

Temporary employment in Canada

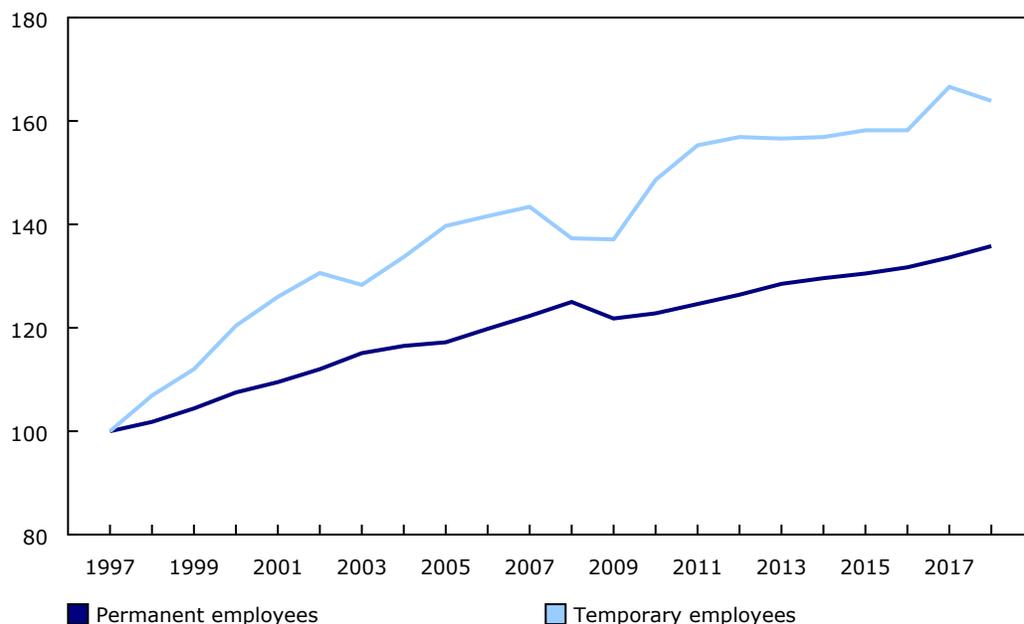
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, May 14, 2019

A temporary job has a predetermined end date, or will end as soon as a specified project is completed. Temporary employment is often associated with lower wages, fewer benefits, less possibility of unionization, and little or no training offered by the employer. However, temporary employment can also provide employees with greater flexibility, experience, skill acquisition, and knowledge diversification.

Although temporary employees represent a relatively small number of overall employees, they have been growing at a faster pace than permanent employees during the past 20 years. Data from the Labour Force Survey show that 13.3% of employees (2.1 million) worked in a temporary job in 2018, up from 11.8% (1.4 million) in 1998. Over this period, most of the growth among temporary employees can be attributed to increases in the number of people with a term or contract job.

Chart 1
Employment index by job permanency, 1997 to 2018

index (1997=100)

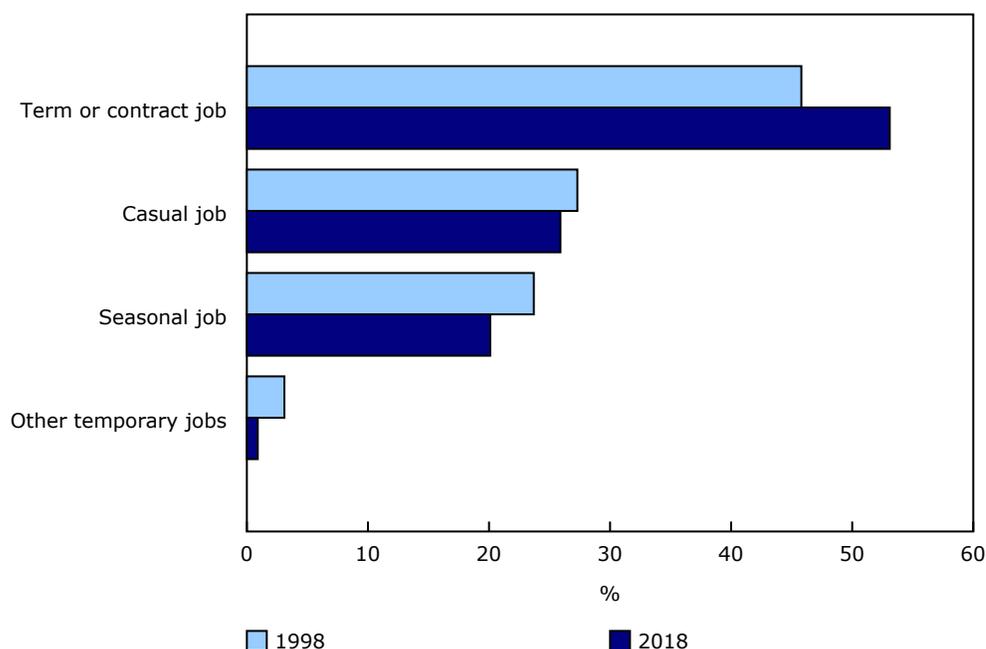


Source(s): Table [14-10-0072-01](#) (formerly CANSIM table 282-0080) and custom tabulation.

From 1998 to 2018, the proportion of term or contract employees increased from 46% to 53% of all temporary employees. At the same time, the proportions of temporary employees in 2018 working in casual (26%), seasonal (20%) and other temporary (1%) jobs were all down from 1998 (27%, 24% and 3%, respectively).



Chart 2
Proportion of temporary employees by type of temporary job, 1998 and 2018



Source(s): Table 14-10-0072-01 (formerly CANSIM table 282-0080).

There was little difference in the share of women (14%) and men (13%) that had temporary jobs in 2018. Among temporary employees, women (85%) were more likely than men (73%) to have a casual, or term or contract job. In contrast, men (27%) were more likely to have a seasonal job than women (14%). At the same time, among temporary employees, women (10%) were more likely than men (6%) to have multiple jobs.

More than 8 in 10 (82%) temporary employees in health care and social assistance were women, as were nearly 7 in 10 (68%) in educational services. These two industries had a relatively large share of temporary employees: 26% for educational services and 13% for health care and social assistance.

Lower earnings are generally associated with temporary work. In 2018, temporary employees (\$21.80) earned less per hour than permanent employees (\$27.71), and also worked fewer hours on average per week (27.8 hours compared with 33.3 hours), leading to lower average weekly earnings for these employees. At the same time, about 4 out of 10 temporary employees worked part-time, compared with 14% of permanent employees.

Temporary employment was higher in the Atlantic provinces in 2018, where seasonal work was relatively more common. The share of temporary employment was largest in Newfoundland and Labrador (26%) and Prince Edward Island (21%), provinces which also had the highest unemployment rates in 2018, at 13.8% and 9.4% respectively. However, when compared with 1998, the proportion of temporary employees decreased across the Atlantic provinces, most notably in Prince Edward Island (-6.2 percentage points). On the other hand, the lowest proportions of temporary employment in 2018 were found in Manitoba (12%), Saskatchewan (13%) and Ontario (13%), provinces with lower unemployment rates.

Note to readers

For more information on job permanency, see the Guide to the Labour Force Survey (71-543-G).

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

The infographic "[Temporary employment in Canada, 2018](#)" is now available.

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

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