



Using data to inform your DEI work

August 2024



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Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

www.ccdi.ca

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Introduction

There are many sources of data that can be used to inform your organization’s DEI work. This document briefly introduces several statistical programs from Statistics Canada and provides examples of ways each program can be used to inform DEI activities. Below each is an example of a specific report or data set that could be used in this way. At the end of this document is also a section outlining a few of the limitations of the Statistics Canada reports, along with some guidance on seeking additional statistical sources.

The goal of this document is to introduce you to a range of sources for data, so you can confidently source the information you need to best support your work. For example, the table below illustrates the range of Statistics Canada sources that might be required to gather just one data point for a selection of groups in Canada.

	Employment rate ¹	Data source
Racialized people²	81.4%	Labour force characteristics by visible minority group, annual
2SLGBTQIA+	81.6% (gay or lesbian) ³ 71.3% (bisexual) ⁴	Labour and economic characteristics of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Canada
Persons with disabilities	73.4%	Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities, 2023
Women	81.6%	Measuring the value of women’s contribution to the Canadian economy: New insights based on recent work
Indigenous peoples	77.3% (all Indigenous) ⁵ 72.3% (First Nations) 82.3% (Métis)	Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group

¹ Employment rate represents the proportion of the population who are employed (full or part-time); Core working age (25-54 years) unless otherwise specified.

² While Statistics Canada and other government agencies currently rely on the use of the term “visible minority”, we use the term “racialized people” here to acknowledge the process of relying on the construct of race to create categories of people.

³ Aged 25 to 64.

⁴ Aged 25 to 64.

⁵ “Data on persons reporting being Inuit or having multiple identities are included in the Indigenous total but are not shown separately because of small sample sizes.” ([Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group](#), footnote 1)

Connecting data to DEI practice

The information provided here can be used in conjunction with many of [CCDI's toolkits](#), as data is often required to support these practices. Below are some examples of where data might come in handy as you are working through a toolkit:

- Seeking demographic data as you are [making the case for diversity, equity, and inclusion \(PDF\)](#).
- Understanding the need for [inclusive hiring practices \(PDF\)](#) to support diverse talent or developing targeted recruitment strategies.
- Developing effective [employee resource groups \(PDF\)](#) that meet the needs of your employees.

Labour Force Survey

The [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#), collected and released monthly, gathers data to calculate important employment figures like the unemployment rate, employment rate, and participation rate. It also offers insights into employment across different industries, job types, public versus private sectors, and hours worked. This information is further categorized by various demographic factors like gender, disability, and race. The LFS provides the most up-to-date data that directly relates to the Canadian labour market.

In a DEI context, employers can utilize data from the LFS in many ways. Below are some examples:

- **Targeted recruitment:** LFS data can inform targeted recruitment efforts aimed at increasing diversity within the workforce. Employers can identify underrepresented groups in specific jobs or regions and implement strategies to attract and retain diverse talent.
 - Example: [Unmasking differences in women's full-time employment](#)
- **Training and development:** Understanding the diversity landscape in the labor market can help employers tailor training and development programs to address the needs of diverse employees. This might include creating mentorship programs or leadership development initiatives for underrepresented groups.
 - Example: [Labour force characteristics by Indigenous group and educational attainment](#)
- **Creating inclusive policies:** LFS data can inform the development of inclusive policies and practices that promote diversity and equity in the workplace. For example, employers can use data on wage disparities to implement pay equity measures or adjust benefits packages to better support diverse employee needs.
 - Example: [Intersectional Gender Wage Gap in Canada, 2007 to 2022](#)
- **Understanding the diversity landscape:** The LFS provides information about various demographic factors within the workplace context. Employers can use this information to gain a deeper understanding of the diversity landscape and identify areas for improvement.
 - Example: [Labour market participation of parents with young children](#)
- **Monitoring progress:** By regularly analyzing LFS data alongside their internal workforce demographics, employers can track progress towards diversity and inclusion goals. This allows them to assess the effectiveness of their initiatives and make adjustments as needed.
 - Example: [Labour force characteristics by visible minority group, annual](#)

Canadian Survey on Disability

The [Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#), collected every five years, gives insights into Canadians “whose everyday activities may be limited because of a condition or health-related problem”. This data is crucial for designing and assessing services, programs, and policies aimed at supporting Canadians with disabilities, especially given the recent data showing a growing population of people with disabilities at 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, or 8.0 million people.⁶

