

Registered retirement savings plan contributions, 2016

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, February 16, 2018

Contributions to registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) totalled \$40.4 billion in 2016, up 3.1% from 2015. Data are based on tax returns filed for 2016.

Increases in contribution amounts occurred in about half of the provinces and territories, while the other half experienced a decrease in 2016. New Brunswick (+8.5%) and Quebec (+6.0%) had the highest contribution increases, while the Northwest Territories (-4.8%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (-4.7%) had the largest declines.

While there was an overall increase in total RRSP contributions, the total number of contributors was down slightly. Just over 5.9 million tax filers contributed to an RRSP in 2016, down 0.9% from 2015. The peak over the last decade occurred in 2007, when just under 6.3 million individuals contributed to an RRSP. Regionally, the highest percentage increases in the number of contributors to RRSPs occurred in Nunavut (+1.8%) and Quebec (+1.0%). The biggest decreases were in Newfoundland and Labrador (-4.9%), the Northwest Territories (-4.7%) and Alberta (-4.3%).

The percentage of tax filers who contributed to an RRSP edged down, from 22.9% in 2015 to 22.5% in 2016. This gradual downward trend can be observed over the previous 16 years. In 2000, for example, about 3 in 10 tax filers contributed to an RRSP.

Nationally, the median contribution in 2016 was \$3,000, unchanged since 2013. In other words, half of the tax filers reporting RRSP contributions reported more than \$3,000 and the other half reported less than \$3,000.

Nunavut had the lowest percentage of tax filers who contributed to an RRSP (11.5%), but, as in previous years, those tax filers who did contribute made the highest median contribution to RRSPs (\$4,060). British Columbia and Yukon had the second highest median contribution to RRSPs (both at \$3,500). Manitoba had the lowest median contribution at \$2,350.

Among census metropolitan areas (CMAs), Vancouver had the highest median RRSP contribution (\$4,000), followed by Calgary (\$3,950) and Toronto (\$3,840). Historically, these three CMAs have had the highest median RRSP contributions. The lowest median RRSP contributions were in Belleville (\$2,240), followed by Winnipeg (\$2,370).

To be eligible to contribute to an RRSP, a tax filer must have unused room from earlier years or new room as a result of qualifying income from the previous year (generally, employment income). The RRSP limit is based on 18% of the previous tax year's earned income up to a fixed maximum, less any pension adjustments and plus any unused room carried forward. The fixed maximum RRSP contribution in 2016 was \$25,370, up from \$24,930 in 2015.

Note to readers

All data in this release have been tabulated according to the 2016 Standard Geographical Classification used for the 2016 Census.

A census metropolitan area (CMA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (also known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core.



Table 1
Registered retirement savings plan contributors - Canada, provinces and territories

	Contributors		All tax filers	Contributions		Median contributions
	2016	2015 to 2016	2016	2016	2015 to 2016	2016
	number	% change	%	thousands of dollars	% change	dollars
Canada	5,936,090	-0.9	22.5	40,394,515	3.1	3,000
Newfoundland and Labrador	66,070	-4.9	16.1	465,520	-4.7	3,000
Prince Edward Island	19,580	-0.7	17.5	124,030	2.6	2,710
Nova Scotia	119,650	-2.7	16.9	706,110	-3.2	2,500
New Brunswick	95,660	-1.1	16.3	634,440	8.5	2,690
Quebec	1,548,800	1.0	24.5	9,956,405	6.0	2,740
Ontario	2,186,980	-0.8	22.0	15,508,265	4.3	3,100
Manitoba	194,670	-2.2	20.9	1,061,930	0.7	2,350
Saskatchewan	186,220	-3.3	23.2	1,078,885	-2.3	2,680
Alberta	750,910	-4.3	25.8	5,333,700	-4.1	3,360
British Columbia	751,500	0.0	21.2	5,419,185	4.9	3,500
Yukon	6,800	-1.6	25.8	46,495	4.5	3,500
Northwest Territories	6,950	-4.7	23.5	42,725	-4.8	3,000
Nunavut	2,300	1.8	11.5	16,815	-0.9	4,060

Source(s): CANSIM table [111-0039](#).

