

Annual wages, salaries and commissions of T1 tax filers, 2021

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Median annual wages and number of wage earners rise in 2021

In 2021, annual median wages, salaries and commissions increased by 4.8% to \$43,190 for tax filers who had wages, while the number of wage earners rose by 194,910 individuals, according to tax filer data.

Median annual wages increased in all provinces and two territories. The increases ranged from 1.9% in Newfoundland and Labrador to 7.2% in British Columbia. Among all the provinces and territories, only Nunavut saw a decrease in the median wage in 2021 (-3.1% to \$36,950), however, the median wage in Nunavut remains higher than in 2019 (+3.6%).

While monthly trends in employment and wages are most commonly reported through the [Labour Force Survey](#), tax filer data presents a picture of annual wages and salaries. Estimates can be disaggregated to small geographic areas, industries or detailed age groups.



Table 1
Tax filers with wages, salaries and commissions by province and territory, 2019 to 2021

	Wage earners			Median wage		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
	number			2021 constant dollars		
Canada	18,002,330	17,983,820	18,178,730	40,910	41,220	43,190
Newfoundland and Labrador	252,880	250,540	254,510	34,850	33,950	34,610
Prince Edward Island	78,050	78,900	81,710	32,170	33,690	34,690
Nova Scotia	453,250	457,120	465,490	35,430	36,180	37,180
New Brunswick	380,960	380,130	386,380	35,030	35,490	36,660
Quebec	4,234,530	4,243,500	4,365,390	39,560	39,760	41,900
Ontario	6,794,810	6,863,390	6,896,250	41,720	41,950	43,960
Manitoba	630,420	634,750	640,380	38,590	38,570	39,400
Saskatchewan	534,910	532,690	531,170	42,070	41,410	42,980
Alberta	2,120,100	2,092,510	2,091,880	47,860	46,160	48,040
British Columbia	2,461,200	2,390,830	2,404,970	39,150	41,810	44,820
Yukon	21,290	21,120	21,510	51,360	55,410	57,150
Northwest Territories	23,480	22,590	23,010	55,800	60,880	62,320
Nunavut	16,450	15,770	16,070	35,680	38,140	36,950

Source(s): Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File (4106) and table 11-10-0072-01.

New habits and public health restrictions continue to impact where wages are earned

During 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world had adapted to a new reality, and annual trends in wages and salaries reflected various dimensions of the pandemic response as the sectors which saw the largest increase in workers from 2020 to 2021 were also those where the pandemic response engaged workers. The largest increase was in public administration where the number of wage earners rose by 123,020. Most notably, the federal public service subsector increased by 85,650 wage earners (+19.0%) over 2020.

Professional, scientific and technical services had the second largest increase in the number of wage earners in 2021, rising by 77,620 wage earners (+7.1%). This increase in professional, scientific and technical services could be partly due to the expansion of teleworking in many industries providing new opportunities to workers to work in this sector, as well as growth opportunities for employers. Other sectors showing growth included health care and social assistance (+65,140 wage earners) and construction (+45,510 wage earners).

Online shopping nearly doubled during the first year of the pandemic, a shift that persisted throughout 2021. This increased the demand for courier and delivery services, with 46.1% more wage earners (+21,190 individuals) in that subsector, the highest proportional increase among all subsectors. The median wage in this subsector was \$38,070 in 2021.

In 2021, the number of wage earners also declined in some sectors, including wage earners in accommodation and food services (-85,380) and in retail trade (-36,470). The two subsectors where the number of wage earners decreased the most were food services and drinking places (-68,790; -7.5%) and accommodation services (-16,580; -10.2%). On the other hand, both subsectors noted increases in their median wages in 2021, with food services and drinking places rising to \$14,160 (+15.9%) and accommodation services increasing to \$18,390 (+17.0%). Some explanations for the increases in wage-earning for these two subsectors could be an increase in number of hours worked; an increase in hours of operation for businesses; higher hourly wages; or fewer seasonal and part-time workers employed in these sectors. The Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours recorded that the year-over-year growth of the average weekly earnings (including overtime) for all employees was particularly notable starting in June 2021 for both subsectors. Compared with 2019, wage earners in accommodation services, and food services and drinking places still had lower median wages despite the large increases from 2020 to 2021.

