

# Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022

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This release is available in audio. The video "[Canadian Survey on Disability: From 2017 to 2022, American Sign Language](#)," is also available.

New findings from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) showed that 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, or 8.0 million people, had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. The rate of disability in Canada has increased by 5 percentage points since 2017, when 22% of Canadians, or 6.2 million people, had one or more disabilities. This increase can be partially attributed to both the aging population and the large increase in mental health-related disabilities among youth and working-age adults. In 2022, the rate of disability was higher among women (30%) than men (24%), following the same pattern from 2017.

The CSD is the official source of data on persons with disabilities aged 15 years and older in Canada, collecting information on the lived experiences of persons with disabilities. Data from the CSD are used to plan and evaluate services, programs and policies for Canadians living with disabilities to help enable their full participation in society. New data offer an opportunity to examine changes in disability from 2017 to 2022.

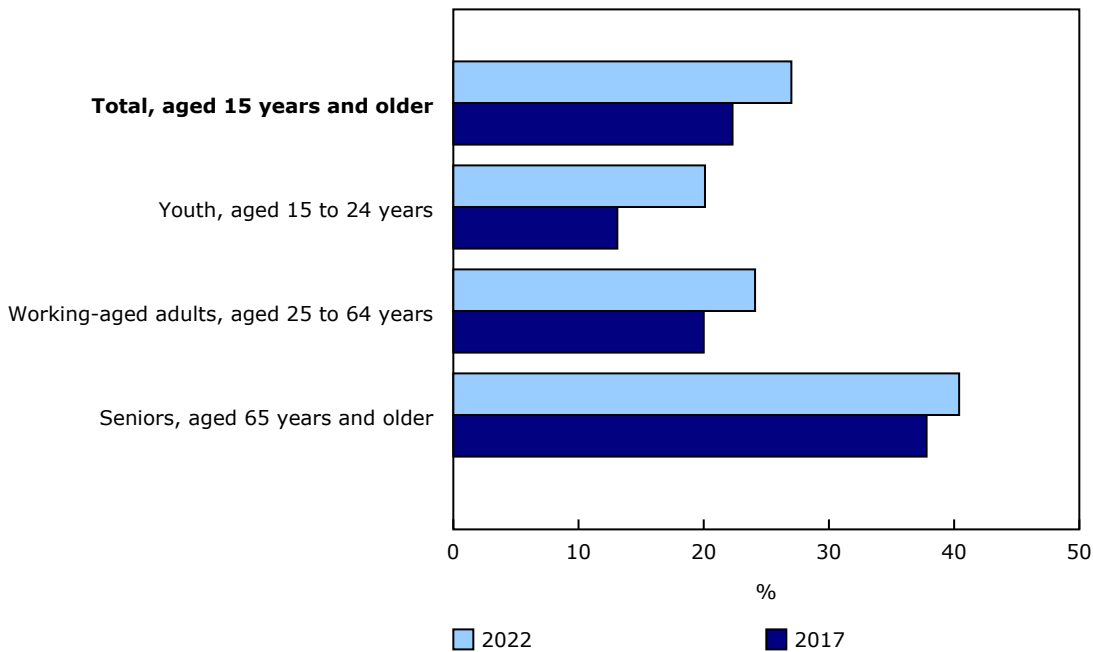
## Youth experience largest increase in disability rate

Youth (aged 15 to 24 years), the working-age population (25 to 64 years) and seniors (65 years and older) all experienced an increase in the rate of disability from 2017 to 2022 (Chart 1). In 2022, 20% of youth had a disability, an increase of 7 percentage points over 2017, when the disability rate was 13%. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of working-age adults had a disability in 2022, an increase of 4 percentage points over 2017, when the rate was 20%. In 2022, the disability rate for seniors was 40%, an increase of 3 percentage points from 2017, when the rate was 38%.

The larger representation of seniors in the total population in 2022 as compared with 2017 increased the disability rate for the total population, as persons aged 65 years and older are more likely to have a disability than those in younger age groups.



**Chart 1**  
**Percentage of Canadians with a disability by age group, 2017 and 2022**



**Note(s):** All changes from 2017 to 2022 are statistically significant.  
**Source(s):** 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (3251).