Employers can use data from the CSD in several ways, including but not limited to:

- **Workplace accommodations:** Understanding the types of disabilities prevalent among Canadians can help employers identify potential accommodations needed in the workplace. This may include modifications to physical spaces, technology, or work processes to support employees with disabilities.
 - Example: [Accessibility Findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017](#)
- **Inclusive hiring practices:** Employers can use the data to inform their hiring practices. This might involve targeted recruitment efforts aimed at individuals with disabilities or inform changes to your application and interview processes.
 - Example: [Reasons for difficulty in finding work for persons with disabilities, aged 15 years and over, by age group and gender](#)
- **Retention strategies:** Understanding the challenges faced by employees with disabilities can help employers implement strategies to improve retention rates. This might involve providing additional support, flexibility, or career development opportunities tailored to the needs of these employees.
 - Example: [Workplace training for persons with disabilities, aged 15 years and over, by age group and gender](#)

⁶ [The disability rate in Canada increased in 2022](#), Statistics Canada, 2024.

Canadian Social Survey

The [Canadian Social Survey \(CSS\)](#), collected quarterly, collects information on a variety of social topics such as health, well-being, impacts of COVID-19, activities, time-use, emergency preparedness, quality of life, energy use, and trust.

Employers can leverage data from the CSS to enhance their DEI efforts. Below are a few examples:

- **Understanding the diversity landscape:** CSS provides insights into various demographic factors, including ethnicity, religion, language, and immigration status. Employers can use this information to gain a deeper understanding of the diversity landscape within their workforce and identify areas for improvement.
 - Example: [Job satisfaction, by gender and other selected sociodemographic characteristics](#)
- **Identifying barriers:** By analyzing CSS data, employers can identify potential barriers that diverse groups face in the workplace, such as discrimination, unequal access to opportunities, or cultural biases. This enables them to develop targeted strategies to address these barriers and promote inclusion.
 - Example: [Difficulty meeting financial needs, by gender and province](#)
- **Work-life balance:** Understanding the factors that influence work-life balance, such as caregiving responsibilities, socio-economic status, or community support networks, can help employers create policies and programs that support employees in managing their personal and professional responsibilities. CSS data can inform these efforts by providing insights into the unique challenges faced by different demographic groups in achieving work-life balance.
 - Example: [Study: “Sandwiched” between multiple unpaid caregiving responsibilities](#)
- **Inclusive policies and practices:** Employers can use CSS data to inform the development of inclusive policies and practices that promote diversity and equity. This might include implementing flexible work arrangements, providing cultural competency training, or establishing diversity and inclusion committees within the organization.
 - Example: [Perceived mental health, by gender and other selected sociodemographic characteristics](#)

Canadian Community Health Survey

The [Canadian Community Health Survey \(CCHS\)](#), collected annually, presents information related to health status, health care utilization and health determinants for the Canadian population. This is also the only statistical program that collects and analyzes information relating to sexual orientation.

Employers can utilize data from the CCHS in several ways to support their DEI work, including:

- **Health and wellness programs:** By understanding the health needs and challenges of diverse groups within their workforce, employers can tailor health and wellness programs to better meet the needs of all employees. This might include offering resources and support for mental health, chronic disease management, or preventive care that address the specific health concerns identified in the CCHS data.
 - Example: [Health indicators by visible minority and selected sociodemographic characteristics: Canada excluding territories, annual estimates](#)
- **Inclusive benefits packages:** Employers can use CCHS data to inform the design of inclusive benefits packages that address the diverse health needs of their workforce. This might include offering coverage for alternative or complementary health services, mental health support programs, or flexible spending accounts that allow employees to customize their benefits to meet their individual needs.
 - Example: [Exploring gaps in prescription drug insurance coverage among men and women in Canada using an intersectional lens](#)
- **Inclusive policies and practices:** Employers can use CCHS data to inform the development of inclusive policies and practices. For example, providing additional career development opportunities or other forms of support tailored to address barriers faced by certain demographic groups.
 - Example: [Labour and economic characteristics of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Canada](#)
- **Promoting a culture of inclusion:** Employers can use CCHS data to raise awareness and foster a culture of inclusion around health and wellness within the workplace. By highlighting the diverse health experiences and needs of their employees, employers can promote empathy, understanding, and support for all members of the workforce.
 - Example: [Socioeconomic characteristics of the transgender and non-binary population, 2019 to 2021](#)

Census of Population

The Canadian [Census of Population](#), collected every 5 years, presents a wide range of demographic and socio-economic information about the Canadian population. This data is essential for understanding the characteristics, diversity, and socio-economic status of the Canadian population, as well as informing policy, resource allocation, and decision-making across various sectors.