Among the subsectors that shrank, the two with the largest proportional decreases in the number of wage earners in 2021 were air transportation (-17.7%; -12,350) and non-metallic mineral product manufacturing (-16.6%; -9,010). These declines may have been due to continued restrictions on non-essential travel and a supply chain squeeze for raw materials.

Table 2
Tax filers with wages, salaries and commissions by main sector, 2019 to 2021

	Wage earners			Median wage		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
	number			2021 constant dollars		
All industries sectors	18,002,330	17,983,820	18,178,730	40,910	41,220	43,190
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	255,490	265,190	258,260	28,090	28,150	29,240
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	197,820	192,340	196,130	103,090	101,620	104,860
Utilities	104,130	103,530	105,210	106,460	107,130	106,030
Construction	1,118,110	1,115,490	1,161,000	52,050	50,180	54,410
Manufacturing	1,613,340	1,589,450	1,572,100	51,400	50,730	51,760
Wholesale trade	762,220	767,110	753,360	52,240	52,840	54,970
Retail trade	1,917,400	1,987,290	1,950,820	24,210	22,200	23,750
Transportation and warehousing	771,830	783,550	796,450	48,120	46,870	47,490
Information and cultural industries	310,930	312,120	311,830	63,150	66,360	68,130
Finance and insurance	690,190	700,920	716,780	60,720	64,500	63,950
Real estate and rental and leasing	281,690	274,580	276,550	42,410	41,990	45,070
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,050,690	1,089,520	1,167,140	59,140	60,530	62,400
Business, building and other support services	1,021,990	1,004,760	1,002,130	33,280	31,940	34,540
Educational services	1,283,710	1,302,970	1,302,290	49,820	50,630	51,430
Health care and social assistance	1,591,060	1,678,760	1,743,900	43,150	43,750	44,470
Arts, entertainment and recreation	266,620	230,440	218,960	18,150	13,950	15,250
Accommodation and food services	1,221,040	1,076,160	990,780	17,430	12,690	14,680
Other services (except public administration)	637,570	618,820	601,660	33,990	31,750	35,540
Public administration	1,769,700	1,753,890	1,876,910	63,800	67,110	66,630
Not available	1,136,810	1,136,940	1,176,460	1,200	3,100	4,080

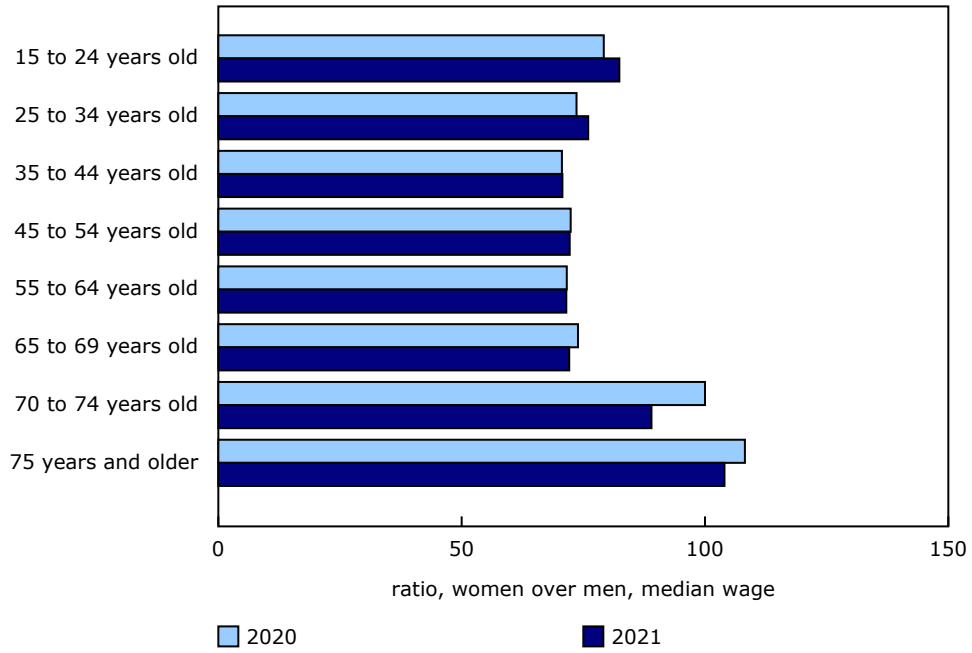
Note(s): The industry sector is based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System.

