

Representation of women on boards of directors and in officer positions, 2023

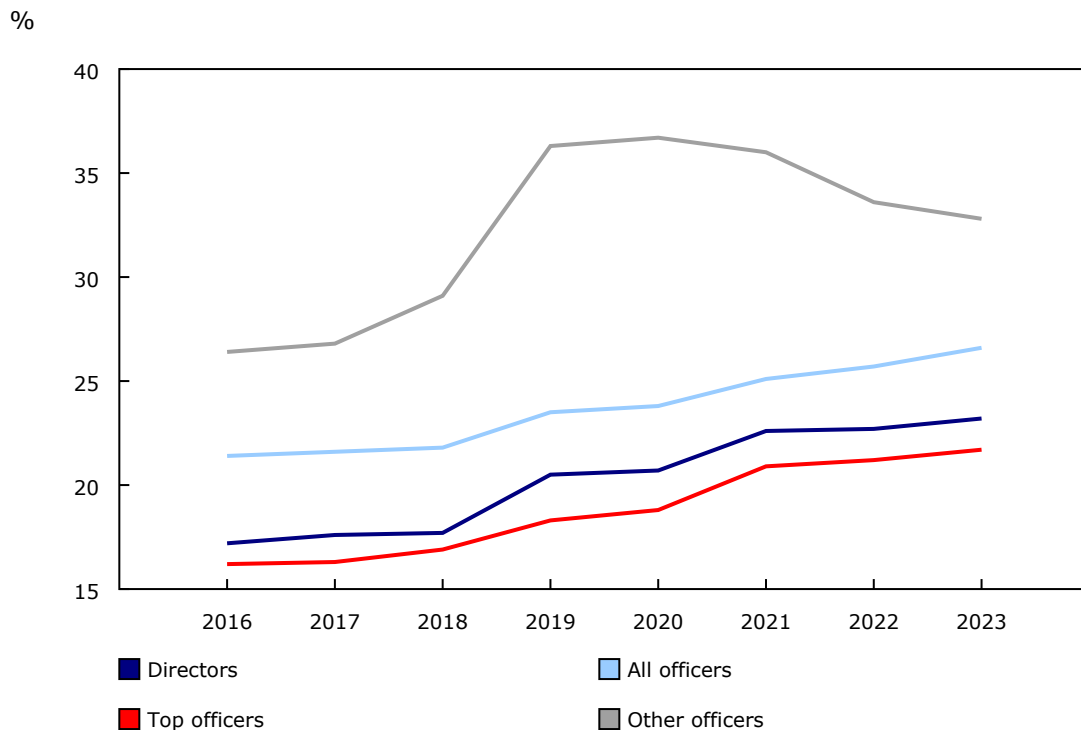
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Statistics Canada is releasing new data on the gender composition of leadership and strategic decision-making roles within publicly traded corporations, privately held corporations and government business enterprises operating across a variety of industries in Canada.

This data helps inform the objective "More company board seats held by women, and more diversity on company boards" and the indicator "Proportion of board members who are women, by type of board" in the [Leadership and democratic participation](#) pillar of the Gender Results Framework.

Additional information and other studies and statistics related to gender and enterprises can be found in the [Gender, diversity and inclusion statistics hub](#), the [Business performance and ownership statistics](#) portal and in the [Representation of women on boards of directors and in officer positions: Visualization tool](#).

Chart 1
Representation of women in executive positions, 2016 to 2023



Source(s): Table 33-10-0501-01.

Women hold just under one-quarter of director positions

In 2023, women occupied just under one-quarter (23.2%) of seats on boards of directors, increasing 0.5 percentage points over the proportion of women recorded in 2022 (22.7%).



Just over half of boards (50.3%) did not include any women directors in 2023. In addition, 25.8% of boards had one woman director, while boards with two or more women directors accounted for 23.9% of the total.

