

Nunavut Government Employee Survey, 2021

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Friday, May 27, 2022

The public service is the largest employer in Nunavut. Out of a population aged 15 years or more of approximately 25,000 people in the territory, the combined public sector territorial and federal workforce had approximately 7,200 employees in 2021. About 6,600 (92%) work for the Government of Nunavut (GN), and roughly 600 (8%) work for the Government of Canada (GoC) in Nunavut.

New data from the 2021 Nunavut Government Employee Survey (NGES) contains information about employee perceptions of their workplace, their interest in learning, training and career advancement, as well as their housing situation and child care responsibilities. In addition, employees were asked about potential barriers to employment of Inuit in the Nunavut public service.

Proportion of Inuit in Government increased between 2016 and 2021

The data from the NGES will be used by governments and Inuit organizations to find ways to increase Inuit employment in government to levels that are representative of the population, as per Article 23 of the Nunavut Agreement. To enroll under the Nunavut agreement, a resident of Nunavut must be an Inuk as determined in accordance with Inuit customs and usages, one that identifies himself or herself as an Inuk, and is associated with a community in Nunavut, or the Nunavut Settlement Area.

The proportion of Inuit in Nunavut is roughly 80% of the total population aged 15 years and older. Of all GN and GoC government employees in Nunavut, close to 57% were Inuit in 2021, compared to 52% in 2016. While the population in the territory is split almost evenly between men and women, women comprised close to 69% of GN and GoC employees in 2021.

Nearly half of all employees (48%) were 30 to 49 years old in 2021, compared to 49% in 2016. Approximately 21% of GN and GoC employees in Nunavut were under 30 years of age in 2021, compared to 23% in 2016. According to the 2021 Census, the median age for Nunavut was 25.6.



Table 1
Percentage of employees in the Government of Nunavut and Government of Canada in Nunavut, by gender, 2021

	Women	Men
Employees enrolled under the Nunavut Agreement	76.2	23.6
Employees not enrolled under the Nunavut Agreement	59.6	40.4
Total Government of Nunavut and Government of Canada employees in Nunavut	68.9	30.9

Source(s): Nunavut Government Employee Survey, 2021 (5226).

Three in five government employees in Nunavut have permanent jobs

Approximately 61% of government employees working in Nunavut held permanent or indeterminate jobs in 2021, the same proportion as in 2016. All remaining employees held non-permanent positions that fell under the seasonal, term, contract or casual employee categories.

The GN typically has a greater reliance on non-permanent employees, including a significant contingent of relief workers and substitute teachers, compared to the GoC in Nunavut. In 2021, just under 78% of GoC workers in Nunavut were employed in permanent positions, compared with 81% in 2016. In comparison, 59% of GN employees reported working in permanent jobs, the same percentage as in 2016.

Employees enrolled under the Nunavut agreement were more likely to report being in a permanent position in the GN than those who are not enrolled, while in the GoC, both enrolled and not enrolled employees reported working in a permanent position at a similar level.

Table 2
Percentage of employees with indeterminate status in the Government of Nunavut and Government of Canada in Nunavut, 2021

	Government of Nunavut	Government of Canada in Nunavut	Total (Government of Nunavut and Government of Canada in Nunavut)
Employees enrolled under the Nunavut Agreement	63.0	77.1	64.0
Employees not enrolled under the Nunavut Agreement	54.7	78.3	56.7
All employees with indeterminate status	59.4	77.6	60.9

Source(s): Nunavut Government Employee Survey, 2021 (5226).

Inuit employees nearly twice as likely to use Inuit language at work

The *Inuit Language Protection Act* covers obligations related to the language of work and day to day services provided to Nunavut residents in territorial, municipal, federal and private sector workplaces. There are three official languages for the territory of Nunavut: the Inuit language (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), English, and French.

When asked which of the languages they could speak well enough to use at work, 42% of all NGES respondents answered "Inuktitut" in 2021, compared to 36% in 2016. The percentage of respondents that answered "Inuinnaqtun" was 3%, which remained consistent with 2016.

Another way of exploring language use is to consider proficiency, or ability to speak, read, write and understand Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun at work. Overall, 51% of respondents stated that they were proficient or somewhat proficient in either Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun, as well as English or French.

In 2021, 33% of all government employees in Nunavut responded "sometimes" or "often or always" when asked if they used an Inuit language at work, compared to 38% in 2016. For Inuit respondents this percentage was higher as 63% responded "sometimes" or "often or always" when asked if they used an Inuit language while at work.

Education and training seen as best solutions to increase share of Inuit in government

The objective of Article 23 of the Nunavut Agreement is to increase Inuit participation in government employment in Nunavut to a representative level. When respondents were asked about the best solutions to increase the number of Inuit employees in the government, the top five solutions indicated were increasing education or pre-employment training opportunities, which was indicated by 43% of respondents, followed by increasing on-the-job training opportunities (36%), encouraging youth to pursue further education (35%), ensuring staff housing is available (31%) and improving the education system (21%).

Housing status

Access to housing is considered important for employee recruitment and retention. In 2021, approximately 33% of NGES respondents reported that they lived in staff housing, while 24% were home owners, 18% lived in public housing, and 14% lived in private rentals. Of those enrolled under the Nunavut Agreement, 22% stated that they lived in staff housing, 28% were home owners, 30% lived in public housing and 9% lived in private rentals.

Among those not living in staff housing at the time of the survey, 7% stated that they had applied for it, while the majority of respondents stated that they either had not applied for this type of housing (62%), or were not eligible for it (28%).

Child care responsibilities and employment

The 2021 NGES questionnaire contained new questions on child care responsibilities, which could influence a person's availability for employment. Overall, 39% of NGES respondents indicated that they were a parent or guardian of a child younger than 12 years or of an older child requiring supervision, and 19% reported helping to care for someone else's children.

Nearly a quarter of all respondents (23%) indicated that they had to take time off work to care for a child, either paid (11%), unpaid (3%) or with a combination of both paid and unpaid leave (9%). While 6% of respondents identified lack of childcare as a barrier to employment for Inuit, just over 18% identified ensuring availability of childcare as a solution to increase the number of Inuit employees in Government. Further, of those requiring childcare, 22% indicated that their current childcare arrangements did not meet their needs.

Note to readers

Nunavut Government Employee Survey (NGES): is an online survey of all Government of Nunavut (GN) and Government of Canada (GoC) employees working in Nunavut. The survey is conducted by Statistics Canada, and is sponsored by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The content was developed by Statistics Canada in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the GN, Pilimmaksaivik (Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut), and ESDC. The data collection period for the 2021 NGES was between April 6 and August 10, 2021.

Nunavut Land Claims Agreement: The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement or Nunavut Agreement, is an Agreement that was signed on May 25, 1993 by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the GoC and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The terms of enrolment are defined under Article 35 of this agreement. One goal defined under Article 23 of this Agreement is a commitment to hire and retain more Inuit to work for the government by providing training or other support. In order to help the GoC better meet its Article 23 obligations, Statistics Canada was asked to conduct the NGES, an electronic survey to be administered to current employees of the GN and the GoC working in Nunavut. The 2021 NGES is the second iteration of the survey.

Inuit language: refers to findings that combine both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, or Inuktit.

Language proficiency: is a categorized level of language fluency based on four questions regarding respondents' perceived ability to use Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun at work (i.e., to speak, read, write and understand). Respondents were also asked if they were interested in learning or improving their fluency in these languages.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5226](#).

The Nunavut Government Employee Survey (NGES) collects information from government employees about their experiences in the workplace, as well as their interest in learning, training and career advancement.

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).