

Public Sector Universe, 2017

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The contribution of public sector institutions is vital to the social and economic well-being of Canadians. Together, they support the generation and the redistribution of wealth and offer a wide array of services such as health, education, public order and safety or economic affairs.

These entities range from the 357 school boards across the country, to the 4,324 municipal government administrations, and the over 240 public colleges and universities. The range of industries in which the public sector is involved underlines its economic influence in Canada.

The public sector universe provides the list of institutional units that are included in the measurement of Canadian government finance statistics, also released [today](#). The list of reporting entities is an essential input into the production of Canadian government finance statistics and a key element in understanding and reconciling these to accounts published by governments.

The distribution of public sector entities can be viewed from sectoral, provincial and industrial dimensions. In 2017, most of Canada's nearly 6,000 entities were related to local governments (83%)—municipalities, school boards and local government business enterprises (GBEs)—with provincial–territorial and federal government related entities accounting for the rest (17%).



Table 1
Number of Canadian public sector entities by industry, 2017

	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba
	number of entities						
Utilities	2	2	8	10	31	69	2
Transportation and warehousing	3	1	7	5	31	51	2
Information and cultural industries	1	0	8	0	2	6	0
Finance and insurance	5	6	7	7	11	13	5
Real estate and rental and leasing	1	5	3	0	11	6	5
Professional, scientific and technical services	3	0	3	3	8	5	1
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2	1	1	2	29	3	3
Educational services	5	5	20	17	105	153	49
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4	6	5	4	14	12	5
Public administration	304	86	91	136	1,398	543	175
All other industries	3	1	2	2	5	7	2
Total by province and territory	333	113	155	186	1,645	868	249
	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut	Total by sector
	number of entities						
Utilities	6	71	75	1	1	1	279
Transportation and warehousing	5	13	9	1	0	0	128
Information and cultural industries	8	7	7	0	0	0	39
Finance and insurance	12	10	8	1	1	0	86
Real estate and rental and leasing	3	1	4	1	1	1	42
Professional, scientific and technical services	7	1	4	0	0	0	35
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2	29	2	0	0	1	75
Educational services	51	108	93	3	3	29	641
Arts, entertainment and recreation	8	3	3	2	1	1	68
Public administration	845	402	382	11	34	32	4,439
All other industries	3	2	5	1	1	2	36
Total by province and territory	950	647	592	21	42	67	5,868

Source(s): Calculations are based on data from [68-516-X](#).

Table 2
Number of Canadian public sector entities by sector, 2017

	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba
number of entities							
Federal government business enterprises	2	0	1	2	7	14	1
Provincial and territorial government business enterprises	6	7	9	4	13	12	7
Local government business enterprises	1	1	9	6	19	106	2
Federal general government	0	0	2	0	6	30	3
Provincial and territorial general government	34	21	32	36	111	60	49
Local general government	285	79	82	129	1,383	495	138
Universities and colleges	3	3	12	9	33	79	13
Local school boards	2	2	8	0	72	71	36
Canada Pension Plan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Quebec Pension Plan	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total by province and territory	333	113	155	186	1,645	868	249
	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut	Total by sector
number of entities							
Federal government business enterprises	1	0	5	0	0	0	33
Provincial and territorial government business enterprises	11	5	8	3	3	3	91
Local government business enterprises	6	45	9	1	0	0	205
Federal general government	0	1	6	0	0	5	53
Provincial and territorial general government	77	51	35	8	13	33	560
Local general government	804	437	436	8	23	25	4,324
Universities and colleges	23	32	33	1	1	1	243
Local school boards	28	76	60	0	2	0	357
Canada Pension Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Quebec Pension Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total by province and territory	950	647	592	21	42	67	5,868

Source(s): Calculations are based on data from [68-516-X](#).

Besides public administration, public sector entities in Canada were active in utilities (e.g., hydro), retail trade (e.g., liquor authorities), transportation (e.g., ports), finance (e.g., deposit insurance), education (e.g., school boards) and many other industries.

Linking the public sector universe with government finance statistics allows some interesting analysis. For example, in 2017, nearly two-thirds of the revenues in the GBE sector (\$149 billion) were accounted for by the 91 provincially and territorially controlled GBEs (\$95 billion), with utility industries recording \$40 billion in revenues alone.

GBEs controlled by municipal governments were by far the most numerous (over 200 across Canada), while they generated 18% (\$27 billion) of total GBE revenues. Local GBEs were also active primarily in utility industries, with \$17 billion in revenues.

Federal GBEs generated about the same level of revenues as local GBEs with \$28 billion (19% of all GBEs), despite the fact that federally controlled business enterprises were much less numerous (33). Federal GBEs generated over half of their revenues from finance and insurance activities (e.g., Bank of Canada or the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation), with another \$10 billion in the transportation industry. This was related to operating VIA Rail and port authorities throughout Canada.

Note to readers

The 2017 list of entities in the public sector universe is now available. This year's product introduces entities from the education sector and municipal government business enterprises that were part of the public sector from 2008 to 2017.

Canada's public sector—governments and business enterprises they control—provides details of the thousands of institutional units present throughout Canada, including operating name, date of entry or exit from the public sector and geographical perspectives. This list of institutional entities constitutes the universe from which the measurement of Canadian government statistics is presented by Statistics Canada.

An institutional unit is defined as an economic entity that is capable, in its own right, of owning assets, incurring liabilities, and engaging in economic activities and in transactions with other entities.

Ministries, departments, agencies, boards, commissions, judicial authorities, legislative bodies, and other entities that make up a government are not institutional units if they do not have the authority to own assets, incur liabilities, or engage in transactions in their own right. In general, all entities funded by appropriations made in accordance with a budget controlled by the legislature are not separate institutional units and are treated as constituting a single institutional unit. Government business enterprises are government controlled, public financial and non-financial corporations engaged in commercial operations involving the sale of goods and services to the public in the market place at economically significant prices.

Other components of Canada's public sector universe (health, Indigenous governments) will be introduced in future releases of the public sector universe list.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5218](#).

The publication *Public Sector Universe* ([68-516-X](#)) is now available in HTML format.

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; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).