

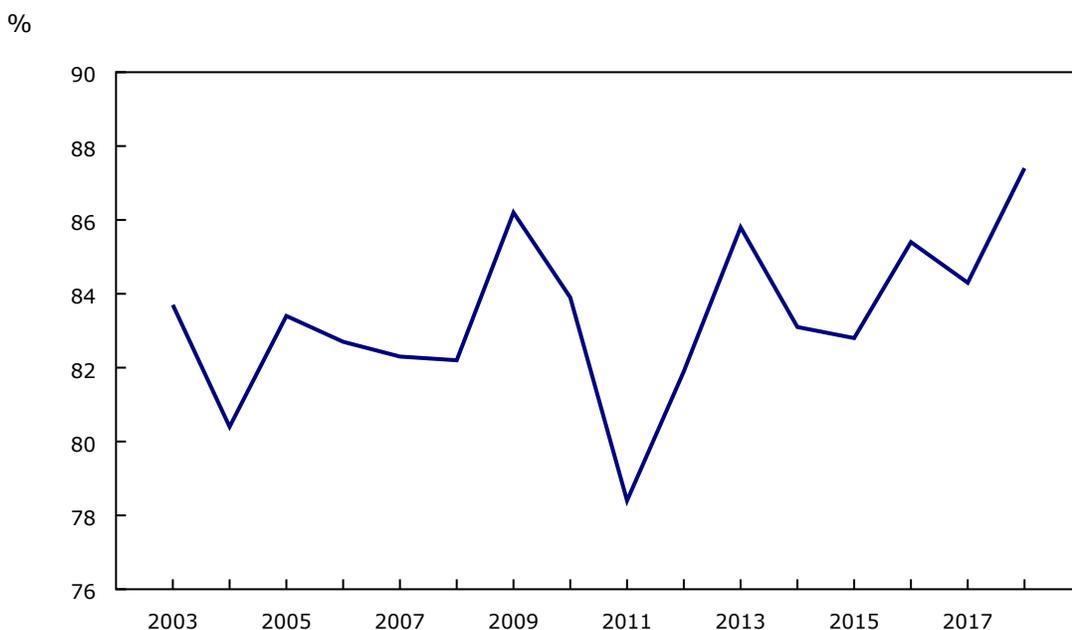
Employment Insurance Coverage Survey, 2018

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

In 2018, about 1.1 million Canadians were unemployed at some point in the year. Of these, 63.9% (709,000) had contributed to the Employment Insurance (EI) program.

Among those who had contributed to EI and also had a valid job separation, 87.4% had accumulated enough insurable hours to be eligible to receive regular EI benefits, up 3.1 percentage points from 84.3% in 2017. This rise in the EI eligibility rate was driven by an increase among youth aged 15 to 24.

Chart 1
Eligibility rate increased in 2018¹



1. The eligibility rate is the number of unemployed people who had accumulated enough insurable hours to be eligible to receive regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, expressed as a proportion of unemployed people who had contributed to the EI program and separated from their job for a reason deemed valid. **Source(s):** Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Eligibility up in four provinces, led by Saskatchewan

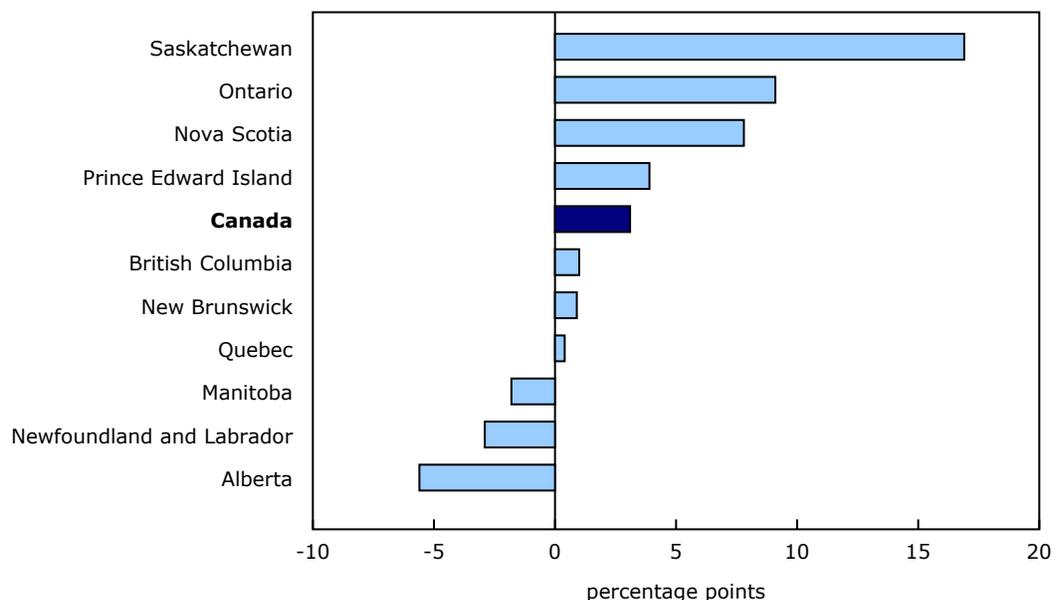
Consistent with previous years, eligibility rates for regular EI benefits varied across provinces in 2018, ranging from 79.6% in Alberta to 98.2% in Prince Edward Island.

