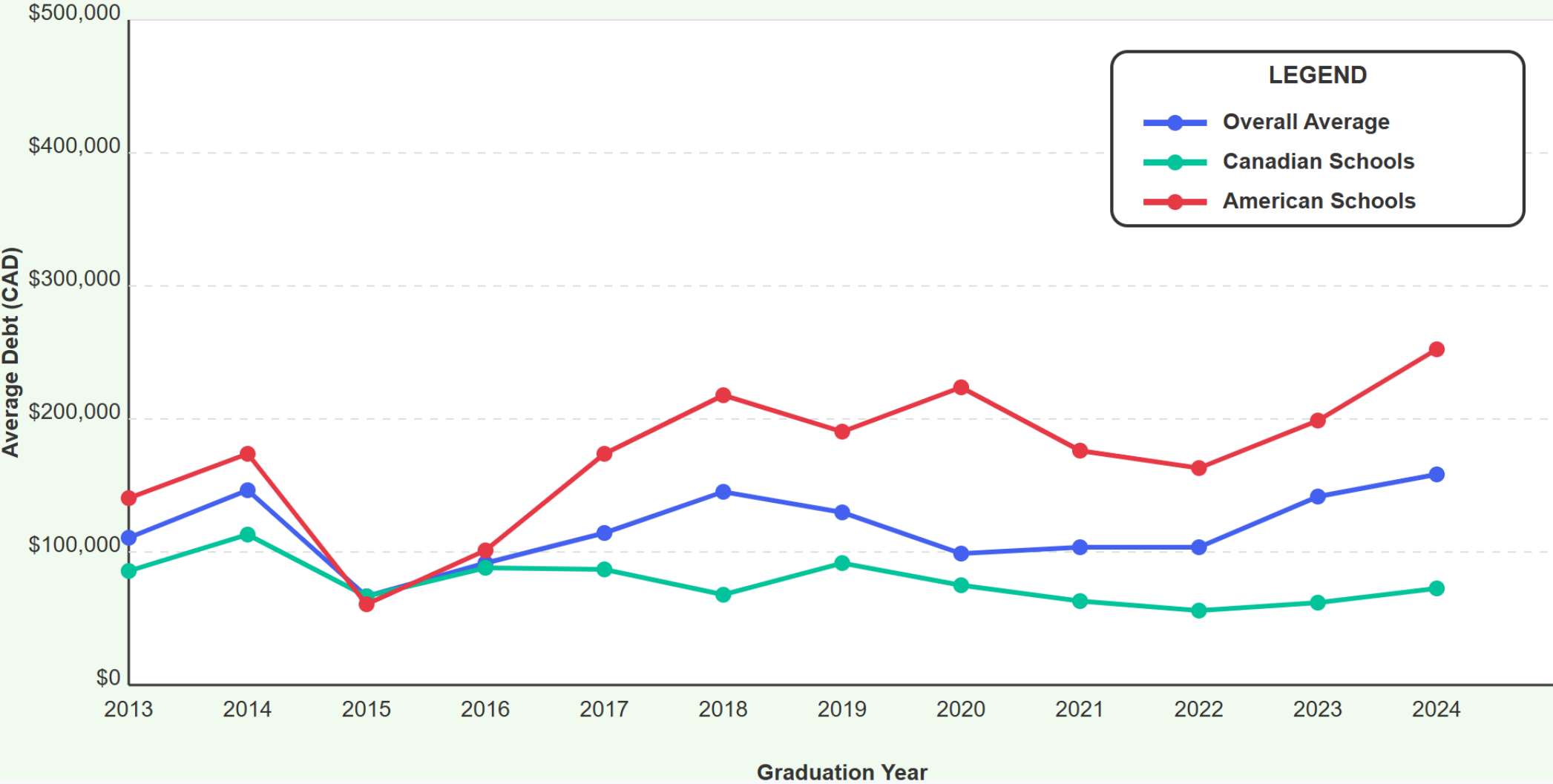
This substantial difference likely reflects the higher tuition costs at American optometry schools compared to Canadian institutions.