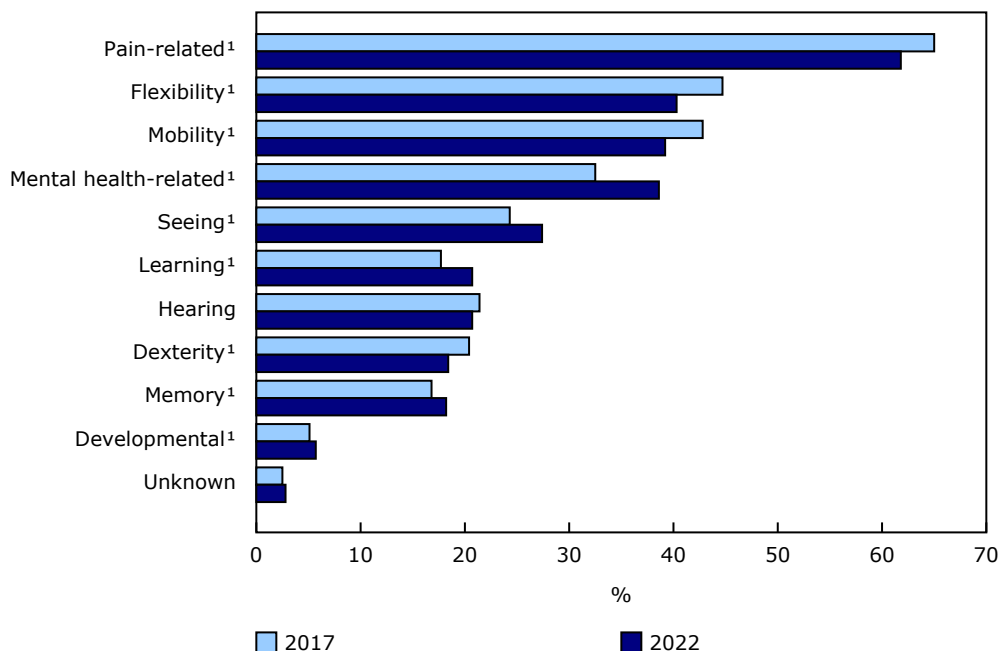
## Mental health-related disabilities experience largest increase

Among persons with a disability, the most common disability type in 2022, as it was in 2017, was pain-related disability; 62% of persons with a disability reported this type of disability (Chart 2). Flexibility (40%), mobility (39%) and mental health-related (39%) disabilities were the next most prevalent types of disability.

The prevalence of mental health-related, seeing, learning, memory and developmental disabilities increased from 2017 to 2022. In 2022, the largest increase belonged to mental health-related disabilities, which increased by 6 percentage points, from 33% in 2017.

The increase in mental health-related disabilities aligns with other findings related to mental health. In fact, [the proportion of people reporting very good or excellent mental health decreased over the past several years](#), while the proportion of people reporting fair or poor mental health increased.

**Chart 2**  
**Prevalence of disability types among persons with disabilities aged 15 years and older, 2017 and 2022**



1. Change from 2017 to 2022 is statistically significant.  
 Source(s): 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (3251).

The types of disability varied by age groups. Among youth with disabilities, mental health-related (68%), learning (46%) and pain-related (34%) were the most common types of disability in 2022. Mental health-related disabilities among youth and working-age adults each increased by 8 percentage points from 2017, representing the largest increase among all disability types and all age groups.

Among the working age population with disabilities, pain-related (63%), mental health-related (46%) and flexibility (36%) were the most common disability types in 2022. Pain-related (68%), mobility (63%) and flexibility (59%) disabilities were most common among seniors with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities often have multiple co-occurring disability types. In 2022, 29% of Canadians with a disability had one disability type, 37% had two or three, and 34% had four or more, similar to 2017 rates. As individuals age, they are more likely to experience a higher number of co-occurring disabilities. Nearly half (42%) of seniors with a disability had four or more co-occurring disabilities, while youth (43%) and working-age adults (36%) were most likely to have two or three disability types.

### Women are more likely to have a more severe disability than men

Overall, in 2022, 59% of persons with disabilities had "milder" disabilities (classified as having a mild or moderate disability) and 41% had "more severe" disabilities (classified as having a severe or very severe disability). The proportion of persons with milder disabilities increased by 2 percentage points from 2017 to 2022, while the proportion of persons with more severe disabilities decreased by the same amount, 2 percentage points. Additionally, women (43%) were more likely than men (39%) to have a more severe disability, following the same pattern as 2017. See Note to readers for information on disability severity.