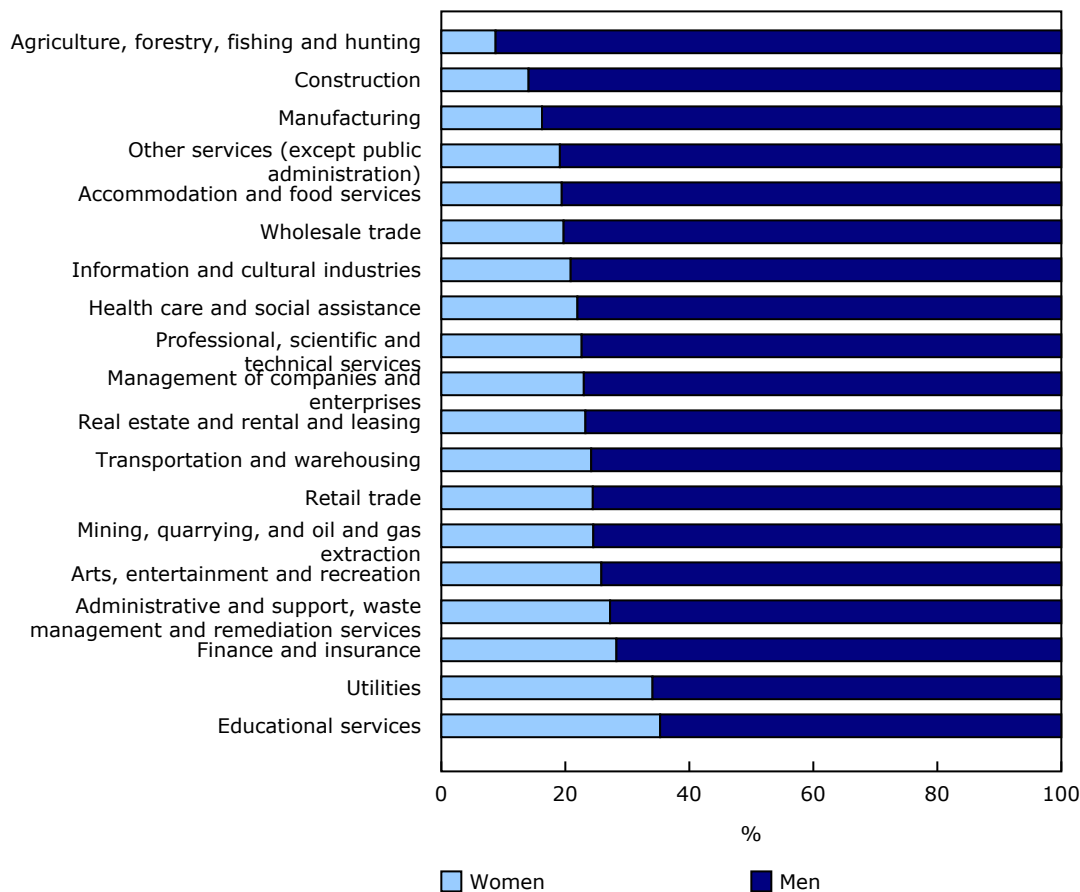
Educational services has the highest representation of women directors, followed by the utilities and finance and insurance industries

Educational services had the highest proportion of women directors in 2023, with women holding 35.3% of board seats. This reflects an increase of 4.9 percentage points from 2022.

The utilities industry recorded the second-highest share in 2023, at 34.1%. Corporations in finance and insurance followed, with women representing 28.2% of board members.

The agriculture industry had the lowest proportion of women directors, with women occupying 8.8% of board seats.

Chart 2
Share of women on corporate boards, by industry, 2023



Source(s): Corporations Returns Act (2503).

Across types of corporations, government business entities have the highest share of women on boards

As in previous years, women were most represented on the boards of directors of government business entities in 2023, representing 33.7% of director positions. Publicly traded corporations followed, with women representing 32.9% of director positions. Women occupied just over one-fifth of private enterprises' board seats, with a share of 21.8%. Private enterprises tend to drive the overall share of women directors across corporation types, as their board seats made up almost 85% of the dataset on directors in 2023.

A majority of publicly traded corporations had at least one woman director: 87.6% of their boards of directors included at least one woman director, compared with 81.3% of government business enterprise boards of directors and 47.1% of private enterprise boards of directors.

Share of women officers continues to grow at steady pace

In 2023, women made up 26.6% of officers across corporations conducting business in Canada. This represents a gain of 0.9 percentage points over 2022 (25.7%), a modest increase that is nevertheless larger than the one recorded for women directors.

Women are less likely to be represented among top officers

As in previous years, women in leadership positions were less likely to occupy top officer positions. In 2023, women held 21.7% of top officer positions and 32.8% of other officer positions.

Women in top officer roles were more likely to be executive vice-presidents (29.7%) than to hold chief executive positions (16.0%), which include presidents, chief executive officers, chief financial officers, and chief operating officers.

Among "other" officer positions, women were most represented among auditors (53.9%) and least represented among treasurers (28.4%).