Following a low in 2017, the EI eligibility rate increased the most in Saskatchewan (+16.9 percentage points). The rate also rose in Ontario (+9.1 percentage points), Nova Scotia (+7.8 percentage points) and Prince Edward Island (+3.9 percentage points).

The eligibility rate declined in Newfoundland and Labrador (-2.9 percentage points) and was little changed in the remaining provinces.



Chart 2
Saskatchewan recorded the largest change in the Employment Insurance eligibility rate from 2017 to 2018



Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Eligibility rate up for youth

In 2018, the EI eligibility rate for youth aged 15 to 24 was 60.5%, up from a record low of 40.7% in 2017.

The eligibility rate for youth has historically been lower than the rate for older age groups, as youth are less likely to accumulate a sufficient number of insurable work hours and are more likely to have an invalid job separation. Reasons not deemed valid by the EI program include voluntarily leaving a job without just cause, including leaving a job to go back to school.

Among youth in 2018, the number of contributors with a valid job separation declined, while the number of contributors who accumulated a sufficient number of insurable hours was little changed. This coincided with a notable rise in the number of youth who left their job to go back to school in 2018. Since 2003, the eligibility rate for youth has ranged between 41% and 63%.

The eligibility rate among people aged 25 to 44 was little changed at 90.7% in 2018, and it was virtually unchanged for those aged 45 and over (90.5%).

Eligibility rate increases for women

In 2018, 86.1% of unemployed female contributors with a valid job separation had enough insurable hours to be eligible to receive regular benefits, up 4.0 percentage points from 2017 and the highest rate since comparable data became available in 2003. For men, the eligibility rate was little changed at 88.3% in 2018.

Maternity and parental benefits

In addition to regular EI benefits, there are other types, including maternity and parental benefits.

In 2018, 75.3% of all new mothers (those with a child aged 12 months or less) had insurable employment, down from 78.5% in 2017. This proportion has been relatively stable since 2003, ranging between 74% and 79%. Among these insured mothers, 88.5% received maternity and/or parental benefits in 2018, little changed compared with 2017.

Quebec, which provides separate maternity and parental benefits through the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP), continued to have a high share of new mothers with insurable employment (87.4%) and the highest proportion of insured new mothers receiving maternity or parental benefits (96.6%). In the rest of Canada, 85.4% of new mothers with insurable employment received maternity or parental benefits in 2018, little changed from 2017.

Across all provinces, the average duration of paid and/or unpaid leave taken or planned by recent mothers who had worked as an employee within the previous two years was 11.6 months, unchanged compared with 2017. More than one in five (22.9%) of these mothers took or planned to take more than 12 months away from work.

Nationally, the share of spouses or partners of recent mothers who claimed or intended to claim parental benefits was 31.3% in 2018, little changed from 2017.

In Quebec, the proportion was 79.6% in 2018, also little changed compared with one year earlier. The share of spouses or partners claiming benefits is typically higher in Quebec, as the QPIP includes benefits that apply exclusively to the second parent. In the rest of Canada, the proportion of spouses or partners of recent mothers who claimed or intended to claim parental benefits was 15.0% in 2018, up from 11.9% in 2017.

Outside of Quebec, the most frequent reason mothers reported for their spouses or partners not claiming or intending to claim benefits was "mother wants to stay home" (32.7%).

Note to readers

The Employment Insurance Coverage Survey sheds light on the coverage of the Employment Insurance (EI) program. It provides an overview of who does or does not have access to EI regular benefits as well as to maternity and parental benefits

To be eligible to receive regular benefits, unemployed individuals have to: (a) contribute to the EI program, (b) meet the criteria for job separation (that is, have a valid job separation) and (c) have accumulated enough insurable hours over the past 12 months.