Table 2
Registered retirement savings plan contributors - Census metropolitan areas

	Contributors		All tax filers	Contributions		Median contributions
	2016	2015 to 2016	2016	2016	2015 to 2016	2016
	number	% change	%	thousands of dollars	% change	dollars
Canada	5,936,090	-0.9	22.5	40,394,515	3.1	3,000
St. John's	34,710	-2.8	22.7	256,310	-1.6	3,230
Halifax	64,800	0.3	21.7	397,645	0.0	2,650
Moncton ¹	21,340	-0.2	19.3	132,255	5.9	2,600
Saint John ¹	20,300	-1.8	21.2	139,995	6.6	3,180
Saguenay ¹	30,070	1.6	23.3	198,595	5.4	2,500
Québec ¹	187,020	0.8	29.7	1,192,265	4.7	2,610
Sherbrooke	39,090	0.8	23.7	230,735	2.2	2,500
Trois-Rivières	28,930	1.3	23.1	209,860	9.1	2,560
Montréal	791,560	1.4	25.4	5,359,405	6.8	3,000
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec ¹	232,370	-1.4	24.2	1,591,965	1.5	3,060
Ottawa part ¹	178,050	-1.0	24.8	1,301,990	2.2	3,320
Gatineau part ¹	54,310	-2.5	22.4	289,975	-1.5	2,600
Kingston	25,050	1.4	21.1	151,260	8.8	2,400
Belleville ¹²	16,230	3.2	18.3	91,910	6.6	2,240
Peterborough	16,690	-9.1	19.9	102,815	-9.0	2,400
Oshawa	62,190	-0.4	23.1	419,615	5.0	2,600
Toronto	996,100	-0.6	22.8	7,658,915	4.4	3,840
Hamilton	126,470	0.5	22.9	899,680	7.5	3,000
St. Catharines–Niagara	58,810	-0.7	18.9	386,565	7.4	2,500
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo ¹	97,780	1.0	25.3	658,065	4.3	3,070
Brantford	22,140	1.8	21.7	132,065	9.1	2,580
Guelph	28,670	-1.5	26.0	196,425	4.1	3,000
London	81,010	-0.4	22.1	519,425	4.3	2,630
Windsor	50,970	3.0	20.0	323,645	9.0	2,830
Barrie	31,280	-2.0	22.2	197,705	6.9	2,530
Greater Sudbury ¹	24,940	-3.7	20.3	154,205	0.3	2,600
Thunder Bay	19,690	-3.0	21.7	115,875	-4.2	2,600
Winnipeg	135,170	-1.8	23.3	742,795	1.8	2,370
Regina ¹	47,800	-2.3	27.5	271,685	-0.1	2,600
Saskatoon ¹	54,860	-2.7	25.8	322,020	-1.4	2,760
Lethbridge ²	19,420	-1.2	23.1	106,995	0.3	2,470
Calgary	283,550	-3.9	28.5	2,319,120	-3.5	3,950
Edmonton	251,910	-3.3	26.6	1,657,435	-2.1	3,230
Kelowna	29,670	1.3	19.5	214,715	6.2	3,000
Abbotsford–Mission	23,770	0.3	18.0	146,145	10.2	2,700
Vancouver	433,940	0.6	23.2	3,314,335	6.0	4,000
Victoria	61,410	-0.4	22.1	416,610	4.6	3,000

1. The 2015 data were adjusted according to the 2016 geographic boundaries of the metropolitan areas.

2. These census metropolitan areas were previously identified as census agglomerations in the 2015 data.

Note(s): Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the [census metropolitan areas](#), according to Standard Geographical Classification 2016.

Source(s): CANSIM table [111-0039](#).

Available in CANSIM: tables [111-0039](#) and [111-0040](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4106](#).

The data on *RRSP Contributors* ([17C0006](#), various prices), *RRSP Contribution Limits* ([17C0011](#), various prices) and *Canadian Tax filers* ([17C0010](#), various prices) are now available for Canada, provinces and territories, economic regions, census divisions, census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census tracts, and postal-based geographies. These custom services are available upon request. CANSIM tables for this release are available for Canada, the provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations.

The following table is also available: CANSIM table [111-0041](#): Summary characteristics of Canadian tax filers.

The technical reference guide "Investment Income, RRSP Contributions and Charitable Donations, [T1 Family File, Preliminary Estimates](#)" ([72-211-X](#)), presents information about the methodology, concepts and data quality for the data available in this release.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).