Education services industry displays the highest proportion of women officers

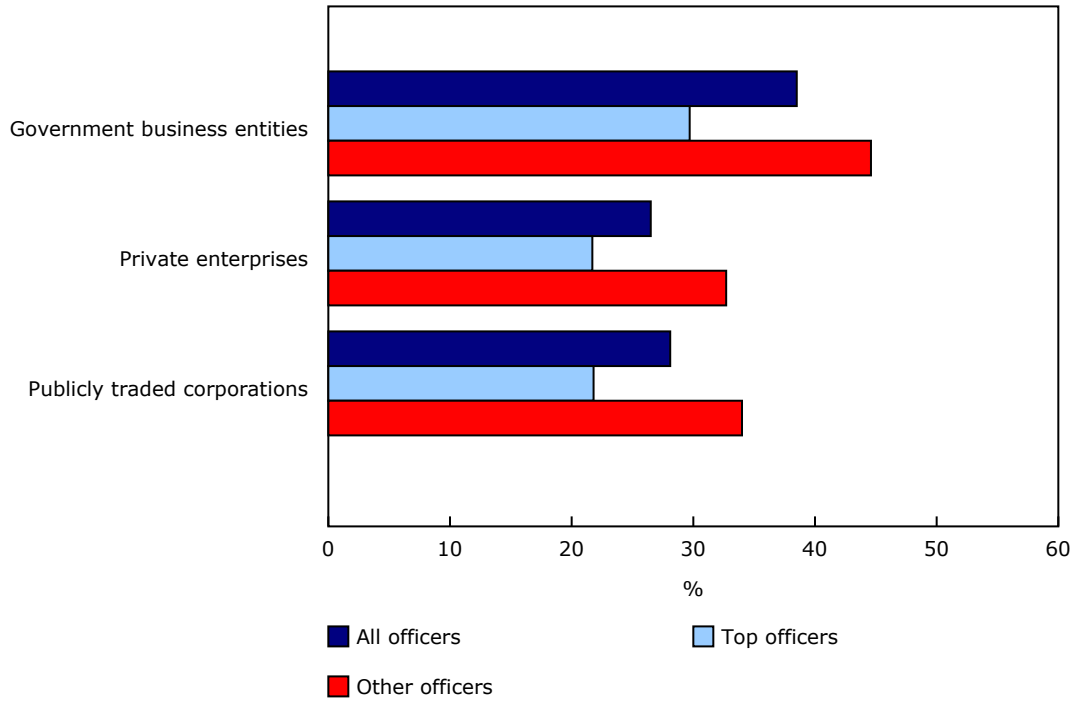
In addition to having the highest share of women directors, education services also had the highest proportion of women officers in 2023 (36.4%). Meanwhile, the utilities industry (34.9%) had the second highest proportion of women officers, more than three times the level of the agriculture industry (11.5%), in which women officers were the least represented.

Across types of corporations, government business entities have the highest share of women officers

Women were most represented in officer positions within government business entities, where they accounted for 38.5% of officers in 2023. This share was notably higher than that observed in publicly traded corporations (28.1%) and private enterprises (26.5%).

The strong representation of women officers in government business entities was driven by the "other" officers category: 44.6% of their other officers were women, compared with 29.7% of their top officers.

Chart 3
Representation of women in officer positions, by type of corporation, 2023



Source(s): Table 33-10-0501-01.

Table 1
Representation of women on boards of directors and officer positions, by industry, 2023

	Directors		Top Officers		Other Officers	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	%					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting [11]	8.8	91.3	6.7	93.3	18.2	81.8
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction [21]	24.5	75.5	18.6	81.4	36.5	63.5
Utilities [22]	34.1	65.9	27.9	72.1	42.3	57.7
Construction [23]	14.1	85.9	11.0	89.0	25.8	74.2
Manufacturing [31-33]	16.2	83.8	15.5	84.5	26.6	73.4
Food manufacturing [311]	21.4	78.6	18.1	81.9	28.1	71.9
Wholesale trade [41]	19.7	80.3	18.1	81.9	29.7	70.3
Retail trade [44-45]	24.4	75.6	20.4	79.6	36.0	64.0
Transportation and warehousing [48-49]	24.2	75.8	22.7	77.3	32.2	67.8
Information and cultural industries [51]	20.9	79.1	25.3	74.7	33.6	66.4
Telecommunications [517]	26.6	73.4	17.4	82.6	31.0	69.0
Finance and insurance [52]	28.2	71.8	26.8	73.2	36.7	63.3
Real estate and rental and leasing [53]	23.2	76.8	21.0	79.0	34.5	65.5
Professional, scientific and technical services [54]	22.6	77.4	21.4	78.6	29.6	70.4
Management of companies and enterprises [55]	23.0	77.0	19.5	80.5	35.4	64.6
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services [56]	27.2	72.8	26.0	74.0	30.1	69.9
Educational services [61]	35.3	64.7	31.8	68.2	45.5	54.5
Health care and social assistance [62]	22.0	78.0	41.7	58.3	21.1	78.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation [71]	25.8	74.2	27.8	72.2	21.1	78.9
Accommodation and food services [72]	19.4	80.6	23.5	76.5	32.0	68.0
Other services (except public administration) [81]	19.1	80.9	19.2	80.8	43.4	56.6

Source(s): Corporations Returns Act (2503).

