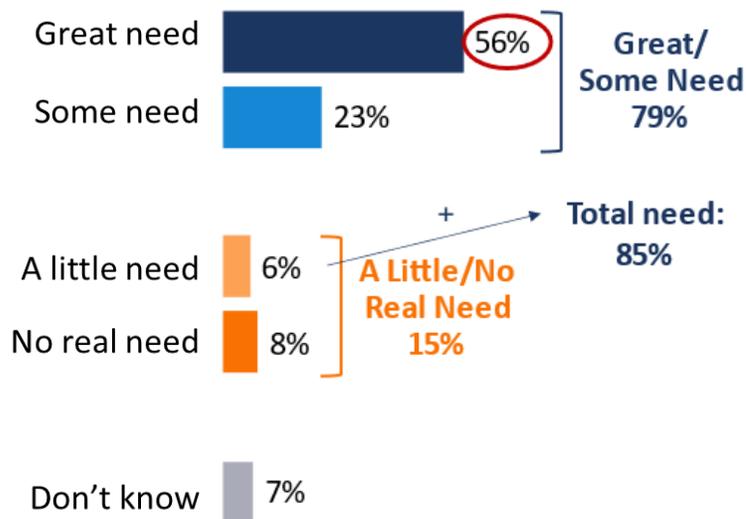# FM3 | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

TO   All Interested Parties

FROM   FM3 Research

RE: Kern County Budget Priorities Community Survey

DATE   July 1, 2022

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently conducted a survey of 387[i] respondents living in Kern County's unincorporated areas to examine the local population's budget and service priorities. **The study found that most believe the County has a great need for additional funding and would prioritize spending for public safety and medical emergency response, as well as attracting new industries and jobs.**
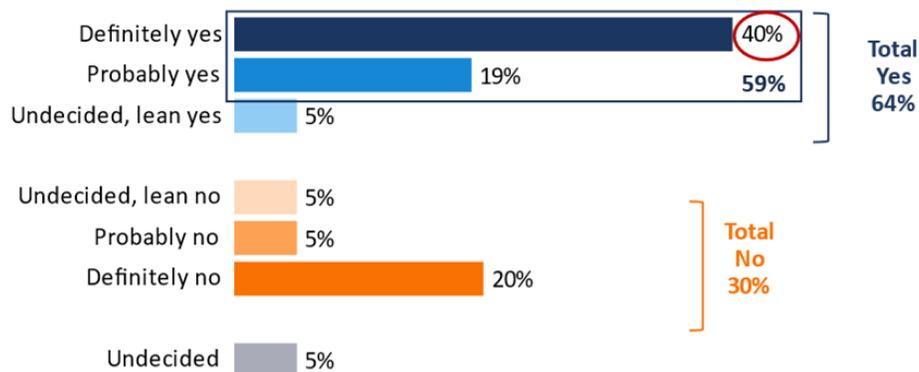
Key findings include:

- **Eight five percent (85%) believe the County has a need for additional funding.** Over half of all respondents believe the County has a great need for additional funding (56%), and almost a quarter believe it has some need (23%), and six percent perceive at least a little need. In contrast, eight percent believe the County has no real need for additional funding, while seven percent remain unsure.

Figure 1: Perception of County's Need for Additional Funding

Great need — 56%
Some need — 23%
Great/Some Need 79%

A little need — 6%
No real need — 8%
A Little/No Real Need 15%

+ → Total need: 85%

Don't know — 7%

- **Overall, up to 64% of respondents support a potential revenue measure in the unincorporated areas of Kern County, meeting the majority threshold.** Forty percent of respondents would "definitely" vote yes in support, while an additional 19% would "probably" vote yes, and five percent lean towards also voting yes in support. In contrast, 20% would "definitely" vote no against the measure, while an additional 10% would "probably" or lean towards voting no against it.

Figure 2: Support for a Potential Local Funding Measure with a Simple Majority Threshold

- **Respondents prioritizing funding for maintaining public safety and emergency response services, as well as attracting new industries and jobs.** Nearly nine-in-ten respondents (89%) believe it is extremely or very important to maintain vital local services such as law enforcement, fire and 911 response, as well as maintaining medical emergency response. High majorities also find other public safety services such as preventing thefts and property crimes (87%); and recruiting and retaining qualified sheriff's deputies as extremely or very important to fund. Seventy-nine percent also find attracting new industries and jobs and helping address mental health and addiction challenges as extremely or very important. See **Figure 3** on the following page for a list of some of the most extremely or very important projects respondents would also prioritize funding for.

Figure 3: Most Important Services or Projects to Fund

(Ranked by "Extremely" or "Very Important")

Service or Project	Ranked as "Extremely" or "Very Important" to Fund
Maintaining vital local services such as law enforcement, fire and 911 response	89%
Maintaining medical emergency response	89%
Preventing thefts and property crimes	87%
Recruiting and retaining qualified sheriff's deputies	84%
Improving Sheriff, fire, and 911 response	83%
Recruiting and retaining qualified firefighters	83%
Attracting new industries and jobs	79%
Helping address mental health and addiction challenges	79%
Repairing roads	78%
Supporting veteran services	77%
Maintaining anti-gang programs	77%

Overall, a vast majority of respondents understand the County has a need for additional funds. A majority would support a potential local funding measure with a simple majority threshold and prioritize funding for services including maintaining vital local services such as law enforcement, fire and 911 response, medical emergency response, and attracting new industries and jobs.

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[i] Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a dual-mode (online and phone-landline and cell) survey between May 24- June 5, 2022, among 387 voters registered in Kern County's unincorporated region likely to participate in a November 2022 election. Telephone interviews were conducted in English and Spanish; online interviews were conducted in English only. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 5.8% with a 95% confidence interval. Margins of error for population subgroups will be higher. Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.