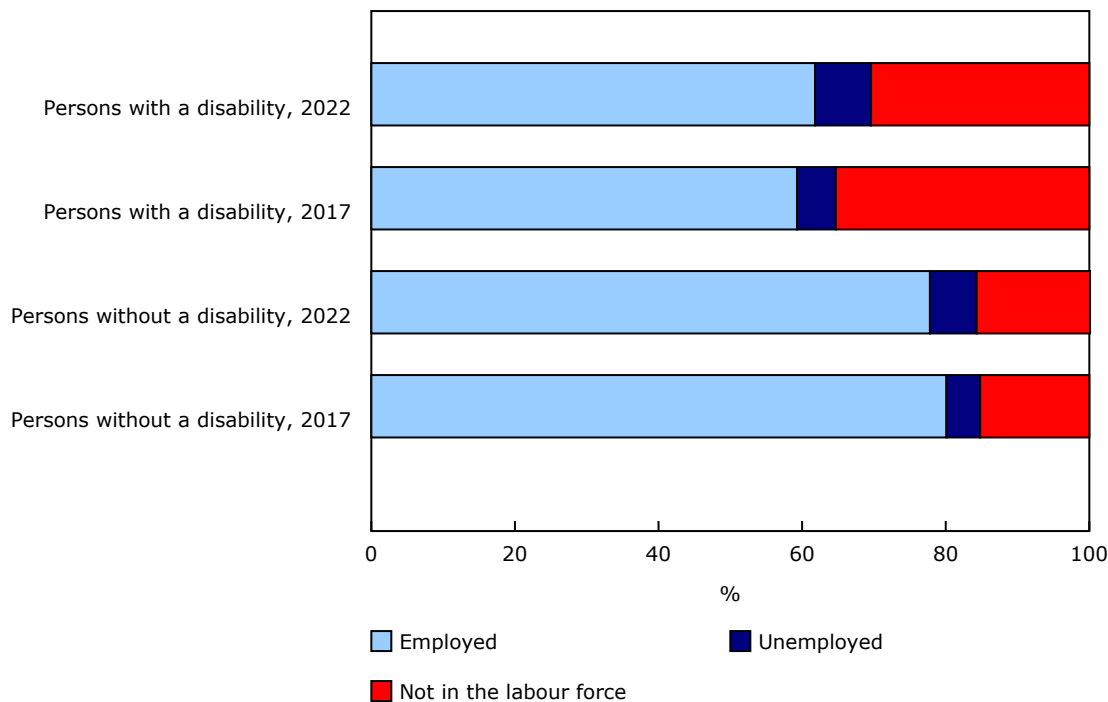
## Persons with disabilities are more likely to be employed than in the past

According to the 2022 CSD, 62% of working-age adults (25 to 64 years of age) with disabilities were employed, compared with 78% of persons without disabilities (Chart 3). The employment rate for persons with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years was up 3 percentage points from 2017, narrowing the gap between the employment rates of persons with disabilities and of persons without disabilities by 5 percentage points. The results from the 2022 CSD align with [recent findings from the Labour Force Survey](#).

Information regarding labour force status comes from data linked to the CSD and the 2016 and 2021 censuses and, therefore, reflects the reference weeks for the censuses, May 1 to May 7, 2016, and May 2 to May 8, 2021.

### Chart 3

#### Labour force status for persons aged 25 to 64 years with and without a disability, 2017 and 2022



**Note(s):** Information regarding labour force status comes from data linked to the CSD and the 2016 and 2021 censuses and, therefore, reflects the reference weeks for the censuses, May 1 to May 7, 2016, and May 2 to May 8, 2021. Differences from 2017 to 2022 for the same labour force status for persons with a disability are statistically significant; differences from 2017 to 2022 for the same labour force status for persons without a disability are statistically significant except persons not in the labour force; differences between persons with a disability and persons without a disability for the same labour force status in the same year are statistically significant; differences among labour force statuses for the same year and same disability status are all statistically significant.

**Source(s):** 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (3251).

The employment rate was lower among people with more severe disabilities. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of persons with milder disabilities aged 25 to 64 years were employed, while less than half (42%) of persons with more severe disabilities aged 25 to 64 years were employed.

The 2022 CSD included information such as the need for aids, assistive devices and technologies, and workplace accommodations that provide context for better understanding the experiences of persons with disabilities in the labour market. It is also important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the labour market through labour disruptions and increased remote work opportunities in some sectors from 2017 to 2022.

A report with more detailed analysis relating to demographics, income and employment of persons with and without disabilities in Canada will be released in 2024.