Data from the Census of Population can be very valuable for employers seeking to enhance DEI through data. Below are several examples:

- **Workforce diversity analysis:** The census provides demographic data on population characteristics such as ethnicity, language, immigration status, and Indigenous identity. Employers can analyze this data to understand the diversity landscape within their workforce and identify underrepresented groups.
 - Example: [Jobs in Canada: Navigating changing local labour markets](#)
- **Targeted recruitment:** Census data can inform targeted recruitment strategies aimed at attracting a more diverse pool of candidates. Employers can use demographic information to identify talent from underrepresented communities and implement outreach efforts to attract diverse candidates.
 - Example: [Postsecondary educational attainment and labour market outcomes among Indigenous peoples in Canada, findings from the 2021 Census](#)
- **DEI training:** Census data can help employers tailor DEI training and education programs to address the specific needs and demographic groups that make up our employees, like bringing in diverse guest speakers.
 - Example: [The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity](#)
- **Employee Resource Groups:** Census data can inform the establishment of employee resource groups or affinity networks within the organization. These groups provide support, networking opportunities, and advocacy for diverse employees.
 - Example: [Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians](#)
- **Policy advocacy:** Census data can inform policy advocacy efforts aimed at addressing systemic barriers to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Employers can use data to advocate for policy changes or initiatives that promote equity and representation within the workforce.
 - Example: [A portrait of educational attainment and occupational outcomes among racialized populations in 2021](#)

Limitations and other sources of data

While Statistics Canada offers many avenues for valuable, Canada-wide data, there are some limitations and situations where you may want to look elsewhere for supplementary information.

Firstly, many of these statistical programs are run infrequently. In between surveys, the data can start to feel a bit outdated. For example, the Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) runs every five years. If you are seeking information that might fill a gap on disability-related data in between surveys, there are other sources for reports that can support and work alongside the CSD data. These sources often include disability-focused organizations, post-secondary education institutions, and think tanks. Below are a few examples:

- [Canadian Survey of Workers with Disabilities](#), George Brown College and Job Talks Access
- [Roadblocks on the career path: Challenges faced by persons with disabilities in employment / Obstacles au cheminement de carrière : difficultés vécues par les personnes handicapées sur le marché du travail](#), Canadian Human Rights Commission
- [Skills Gaps, Underemployment, and Equity of Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in Canada / Écarts de compétences, sous-emploi et égalité des chances sur le marché du travail pour des personnes en situation de handicap au Canada](#), Public Policy Forum, Diversity Institute, and Future Skills Centre
- [Trends Report 2023: Making Waves In The Current Canadian Labour Market \(PDF\) / Rapport Sur Les Tendances 2023 : Faire Des Vagues Sur Le Marché Du Travail Canadien Actuel \(PDF\)](#), Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

Second, Statistics Canada data on certain populations can be limited. For example, Statistics Canada began collecting data on transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming Canadians in the 2021 Census and is the first statistical program to do so. However, any analysis using that data has been minimal so far, due to challenges with maintaining anonymity:

“To maintain the balance between disseminating as much gender-based data as possible and preserving confidentiality, some information from the 2021 Census will be released at higher levels of geography using a three-category gender variable with the following categories:

- men (cisgender and transgender)
- women (cisgender and transgender)
- non-binary persons.

Given that the non-binary population is small, when necessary, a statistical method producing a two-category gender variable will be applied to prevent disclosure of identifiable data for lower levels of geography.

Consequently, in these cases, information will be disseminated using the following categories:

- men+
- women+.

Individuals in the “non-binary persons” category are distributed in the other two gender categories and are denoted by the “+” symbol.

At higher levels of geography that allow for data disaggregation while maintaining confidentiality, certain information will be released using a five-category classification of cisgender, transgender and non-binary populations. This is a derived variable that uses both three-category gender and sex at birth:

- cisgender men
- cisgender women
- transgender men
- transgender women
- non-binary persons.”⁷

In this case, it can be helpful to seek this information from a more focused survey of transgender and non-binary people, rather than a survey of the entire population. These types of surveys and reports also often come from advocacy organizations, post-secondary education institutions, and think tanks. Below are a few examples:

⁷ [Balancing the Protection of Confidentiality with the Needs for Disaggregated Census Data, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada, 2022.