STUDENT DEBT AT GRADUATION

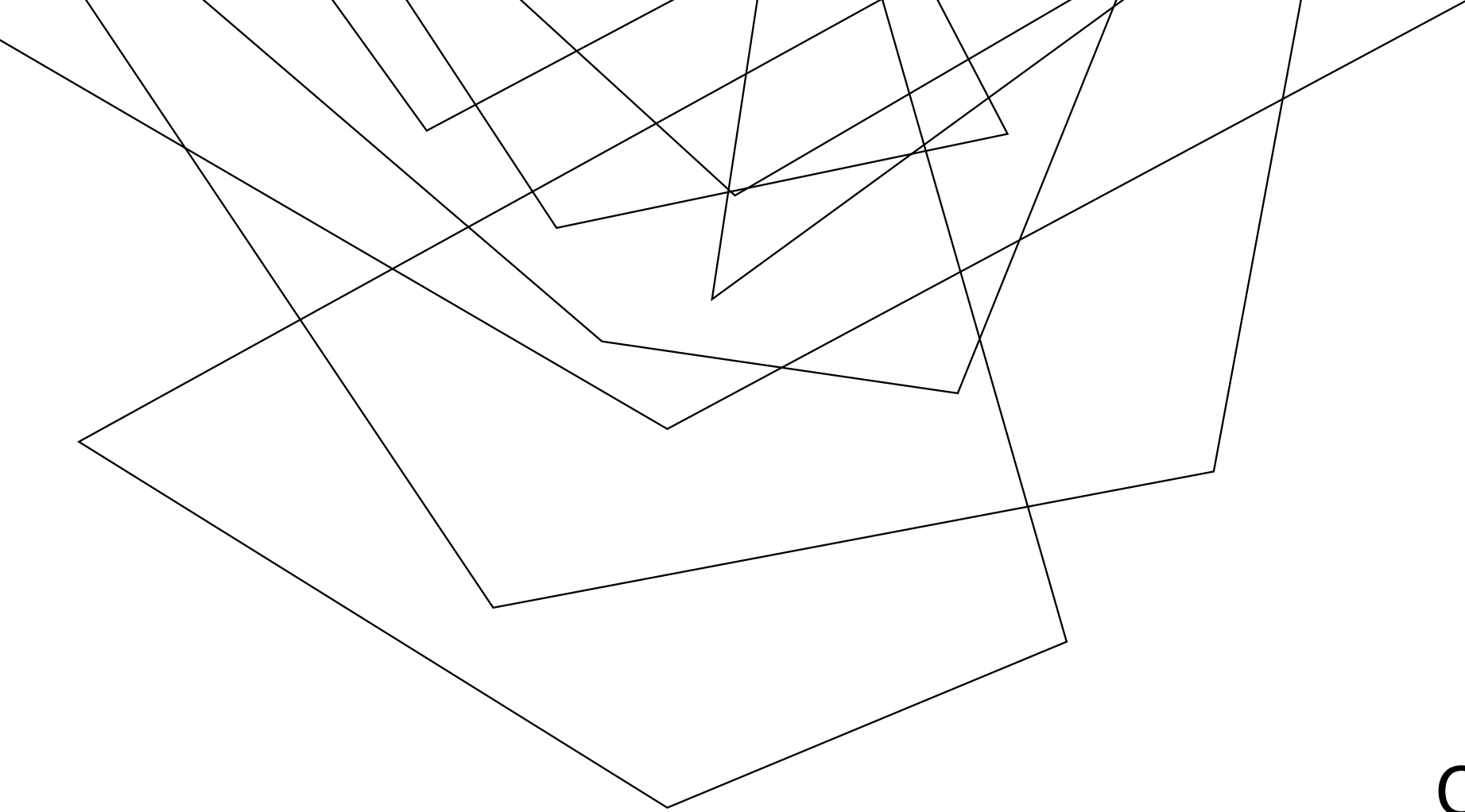


Based on 293 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey

AVERAGE STUDENT DEBT BY GRADUATION YEAR



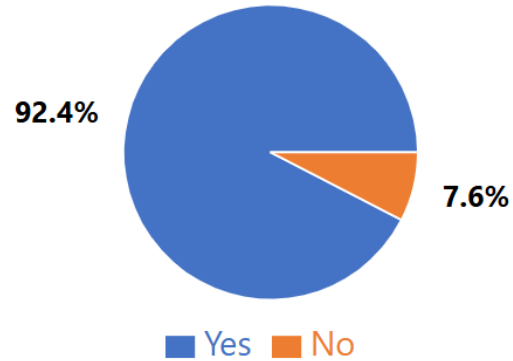
Based on 293 respondents | 2025 Canadian New ODs Survey



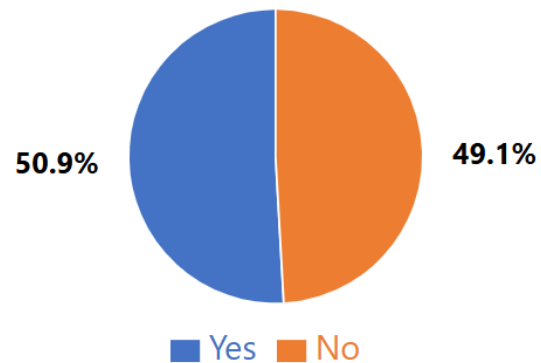
COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Professional Associations & Buying Groups