Table 2
Representation of women on boards of directors and officer positions, by industry, 2022

	Directors		Top Officers		Other Officers	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	%					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting [11]	15.7	84.3	8.6	91.4	28.8	71.2
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction [21]	20.3	79.7	18.4	81.6	36.4	63.6
Utilities [22]	30.5	69.5	25.2	74.8	36.8	63.2
Construction [23]	15.5	84.5	13.3	86.7	26.1	73.9
Manufacturing [31-33]	16.7	83.3	15.3	84.7	29.6	70.4
Food manufacturing [311]	19.7	80.3	17.2	82.8	30.8	69.2
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Arts, entertainment and recreation [71]	25.0	75.0	32.4	67.6	23.5	76.5
Accommodation and food services [72]	18.9	81.1	17.0	83.0	28.9	71.1
Other services (except public administration) [81]	23.5	76.5	22.5	77.5	40.0	60.0

Source(s): *Corporations Returns Act (2503)*.

Note to readers

Data sources and methodology

The Corporations Returns Act (CRA) 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 gender profile of these individuals.

To identify the gender of these corporate board members and officers, a two-step process was undertaken.

First, the data were integrated, where possible, with gender data from the Derived Record Depository—a national dynamic relational database containing only the basic personal identifiers of Canadians and 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, for the records that could not be integrated, probabilistic imputation was employed using information available about the corporate board members and officers.

The data obtained through the CRA program are used to evaluate the extent of foreign control in the Canadian economy and are summarized in an annual report to Parliament. To release information from the CRA program, Statistics Canada must receive approval from Parliament.

Definitions

Board of directors: The governing body of a corporation.

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.

Table

The data table used for this analysis is available today (Table 33-10-0501-01 – Representation of women and men on boards of directors and in officer positions, by firm attributes).

Visualization tool

The [Representation of women on boards of directors and in officer positions: Visualization tool](#) is a comprehensive analytical tool that presents annual changes to the representation of women and men on boards of directors in Canada.

Revision policy

Statistical revisions are carried out annually to incorporate the most current information available. Generally, these revisions are limited to the previous reference year.

Periodically, comprehensive revisions could be conducted, which would generally entail revisions beyond the scope of the standard revision window. These provide an opportunity to enhance estimation methods and incorporate improved data sources and concepts.

Sources of revisions

Data for reference years 2016 to 2020 were revised, and new data for 2021 to 2023 were produced using an updated methodology. The data source remains unchanged and continues to rely on information collected under the CRA. No imputation or forward/backward linking of individuals across years is performed; each reference year reflects only records meeting CRA coverage requirements for that year.

The unit of analysis was refined to the enterprise-individual level to reduce overrepresentation of individuals within corporate groups. Under the previous structure, individuals within large corporate ownership groups could be counted multiple times. Redefining the analytical unit at the enterprise-individual level ensures that each individual-enterprise pairing is treated as a distinct observation, thereby preventing duplication and ensuring proportional representation.

Director and officer classifications were corrected, so that the highest-ranking officer position is retained when multiple positions are reported, and North American Industry Classification System and position variables were standardized. Industry groupings were expanded, and firm size is now classified by employment: small (fewer than 100 employees), medium (100 to 499 employees), and large (500 employees or more).

Impact of the revisions

Because of the methodological changes, data from the 2016 reference year onward are not directly comparable with previously released estimates. The removal of forward/backward linking and the refined unit of analysis definition affect the distribution of individuals across categories.

Absolute counts are no longer published, as the dataset reflects annual CRA coverage rather than a complete population. The revised release focuses on percentage distributions, which changed only slightly overall as a result of the updates.

Requirement to disclose

Under the Canada Business Corporations Act, publicly traded corporations are required to disclose information on the number of women on their boards, and their diversity policies, targets and statistics in relation to the four employment equity groups for boards of directors and executive officer positions. Essentially, while it will not be mandatory for public corporations to adopt diversity policies or quotas, they will be required to disclose whether they did so or not and—if not—to explain why.

Available tables: table [33-10-0501-01](#).

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

The [Representation of women on boards of directors and in officer positions: Visualization tool](#), which is part of the series *Statistics Canada - Data Visualization Products (71-607-X)*, is now 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) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).