

# The impact of COVID-19 on the gig economy: Short- and long-term concerns

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A new study looks at some of the challenges in tracking the gig economy in real time and profiles the approximately 1.7 million Canadians who worked in the gig economy prior to the pandemic.

About 1 in 10 Canadians in the labour force worked in the gig economy pre-COVID. About half worked to supplement their wage income, while gig work represented the sole source of income for the other half. The gig earnings of most gig workers were below \$5,000 a year. For over one-quarter of gig workers, the vast majority (89%) of their total annual income was derived from gig work.

How one fares in the gig economy during COVID-19 may depend on the type of work done. Administrative and support services such as cleaners, tour operators, retail trade, and "other services" such as cooks, maids and nannies, all reported large employment losses in April. Just over one-third of all female gig workers work in those industries.

In addition to the short-term concerns, the study looks at how the gig economy may evolve in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic based on earlier data trends. For example, the percentage of labour force participants in the gig economy rose from 6.0% in 2008 to 6.8% in 2009 as those who lost wage employment during the recession may have been "pushed" into self-employment.

For more information, see the article "[The impact of COVID-19 on the gig economy: Short- and long-term concerns](#)," released today in the series *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* (**45280001**).

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