

Architectural services, 2020

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Operating revenue of architectural services held steady in 2020

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the economy, the combined total operating revenue of the architectural services and landscape architectural services industries—which are responsible for planning and designing residential, industrial, commercial, institutional and government buildings, as well as land developments—remained largely unchanged from 2019, at \$5.4 billion. Total operating expenses for these industries were \$4.4 billion, a slight decrease (-0.8%) from 2019, leading to an operating profit margin of 17.8% in 2020.

The architectural services industries benefited from housing starts increasing in 2020 to 217,802 units, up from 208,685 units in 2019, with gains in both single-detached and multiple-unit types. However, non-residential investment did not grow in 2020 because of a generalized weakness in many sectors of the economy and a drop in capital outlays in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector, which affected demand for architectural services.

Architectural services for non-residential building projects, such as office buildings, educational institutions, health care institutions, retail stores and restaurants accounted for 52.5% of the combined sales in the two industries in 2020, down from 56.5% in 2019. Sales for residential building projects accounted for 20.6% of combined sales in 2020, up 2.3 percentage points compared with 2019. The remaining proportion of sales for the two industries (26.9%) was generated by landscape architectural services, urban planning and other related services; this share did not change much compared with 2019.

In 2020, Ontario companies providing architectural services and landscape architectural services generated \$2.4 billion, representing 44.8% of the total operating revenue in Canada. Quebec (\$1.1 billion; 19.8%) was the second-largest contributor to the total operating revenue, followed by British Columbia (\$1.0 billion; 18.2%).

Industries' sales to businesses represented 50.9% of total sales, followed by sales to governments, non-profit organizations and public institutions (33.1%); individuals and households (12.6%); and customers outside of Canada (3.4%).

Since the pandemic hit in March 2020, the operations of many professional businesses have been disrupted. Architectural services firms adapted their operations, with almost two-thirds (65%) of businesses who responded to the survey asking some or all employees to work from home. Over one-third (36%) had to adopt or expand to a contactless business model, and a similar share (34%) of businesses had to retrofit their workspaces.

Growth expected to pick up in architectural services in 2021

With housing starts growing, the non-residential investment turning around and restrictions loosening after the third wave of the pandemic, most indicators have been positive for the architectural services and landscape architectural services industries in 2021. The survey for the 2021 reference year will provide insight into how architectural services businesses fared in the second year of the pandemic.

Note to readers

Data for 2018 and 2019 have been revised.

Information on housing starts and the number of units was taken from table [34-10-0126-01](#).

Information on business non-residential investment was taken from table [34-10-0035-01](#).

Information on growth in housing starts was taken from table [34-10-0126-01](#).

Data are collected for the 12-month fiscal period that ends on or between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. This means that some businesses reported for a fiscal year in which the majority of their operations were before the pandemic. As a result, the effects of the pandemic are not fully reflected in this reference year, but will extend into the 2021 reference year estimates.

These and other data related to business and consumer services can be found at the [Business and consumer services and culture statistics portal](#).

Available tables: [21-10-0036-01](#) to [21-10-0038-01](#) and [21-10-0198-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2420](#).

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).