Job separations that are deemed invalid to receive regular benefits include, among others, quitting the job without just cause (including leaving a job to go to school, dissatisfaction with the job and retirement) or dismissal with cause.

The number of unemployed people who had accumulated enough insurable hours to be eligible to receive regular EI benefits, expressed as a proportion of unemployed people who were covered by the EI program and separated from their job for a reason deemed valid by the program, is known as the "eligibility rate."

The number of insured hours required to qualify for regular benefits varies across geographic regions, ranging from 420 to 700 hours, depending on the region's unemployment rate. The higher the unemployment rate, the lower the number of hours required to qualify for benefits. For maternity and parental benefits (excluding Quebec), the required number of insured hours to qualify for benefits is 600. Eligibility for benefits under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) is not based on a minimum number of insured hours.

There are two main reasons for not contributing to the EI program: not having worked in the previous 12 months (which includes those who have never worked), and non-insurable employment (which includes self-employment).

The survey is administered to a sub-sample of respondents of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) four times a year, namely in April, July, November and January. Respondents are asked questions about their situation during the LFS reference week in the month prior to being interviewed (March, June, October and December respectively). The estimates are produced for the reference year by averaging over the four cycles covered by the survey.

In 2018, the total sample size was 13,570 people, composed of unemployed individuals (as defined by the LFS) and other individuals who, given their recent status in the labour market, were potentially eligible for EI.

This analysis focuses on differences between estimates that are statistically significant at the 68% confidence level.

The survey is conducted on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada.

Employment Insurance policy changes

In December 2017, [EI policy changes](#) came into effect that included the introduction of extended parental benefits, allowing parents to choose between receiving benefits for up to 12 months at the standard rate, or for up to 18 months at a lower rate. More flexibility was also introduced for pregnant workers as to when they can start receiving maternity benefits.

Also, effective August 2018, further changes included a program to support adults who want to return to school and upgrade their skills. People who are out of work now have more flexibility to take training and continue receiving regular EI benefits.

Table 1
Coverage and eligibility of the unemployed for Employment Insurance benefits, Canada, 2018

	Number	Unemployed	Contributors	Contributors with valid job separation
	thousands		%	
Unemployed	1,108.5	100.0	...	...
Contributors	708.6	63.9	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	534.0	48.2	75.3	100.0
Eligible contributors	466.9	42.1	65.9	87.4
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	67.1	6.1	9.5	12.6
Contributors, invalid job separation	174.7	15.8	24.7	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	89.1	8.0	12.6	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	85.6	7.7	12.1	...
Non-contributors	399.9	36.1	...	...
Had no insurable employment	54.8 ^E	4.9 ^E	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	345.1	31.1	...	...

... not applicable

^E use with caution

Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Table 2
Coverage and eligibility of the unemployed for Employment Insurance benefits by sex, Canada, 2018

	Number	Unemployed	Contributors	Contributors with valid job separation
	thousands		%	
Men				
Unemployed	637.3	100.0	...	...
Contributors	434.9	68.3	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	329.3	51.7	75.7	100.0
Eligible contributors	290.7	45.6	66.8	88.3
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	38.7 ^E	6.1 ^E	8.9 ^E	11.7 ^E
Contributors, invalid job separation	105.6	16.6	24.3	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	59.7	9.4	13.7	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	45.9 ^E	7.2 ^E	10.6 ^E	...
Non-contributors	202.3	31.7	...	...
Had no insurable employment	26.8 ^E	4.2 ^E	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	175.5	27.5	...	...
Women				
Unemployed	471.3	100.0	...	...
Contributors	273.7	58.1	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	204.6	43.4	74.8	100.0
Eligible contributors	176.2	37.4	64.4	86.1
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	28.4 ^E	6.0 ^E	10.4 ^E	13.9 ^E
Contributors, invalid job separation	69.1	14.7	25.2	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	29.4 ^E	6.2 ^E	10.7 ^E	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	39.7 ^E	8.4 ^E	14.5 ^E	...
Non-contributors	197.6	41.9	...	...
Had no insurable employment	28.0 ^E	5.9 ^E	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	169.6	36.0	...	...

