

Representation of persons with disabilities in executive positions, 2016 to 2019

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Today, Statistics Canada is releasing new data on the diversity of corporate boards and senior management by providing a brief profile of persons with disabilities who reach executive positions in their careers.

Also released today is "[Executives with disabilities in Canada, 2019](#)," an infographic that provides an overview of the key findings.

Few persons with disabilities work in executive positions

In 2019, 0.8% of executives benefitted from the [disability tax credit](#) (DTC). By way of comparison with the [other employment equity groups](#), women represented 23.0% of executives, followed by racialized persons (7.9%) and Indigenous peoples (1.2%).

Only Canadians with a severe and prolonged impairment are eligible, while persons with disabilities with less severe or recent impairments, or those who do not have access to a medical professional who is able to certify the effects of their impairment, may not be eligible for the DTC.

The share of executives with a disability remains unchanged from 2016 to 2019

The proportion of executives with a disability (0.8%) in 2019 did not change from 2016. The same trend was observed when examining the share of executives with a disability by role; the proportion of directors (0.8%) and officers (0.7%) with a disability remained unchanged from 2016 to 2019.

Of executives with disabilities, the majority were directors. In 2019, more than three in five directors (60.9%) had a disability, while slightly fewer than two in five officers (39.1%) had a disability.

Women and men executives with a disability are older than executives without a disability

In 2019, on average, women executives with a disability were 58 years old, whereas women executives without a disability were 52 years old. The age gap between men executives with and without a disability was much greater. The same year, on average, men executives with a disability were 71 years old, while men executives without a disability were 56 years old. People aged 65 years and older had the highest proportion of executives with a disability, at 3.8% in 2016 and 2.9% in 2019. In comparison, 0.3% of executives aged 25 to 64 years reported having a disability in 2016 and 2019.

In 2019, among executives aged 25 to 64 years, those with a disability were about as likely to be married or in a common-law relationship (88.9%) as those without a disability (89.2%). However, those with a disability were less likely to have children (57.8%) than those without a disability (67.2%); the same trend has been observed since 2016.

The share of men executives with a disability was constant over the years. Among men in executive positions, 0.8% had a disability in 2016 and 2019. Conversely, among women executives, 0.8% had a disability in 2016 and this proportion decreased slightly to 0.6% in 2019.

Mobility limitations are the most common type of disability among executives

In accordance with the results of the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, mobility limitations were the most prevalent type of disability among executives in 2016 and 2019, rising from 32.0% in 2016 to 35.6% in 2019. Hearing was the least common type of disability among executives in both 2016 (5.4%) and 2019 (7.8%).



In 2016, executives with a hearing disability were the oldest (average age of 82 years), whereas in 2019, executives with a mobility disability were the oldest (average age of 77 years).

Manufacturing has the highest representation of executives with a disability

Based on selected industries, in 2019, the manufacturing industry (1.2%) had the highest proportion of executives with a disability, while the finance industry (0.4%) had the lowest representation. In 2016, the "other industries" category and manufacturing had the highest proportion of executives with a disability, with both categories having a proportion of 0.9%, whereas the management of companies and enterprises industry (0.5%) had the lowest proportion.

Executives with a disability were less likely to be represented in private enterprises compared with other enterprises, which includes publicly traded corporations, government business entities and unclassified enterprises. Private enterprises saw a slight decrease in the proportion of executives with a disability, from 0.8% in 2016 to 0.7% in 2019.

In 2016 and 2019, executives with a disability were more likely to work in small-to-medium corporations (0.9% in both years) than in medium-to-large corporations (0.6% in both years).

Table 1
Proportion of executives with a disability, by type of disability, 2016 to 2019

	Dressing	Hearing	Mental health-related	Mobility	Speaking	Life-sustaining therapy	Vision	Other disabilities
	%							
2016	9.9	5.4	21.9	32.0	x	6.6	16.5	x
2017	7.5	x	27.8	30.7	x	7.1	20.3	x
2018	11.5	x	24.8	35.9	10.0	x	x	x
2019	15.1	7.8	17.8	35.6	10.5	x	x	x

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

Note(s): Figures may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): T1 Family File, 2016 to 2019, and *Corporations Returns Act*, 2016 to 2019 (2503).

Table 2
Proportion of executives with a disability, by industry type, 2016 to 2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
	%			
Finance	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.4
Management of companies and enterprises	0.5	0.4	0.9	1.0
Manufacturing	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.2
Other industries	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.8

Source(s): T1 Family File, 2016 to 2019 and *Corporations Returns Act*, 2016 to 2019 (2503).

Note to readers

Data sources and methodology

The Corporations Returns Act program collects financial and ownership data on corporations conducting business in Canada for public, private and government businesses. Corporations are included in the sample if their gross revenues for a fiscal period exceed \$200 million, their assets exceed \$600 million, or their long-term debt or equity owing to non-residents exceeds a book value of \$1 million.

However, while these data are used to understand the domestic and foreign residence of corporate board members and officers, they cannot provide information on the disability status of these individuals.

To identify executives with disability, a two-step process was undertaken.

First, the data were integrated, where possible, with tax files from the Derived Record Depository (DRD), a national dynamic relational database containing only the 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, for the purpose of facilitating the integration of data from other files.

Then, the data were integrated with the T1 Family File (T1FF) to obtain the disability tax credit (DTC) information, and eligible Canadian executives were identified. The DTC is intended to assist individuals with severe and prolonged impairments. The application process requires the support of a medical practitioner who can certify the effects of impairments. Persons with disabilities with less severe or recent impairments, or those who do not have access to a medical professional who is able to certify the effects of their impairment, may not be able to access the DTC. Disability status derived from the DTC is not comparable with other methods of disability identification such as the one found in the Canadian Survey on Disability.

Definitions

Disability status: Executives' disability status is determined based on whether they benefit from the DTC, which is reported in the T1FF. An individual is eligible for the DTC if a medical practitioner certifies that they have a severe and prolonged impairment in one of nine daily activity categories, have significant limitations in two or more categories, or receive therapy to support a vital function. For more information on the DTC, see the page "[Disability tax credit \(DTC\)](#)."

Dressing: For some persons, dressing themselves can be a challenge even with the help of appropriate therapy, medication, and devices. In this context, they may be eligible for the DTC.

Executives: Individuals who occupy a leadership and strategic decision-making role within an enterprise and who contribute as either a board director or an officer.

Directors: Individuals responsible for supervising the activities of a corporation and for making decisions for those corporations.

Officers: Individuals responsible for leading the day-to-day operations of a corporation.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2503](#).

Also released today is the infographic titled "[Executives with disabilities in Canada, 2019](#)," available as part of the series *Statistics Canada – Infographics* ([11-627-M](#)).

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).