- [Addressing knowledge gaps about skills of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada: A scoping review and qualitative inquiry \(PDF\)](#) / [Comblir les lacunes dans les connaissances sur les compétences des personnes 2ELGBTQ+ au Canada : examen de la portée et enquête qualitative \(PDF\)](#), Employment and Social Development Canada
- [Lead with Pride: Best Practices for Advancing 2SLGBTQIA+ Leadership](#) / [Diriger avec fierté : pratiques exemplaires pour l'avancement du leadership 2SLGBTQIA+](#), Pride at Work Canada
- [LGBTQ2S-Plus Voices in Employment: Labour Market Experiences of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Canada](#) / [Les voix des personnes LGBTQ2S-Plus dans l'emploi : Expériences des minorités sexuelles et de genre sur le marché du travail au Canada](#), Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
- [Study Results – Reports](#) / [Résultats de l'étude – Rapports](#), Trans PULSE Canada
- [Transitioning Employers: A survey of policies and practices for trans inclusive workplaces](#) / [La transition des organismes employeurs : une étude sur les politiques et les pratiques favorisant l'intégration des personnes trans en milieu de travail](#), Pride at Work
- [Working for Change: Understanding the employment experiences of Two Spirit, Trans, and nonbinary people in Canada](#) / [Travailler pour le changement : comprendre les expériences en matière d'emploi des personnes 2Spirit, trans et non binaires au Canada](#), Egale

Additionally, Statistics Canada surveys and reports tend to rely on quantitative data, which is numerical in nature and may lack nuanced information or details of lived experiences. It can be valuable to seek out reports that include qualitative data, such as interviews or focus groups. Additionally, sometimes there can be differences between the language used in Statistics Canada reports and current best practice for inclusive language. Specifically, these reports tend to use “visible minority” to describe “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”.⁸ This language use stems from the federal Employment Equity Act, although recent inquiry has recommended a change in this language to “racialized worker”⁹, which will likely be reflected in future statistical programs and reports.

Finally, we have provided several examples above of additional sources of data for both disability-related data and data on transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming Canadians. Below are some additional examples for other populations for which you may be seeking data.

- [2023 Diversity Disclosure Practices: Diversity and leadership at Canadian public companies](#) / [Pratiques de divulgation en matière de diversité 2023 : Diversité et leadership au sein des sociétés ouvertes canadiennes](#), Osler

⁸ [Visible minority of person](#), Statistics Canada, 2021.

⁹ [Executive summary: A Transformative Framework to Achieve and Sustain Employment Equity: Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force](#), Government of Canada, 2023.

- [Annual Report Card on Gender Equity and Leadership / Rapport annuel sur le rendement en matière de diversité des genres et de leadership](#), The Prosperity Project
- [Building Inclusion for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian Workplaces / Favoriser l'inclusion des peuples autochtones dans les milieux de travail canadiens](#), Catalyst
- [Employment Gaps and Underemployment for Racialized Groups and Immigrants in Canada: Current Findings and Future Directions / Écarts d'emploi et sous-emploi touchant les groupes racialisés et les immigrants au Canada : Constatations actuelles et directions futures](#), Future Skills Centre, Public Policy Forum, and the Diversity Institute
- [Skills for Inclusive Workplaces and the Advancement of Indigenous Peoples / Des compétences pour des milieux de travail inclusifs et l'avancement des peuples autochtones](#), Diversity Institute, Future Skills Centre, and the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business
- [What can the data tell us about Black Canadians and the labour market? / Que peuvent nous apprendre les données sur les Canadiens de race noire et le marché du travail?](#)
Labour Market Information Council

Conclusion

Data can serve as a powerful tool to support DEI initiatives in organizations. Using external data can help you build a case for DEI investment and help you to structure that investment where it will have the most impact. However, finding the right data for the right purpose can be challenging.

Our mandate at the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion is to assist Canadian employers in creating more inclusive workplaces. We hope that the ideas, strategies, and resources we have provided are valuable and useful in helping you find the information you need and leverage DEI-related data in your organization.