

# Representation of women on boards of directors by province and territory

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Today, Statistics Canada is releasing new data on the gender composition of corporate boards in Canada. The purpose of this release is to expand on the information previously published in March 2021 in the *Daily* article "[Representation of women on boards of directors, 2018](#)," by providing more detailed information at the provincial and territorial level for the reference years 2017 and 2018. These data highlight women in leadership and strategic decision-making roles within corporations conducting business in Canada.

Additional information and other statistics and studies related to gender and business are available in the [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub](#) and the [Business Performance and Ownership Statistics Portal](#).

The data obtained through the *Corporations Returns Act* and from the Business Register show that the 2017 dataset listed 9,400 corporations and 28,972 directors' seats, 17.9% of which were held by women. The 2018 dataset listed 9,232 corporations and 28,071 directors' seats, 18.3% of which were held by women.

## Almost half of enterprises and women directors are located in Ontario

Among all the corporations conducting business in Canada, almost one in two enterprises were located in Ontario in 2017 (46.0%) and 2018 (45.5%). Similarly, the highest number of women directors was found in this province in both years, as almost one in two women directors led enterprises operating there (47.4% in 2017 and 47.0% in 2018).

Quebec followed, with 19.0% of enterprises in 2017 and 19.6% of enterprises in 2018, and with one in five women directors participating on boards over the same period.

Conversely, Saskatchewan reported the lowest number of enterprises, at 1.5% in 2017 and 1.6% in 2018. Saskatchewan was also the province with the smallest number of women directors participating on boards, with 1.7% in 2017 and 2.0% in 2018.

## Corporations operating in Quebec have the highest share of women directors

Quebec had the highest share of women directors for both reference years, rising from 19.0% in 2017 to 19.4% in 2018. Saskatchewan also had the highest representation of women directors in 2018, with 19.4% of board members being women. This province also recorded the highest year-over-year increase (+1.4%).

British Columbia (-0.1%) and the northern territories region (-0.8%) were the only areas that posted a slight decline from 2017 to 2018 in the representation of women on boards of directors.

## The province with the highest share of women directors differs by sector

The province with the highest representation of women directors differs based on the sector in which the enterprises operate. For example, in the utilities sector, of all provinces and territories, British Columbia had the greatest representation of women directors in 2017 (34.6%), but saw a decrease in 2018 (32.2%). The Atlantic region had the highest proportion of women directors in utilities in 2018 (32.4%), while Quebec saw the biggest increase in women directors (+9.1%), rising from 12.5% in 2017 to 21.6% in 2018.

Quebec had the highest representation of women directors in the finance sector for both years (26.7% in 2017 and 26.2% in 2018), followed by Ontario, with 23.6% of directors being women in 2017 and 22.6% in 2018. Within the same sector, the greatest increase of women on boards of directors was observed in Manitoba (+2.1%)—the share of seats occupied by women increased from 18.7% in 2017 to 20.8% in 2018.



The highest proportion of women directors in the management of companies and enterprises sector was in Manitoba, where 25.6% of board members were women in 2017 and 25.2% were women in 2018. Alberta posted the highest growth in this sector, with a 3.4% increase from 2017 to 2018 (15.5% to 18.9%).

In the energy sector, women were more likely to contribute as directors in enterprises operating in Saskatchewan, where women represented 26.5% of board members in 2017 and 26.6% in 2018. In the same sector, Ontario had the largest year-over-year increase (+2.6%) in the proportion of women on boards, up from 13.3% in 2017 to 15.9% in 2018.

**Table 1**  
**Total number and proportion of enterprises by province and territory, 2017 and 2018**

	2017		2018	
	Number of enterprises	Proportion of enterprises (%)	Number of enterprises	Proportion of enterprises (%)
Ontario	4,322	46.0	4,205	45.5
Quebec	1,790	19.0	1,807	19.6
Alberta	1,312	14.0	1,260	13.6
British Columbia	1,083	11.5	1,082	11.7
Atlantic region	431	4.6	412	4.5
Manitoba	228	2.4	237	2.6
Saskatchewan	143	1.5	147	1.6
Northern territories region	13	0.1	11	0.1
Not available <sup>1</sup>	78	0.8	71	0.8
Canada	9,400	100	9,232	100

1. "Not available" refers to enterprises that did not report the province or territory in which they operate.

Source(s): *Corporations Returns Act*, 2017 and 2018 (2503).

**Table 2**  
**Total number and proportion of directors by province and territory, 2017 and 2018**

	2017			2018		
	Number of women directors	Proportion of women directors (%)	Total number of directors	Number of women directors	Proportion of women directors (%)	Total number of directors
Ontario	2,452	18.4	13,328	2,406	18.6	12,940
Quebec	1,038	19.0	5,473	1,053	19.4	5,442
Alberta	699	16.7	4,189	673	17.5	3,836
British Columbia	515	16.1	3,201	492	16.0	3,070
Atlantic region	226	17.0	1,333	224	17.4	1,288
Manitoba	133	18.0	739	150	19.3	776
Saskatchewan	89	18.0	494	100	19.4	515
Northern territories region	5	11.9	42	x	x	36
Not available <sup>1</sup>	17	9.8	173	26	15.5	168
Canada	5,174	-	28,972	5,124	-	28,071

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

1. "Not available" refers to enterprises that did not report the province or territory in which they operate.

Source(s): *Corporations Returns Act*, 2017 and 2018 (2503).

