

# Health care workers in Canada and use of official languages at work, 2021

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In 2021, there were 1,975,000 health care workers in Canada, representing 11.4% of the employed population. The number of health care workers rose across the country.

While the number of English-speaking health care workers in Quebec increased, their share of all health care workers in the province has remained relatively stable since 2006 (to 9.0% in 2021). By contrast, the proportion of French-speaking health care workers in New Brunswick and Ontario fell over the same period (34.3% and 3.6%, respectively, in 2021).

These findings are from a new report, "Official languages and health care workers in Canada: A portrait, 2025." Comparing data from the 2021 Census and previous censuses, it provides a portrait of health care workers' knowledge and use of English and French at work. These findings aim to help plan and improve health care services for a diverse population.

## More than one-quarter of health care workers in Quebec regularly use English at work

In 2021, around 28% of health care workers who lived in Quebec regularly used English at work and almost all (95.9%) regularly used French. Almost two-thirds (65.1%) of English-speaking health care workers regularly used French at work, even if in most cases they primarily used English. Around one-fifth (19.9%) of French-speaking health care workers used English at work, usually as a secondary language.

In the Montréal region, more than half (53.7%) of health care workers regularly used English at work in 2021, compared with 89.9% who regularly used French.

## Almost all French-speaking health care workers in New Brunswick use French at work

In 2021, more than 93% of the 15,100 French-speaking health care workers living in New Brunswick regularly used French at work. However, the use of French was less common in regions where there were smaller proportions of French-speaking residents.

In addition, a small proportion (10.6%) of English-speaking health care workers regularly used French at work in New Brunswick in 2021. This proportion was higher in the Campbellton–Miramichi region (26.1%), where most of the population is French-speaking.

## Outside Quebec and New Brunswick, close to half of French-speaking health care workers did not use French at work

More than 70% of the 34,600 French-speaking health care workers in Canada outside Quebec and New Brunswick lived in Ontario in 2021, and over one third (35.8% or 12,400 workers) of these workers lived in the Ottawa region.

In the rest of Canada (i.e., excluding Quebec and New Brunswick), 56.3% of French-speaking health care workers regularly used French at work in 2021. However, this proportion varied widely by region, ranging from 83.2% in the Ottawa region and 74.7% in northeastern Ontario to less than 20% in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Furthermore, English was the first official language spoken of almost half (44.6%) of health care workers who regularly used French at work.



## Concepts

**Health care workers** are employed persons in any one of 51 occupations based on the [National Occupational Classification](#). In addition to workers in health care occupations (such as dentists, physiotherapists, medical sonographers and paramedical occupations), workers in other fields are considered to be health care workers for the purposes of this analysis since they play an important part in health care facility operations. This is also useful to reflect the diverse roles of workers in these establishments. Occupations in these fields include administrative officers, receptionists and other office support staff who work in ambulatory health care establishments, hospitals, and in nursing and residential care facilities.

The **first official language spoken** is used in the analysis to identify **French-speaking workers** (i.e., workers with only French as their first official language spoken) and **English-speaking workers** (i.e., workers with only English as their first official language spoken). For more information on how the first official language spoken variable is derived, please see [First official language spoken of person](#).

The **regions** of Montréal, Campbellton–Miramichi, Ottawa and northeastern Ontario correspond to economic regions. For more information, see [Variant of Standard Geographical Classification \(SGC\) 2021 for Economic Regions](#).

## Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3901](#).

The infographics "[French and English among health care workers in Quebec, 2021](#)" ([11-627-M](#)) and "[French among health care workers in Canada outside Quebec, 2021](#)" ([11-627-M](#)) are now available.

The report *Official languages and health care workers in Canada: A portrait, 2025* is available upon request. This analysis was prepared for Health Canada.

The tables [98-10-0659-01](#), [98-10-0660-01](#), [98-10-0661-01](#), [98-10-0662-01](#) and [98-10-0663-01](#) are also available.

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)).