

Study: The impact of aging on labour market participation rates

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, June 14, 2017

The labour force participation rate of Canadians aged 55 and older reached 38% in 2016, up from 24% in 1996 and the highest rate for this age group since the collection of comparable statistics in 1976.

Over this period, the participation rate for women aged 55 and older rose from 17% to 32%, while for men in the same age group it rose from 32% to 44%.

The increase was also widespread across age groups, including senior Canadians aged 65 and older, and across all categories of educational attainment.

For instance, the participation rate more than doubled among those aged 65 and older—from 6% in 1996 to 14% in 2016.

While the participation rate of older Canadians increased, the overall participation rate—that of the population aged 15 and older—decreased over the past 10 years.

This is because older Canadians, who are less active in the labour market than younger age groups, account for a growing portion of the working age population.

Canadians aged 55 and older accounted for a record 36% of the working age population in 2016. Based on population projections, this proportion is expected to increase to 40% by 2026.

These results come from a new study "[The impact of aging on labour market participation rates](#)", based on Labour Force Survey data.

The study examines the extent to which population aging is putting downward pressure on the overall participation rate. It also explores the reasons behind the increase in the labour market participation rates of men and women aged 55 and older, which have been rising since 1996.

With the release of additional census data later this year, more information will be available on the work activity and detailed occupations of working seniors.

Note to readers

The study "[The impact of aging on labour market participation rates](#)" examines the impact of aging on the overall labour force participation rate since 2007 (before the 2008/2009 recession). The study also explores the reasons behind the increase in the participation rates of Canadians aged 55 and older, which have been increasing since 1996.

This study uses data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a monthly survey that collects labour market information for all household members aged 15 and older, as well as demographic and family relationship information for all household members. Excluded from the survey's coverage are people living on reserves and other Aboriginal settlements in the provinces, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and the institutionalized population. The labour force participation rate is the percentage of the population aged 15 and older who are in the labour force (that is, employed or unemployed during the survey reference week).

The study follows the most recent Statistics Canada [release of census information](#), which showed that Canada's population is aging faster than at any point in the history of the nation. In a "[Census in Brief](#)" release, additional information was provided about the population aged 15 to 64, who are more likely to be active in the labour market. It showed that people aged 55 to 64 accounted for a record 21% of the population aged 15 to 64 in Canada.



Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3701](#).

The article "[The impact of aging on labour market participation rates](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)).

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Andrew Fields (613-951-3551; andrew.fields@canada.ca).

For more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRoche-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@canada.ca).