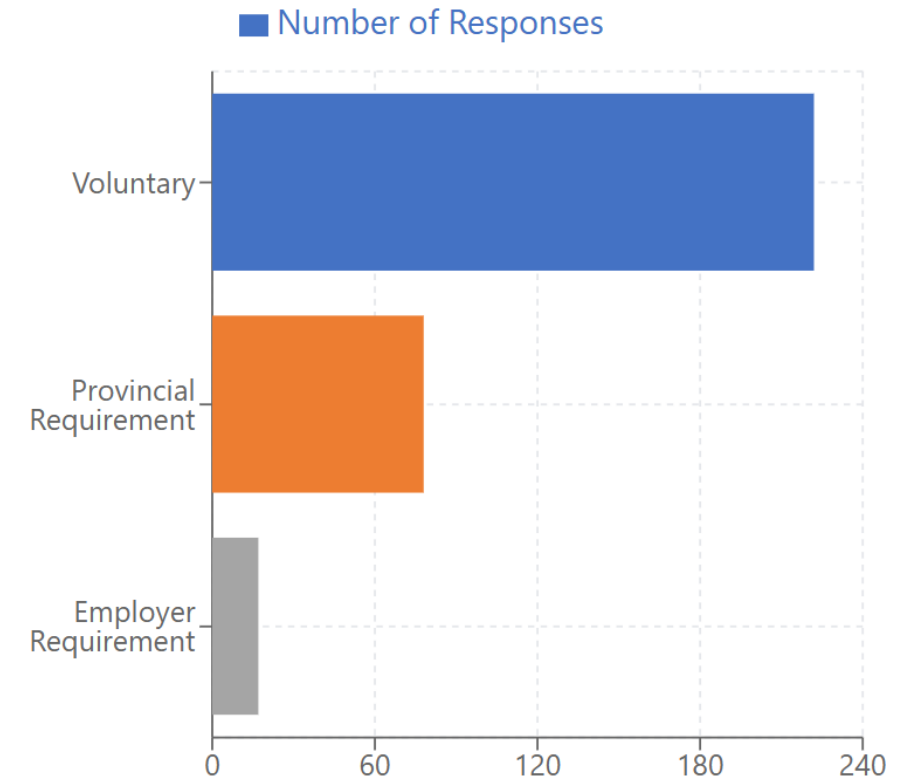
Provincial Association Membership



Buying Group Membership



Reason for Provincial Association Membership



92.4% are provincial association members

70% join voluntarily

Nearly even split (50.9% vs 49.1%) in buying group membership

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Canadian

NEW OPTOMETRISTS 

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