... not applicable

^E use with caution

Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Table 3
Coverage and eligibility of the unemployed for Employment Insurance benefits, by age group, Canada, 2018

	Number	Unemployed	Contributors	Contributors with valid job separation
	thousands	%		
Total unemployed, aged 15 to 24	275.8	100.0	...	...
Contributors	157.6	57.1	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	55.9	20.3	35.5	100.0
Eligible contributors	33.9 ^E	12.3 ^E	21.5 ^E	60.5
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	22.1 ^E	8.0 ^E	14.0 ^E	39.5 ^E
Contributors, invalid job separation	101.7	36.9	64.5	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	78.9	28.6	50.1	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	22.8 ^E	8.3 ^E	14.4 ^E	...
Non-contributors	118.3	42.9	...	...
Had no insurable employment	F	F	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	107.2	38.9	...	...
Total unemployed, aged 25 to 44	350.1	100.0	...	...
Contributors	225.4	64.4	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	183.9	52.5	81.6	100.0
Eligible contributors	166.9	47.7	74.1	90.7
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	17.0 ^E	4.9 ^E	7.6 ^E	9.3 ^E
Contributors, invalid job separation	41.5 ^E	11.8 ^E	18.4 ^E	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	F	F	F	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	31.5 ^E	9.0 ^E	14.0 ^E	...
Non-contributors	124.7	35.6	...	...
Had no insurable employment	26.0 ^E	7.4 ^E	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	98.7	28.2	...	...
Total unemployed, aged 45 and over	482.6	100.0	...	...
Contributors	325.6	67.5	100.0	...
Contributors, valid job separation	294.1	60.9	90.3	100.0
Eligible contributors	266.1	55.1	81.7	90.5
Not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	28.0 ^E	5.8 ^E	8.6 ^E	9.5 ^E
Contributors, invalid job separation	31.5 ^E	6.5 ^E	9.7 ^E	...
Invalid job separation: quit to go back to school	F	F	F	...
Invalid job separation: other reasons deemed invalid	31.3 ^E	6.5 ^E	9.6 ^E	...
Non-contributors	157.0	32.5	...	...
Had no insurable employment	17.8 ^E	3.7 ^E	...	...
Had not worked in previous 12 months/never worked	139.2	28.8	...	...

... not applicable

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Table 4
Coverage and eligibility of the unemployed for Employment Insurance benefits, by province, 2018

	Unemployed	Contributors	Contributors, valid job separation	Eligible contributors	Contributors, not eligible due to not enough insurable hours	Contributors, invalid job separation	Non- contributors	Share of contributors with valid job separation who had sufficient hours to qualify
	thousands							%
Canada	1,108.5	708.6	534.0	466.9	67.1	174.7	399.9	87.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	37.0	32.3	30.1	28.3	1.9 ^E	F	4.7 ^E	93.8
Prince Edward Island	8.0	7.3	6.7	6.5	F	0.6 ^E	0.7 ^E	98.2
Nova Scotia	33.8	24.6	20.3	19.1	F	4.3 ^E	9.1 ^E	93.8
New Brunswick	26.6	18.6	16.9	15.9	F	F	8.1	94.0
Quebec	240.1	160.8	132.8	113.5	19.3 ^E	28.0 ^E	79.3	85.5
Ontario	415.3	247.3	165.5	146.8	18.7 ^E	81.8	168.0	88.7
Manitoba	38.5	24.1	16.5 ^E	13.7 ^E	2.8 ^E	7.5 ^E	14.4	83.1
Saskatchewan	33.6	23.6	18.8	16.3	2.5 ^E	4.8 ^E	10.0	86.6
Alberta	161.1	99.4	71.5	56.9	14.6 ^E	27.9 ^E	61.8	79.6
British Columbia	114.5	70.7	54.8	49.9	F	15.9 ^E	43.8	91.0

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Table 5
Mothers and maternity/parental benefits, Canada, 2018

	Persons	Mothers with a child aged 12 months or less	Mothers with insurable employment
	thousands	%	
Mothers with a child aged 12 months or less	385.7	100.0	...
With insurable employment	290.3	75.3	100.0
Received maternity and/or parental benefits	257.0	66.6	88.5
Received benefits from the Employment Insurance program	179.1	46.4	61.7
Received benefits from the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan	77.9	20.2	26.8
Did not claim or receive maternity or parental benefits	33.3	8.6	11.5
Without insurable employment	95.3	24.7	...
Not worked in two years	66.6	17.3	...
Other (includes self-employed)	28.8 ^E	7.5 ^E	...

... not applicable

^E use with caution

Source(s): Employment Insurance Coverage Survey (4428).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4428.

The product *Employment Insurance Coverage Survey: Public Use Microdata Files, 2018* ([89M0025X](#)) is now available.

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).