**Table 3**  
**Proportion of women directors by selected sector and by province and territory, 2017 and 2018**

	Finance (%)		Energy (%)		Construction (%)	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Alberta	21.3	21.6	12.2	13.1	13.1	16.7
Atlantic region	21.0	18.2	18.8	17.8	x	x
British Columbia	21.9	22.7	12.1	11.6	15.4	13.0
Manitoba	18.7	20.8	x	x	27.8	28.6
Northern territories region	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ontario	23.6	22.6	13.3	15.9	13.4	13.1
Saskatchewan	13.4	13.9	26.5	26.6	x	x
Quebec	26.7	26.2	15.7	17.3	9.7	8.9

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

Source(s): *Corporations Returns Act*, 2017 and 2018 (2503).

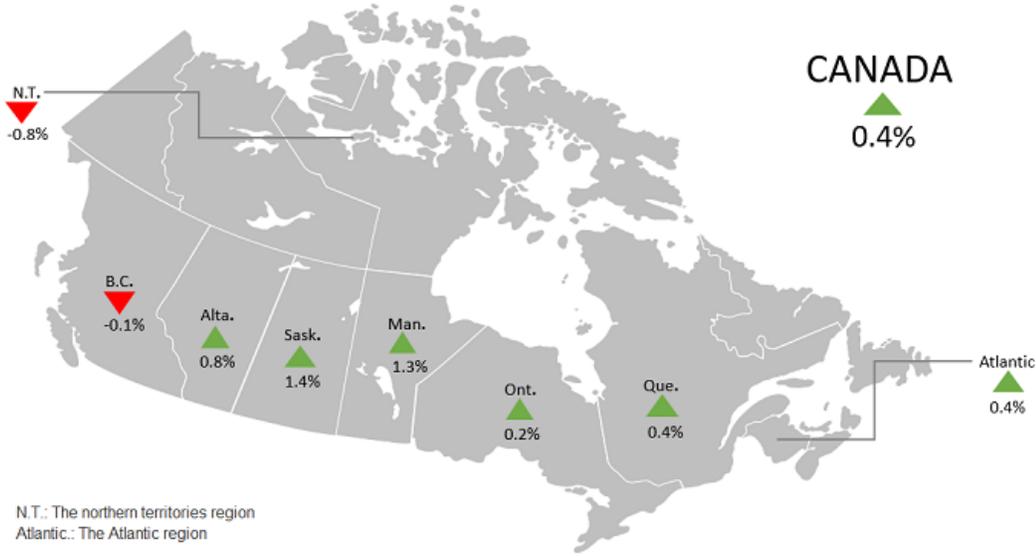
**Table 4**  
**Proportion of women directors by selected sector and by province and territory, 2017 and 2018**

	Manufacturing (%)		Distributive trade (%)		Utilities (%)		Management of companies and enterprises (%)	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Alberta	14.9	14.9	14.6	13.3	29.0	30.7	15.5	18.9
Atlantic region	16.4	18.4	20.9	17.9	25.0	32.4	18.4	20.4
British Columbia	10.9	10.6	12.1	11.8	34.6	32.2	17.7	16.9
Manitoba	14.7	14.3	13.0	13.3	x	x	25.6	25.2
Northern territories region	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ontario	11.7	11.9	15.2	15.3	17.5	20.5	20.1	21.0
Saskatchewan	18.2	21.2	21.4	25.8	x	x	11.5	12.0
Quebec	13.5	13.0	15.3	15.8	12.5	21.6	22.8	21.6

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

Source(s): *Corporations Returns Act*, 2017 and 2018 (2503).

**Infographic 1 – The change in the proportion of women directors by province and territory from 2017 to 2018**



Source: *Corporate Reports* Aug., 2017 and 2018 (2503).

## **Note to readers**

### **Data sources and methodology**

The Corporations Returns Act (CRA) program collects financial and ownership data on corporations conducting business in Canada in the public, private and government sectors. Corporations were included in the sample if their gross revenues for a fiscal period exceeded \$200 million, their assets exceeded \$600 million, or their long-term debt or equity owing to non-residents exceeded a book value of \$1 million. Corporations that were inactive or that reported less than \$30,000 in tax revenue were omitted from the sample.

While these data are used to understand domestic and foreign residence of corporate board members, they cannot provide information on the gender profile of these individuals. To identify the gender of corporate board members, a two-step process was undertaken.

First, the data were integrated, where possible, with gender data from the Derived Record Depository (DRD), a national dynamic relational database containing only basic personal identifiers of Canadians. The DRD was built by integrating information from administrative data files available at Statistics Canada, including the T1 personal master file, to facilitate the integration of data from other files.

Then, for the records that could not be linked between the different data files, probabilistic imputation was employed using available information about the corporate board members.

The data obtained through the CRA program are used to evaluate the extent of foreign control in the Canadian economy and are summarized in an annual report to Parliament. To release information from the CRA program, Statistics Canada must receive approval from Parliament.

The corporations targeted by the CRA represent a subsample of the total population of incorporated enterprises operating in Canada, which are included in the Annual Financial and Taxation Statistics for Enterprises (AFTS). The CRA program publishes statistics at the legal-entity level, while the AFTS program disseminates statistics at the enterprise level. Since the AFTS assets are consolidated, there is an overrepresentation of assets in the CRA program when compared with the assets in the AFTS.

Thereafter, the data were integrated with the Business Register to determine the province where enterprises were located, using operating address information. The operating address indicates the Canadian provinces and territories where operations take place.

### **Confidentiality**

To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of individuals, the provinces in the Atlantic region (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia) and the territories in the northern territories region (the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut) were combined. In addition, all estimates with fewer than five individuals were suppressed.

### **Definition**

The Atlantic region consists of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

The northern territories region consists of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

### **Table**

Some data used for this analysis come from [Table 33-10-0218-01 – Representation of men and women on boards of directors](#).

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](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).