## **Nearly half of Canadians with disabilities faced financial challenges due to the pandemic**

Persons with disabilities are at a financial disadvantage compared with persons without disabilities, which is consistent with previous findings in "[A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017](#)." According to the 2022 CSD, the median personal after-tax income of persons with disabilities was \$32,870, compared with \$39,490 for persons without disabilities. The median personal after-tax income for persons with more severe disabilities (\$28,110) was lower than that for those with milder disabilities (\$36,900).

While the pandemic has been difficult for many Canadians, previous findings in the infographic "[How are Canadians with long-term conditions and disabilities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?](#)" show that it has posed particular challenges for persons with disabilities. According to the 2022 CSD, two in five persons with disabilities (45%) reported difficulties in meeting their financial obligations due to the pandemic. Working age adults with disabilities were more likely than youth and seniors to report financial challenges due to the pandemic.

## **In 2022, 6 in 10 persons with disabilities experienced barriers related to accessing indoor and outdoor public spaces**

The 2022 CSD collected information on barriers to accessibility, in support of the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA). The ACA was passed in 2019 with the intention of creating a barrier-free Canada by 2040. In 2022, 72% of persons with disabilities reported that they experienced 1 or more of 27 types of barriers to accessibility because of their condition at least sometimes in the past year.

Persons with more severe disabilities experienced more barriers to accessibility. These individuals reported that they experienced on average nine of the included types of barriers at least sometimes in the past year.

Persons with milder disabilities reported that they experienced on average six of the included types of barriers at least sometimes in the past year. Barriers related to features inside or outside public spaces, such as entrances or exits and sidewalks, were the most commonly experienced (56%), followed by barriers related to communication (48%), barriers related to behaviours, misconceptions or assumptions (37%) and barriers related to online activities (17%).

A report which uses data from the 2022 CSD to further explore the accessibility experiences of persons with disabilities in Canada will be released in support of the 2024 [National AccessAbility Week](#), taking place from May 26 to June 1, 2024.

## Note to readers

The Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) sample is selected from the Census of Population respondents, making it a postcensal survey. For methodological details see [Surveys and statistical programs - Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#).

The 2022 CSD includes questions on both sex at birth and gender, while the 2017 CSD asked respondents if they were male or female (i.e., their sex). This analysis uses the concept of gender to disaggregate and disseminate 2022 CSD data, while the 2017 CSD uses sex of person. The change to disseminate data on gender rather than sex is consistent with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's [Policy direction to modernize the Government of Canada's sex and gender information practices](#) (2018) and the changes to the 2021 Census (see [Filling the gaps: Information on gender in the 2021 Census](#)).

In this analysis, a two-category gender variable is used to facilitate historical comparison and to protect the confidentiality of non-binary persons, given the relatively small size of this population in Canada. For 2022 data, the category of "men" includes cisgender and transgender men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons, while "women" includes cisgender and transgender women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons. Although sex and gender refer to two different concepts, the introduction of gender is not expected to have a significant impact on data analysis and historical comparability, given the small size of the transgender and non-binary populations.

A global severity score was developed for the CSD, which was calculated for each person using the number of disability types that a person has, the level of difficulty experienced in performing certain tasks, and the frequency of activity limitations. To simplify the concept of severity, four severity classes were established: mild, moderate, severe, and very severe. "Mild" and "moderate" classes were collapsed into "milder," while "severe" and "very severe" classes were collapsed into "more severe." It is important to understand, however, that the name assigned to each class is simply intended to facilitate use of the severity score and is not a label or judgment concerning the person's level of disability.

The CSD collected information on 27 types of barriers to accessibility, touching on the Accessible Canada Act priority areas of Built Environment, Communication, and Information and Communication Technology. These barriers do not represent a comprehensive list of barriers to accessibility. Respondents were asked if they experienced barriers because of their condition using the response categories of "not applicable," "never," "sometimes," "often" and "always." Respondents who indicated that they experienced barriers "sometimes," "often" or "always" are included as having experienced a barrier at least sometimes. See the [2022 CSD questionnaire](#) for more information on the barriers to accessibility included within the survey.

Note that categories may not always add to 100% due to rounding rules.

All differences mentioned in this article are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3251](#).

The product "[Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022: Concepts and Methods Guide](#)," which is part of the [Reports on Disability and Accessibility in Canada \(89-654-X\)](#), is now available.

The infographic "[New data on disability in Canada, 2022](#)," is now available in 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](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).