Source(s): Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File (4106) and table 11-10-0072-01.

Wage gap falls between young men and young women

In 2021, the median wage increased for both sexes, to \$50,230 (+4.3%) for men and \$37,190 (+6.2%) for women. The larger increase in the median wage for women reduced the difference from men, with the median wage for women 26.0% lower than the median wage for men in 2021, a smaller difference than the 27.3% seen in 2020. This narrowing of the difference in median wages for men and women was most prominent in individuals under the age of 35. In 2021, older seniors (75 years and older) were the only age group where median wages were higher for women than men. In 2021, this age group represented 1.7% of wage earners.

Chart 1
Ratio of median female wage to median male wage by age group, 2020 to 2021



Source(s): Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File (4106) and table 11-10-0072-01.

Table 3
Tax filers with wages, salaries and commissions, by sex and age, 2019 to 2021

	Wage earners			Median wage		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
	number			2021 constant dollars		
Both sexes						
15 years old and older	18,002,330	17,983,820	18,178,730	40,910	41,220	43,190
15 to 24 years old	2,666,560	2,515,690	2,596,690	13,710	12,720	13,810
25 to 34 years old	3,894,090	3,925,450	3,963,570	42,540	42,370	44,610
35 to 44 years old	3,588,100	3,686,460	3,729,210	55,690	56,250	58,410
45 to 54 years old	3,333,040	3,352,370	3,336,670	58,560	59,490	61,440
55 to 64 years old	3,118,350	3,142,430	3,126,990	46,670	46,870	48,500
65 years old and older	1,402,200	1,361,420	1,425,600	7,420	8,140	9,270
65 to 69 years old	721,300	726,260	761,430	19,010	18,490	21,150
70 to 74 years old	362,400	346,970	356,240	4,630	5,170	5,500
75 years old and older	318,500	288,190	307,920	460	500	510
Men						
15 years old and older	9,224,170	9,205,320	9,288,370	47,950	48,160	50,230
15 to 24 years old	1,343,700	1,263,720	1,303,130	15,160	14,390	15,300
25 to 34 years old	1,984,870	1,990,960	2,008,640	49,060	48,940	51,000
35 to 44 years old	1,813,370	1,860,220	1,879,230	66,450	66,560	69,020
45 to 54 years old	1,656,780	1,662,650	1,653,730	69,790	70,020	72,300
55 to 64 years old	1,599,690	1,610,890	1,598,530	55,960	55,440	57,640
65 years old and older	825,760	816,880	845,110	7,400	7,800	9,080
65 to 69 years old	403,020	409,920	424,170	22,020	21,120	24,770
70 to 74 years old	217,680	213,760	216,720	5,020	5,170	5,810
75 years old and older	205,060	193,210	204,220	480	490	500
Women						
15 years old and older	8,778,160	8,778,510	8,890,360	35,030	35,010	37,190
15 to 24 years old	1,322,860	1,251,970	1,293,560	12,560	11,390	12,610
25 to 34 years old	1,909,210	1,934,490	1,954,940	36,670	36,030	38,750
35 to 44 years old	1,774,740	1,826,240	1,849,980	46,380	46,970	48,780
45 to 54 years old	1,676,260	1,689,730	1,682,950	49,330	50,710	52,200
55 to 64 years old	1,518,660	1,531,540	1,528,450	39,280	39,670	41,200
65 years old and older	576,440	544,540	580,480	7,450	8,500	9,470
65 to 69 years old	318,270	316,350	337,270	16,070	15,600	17,850
70 to 74 years old	144,720	133,210	139,520	4,160	5,170	5,170
75 years old and older	113,450	94,980	103,700	430	530	520

Source(s): Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File (4106) and table 11-10-0072-01.

Earnings of lower wage workers return to pre-pandemic levels

To see the impact of the pandemic on lower-earning workers, one needs to look beyond the median. Looking at wage earners at the 25th percentile is one way to assess the effects of the pandemic. The 25th percentile is the point on the earnings distribution where one-quarter of workers earned less, and three-quarters earned more.

After a drop in 2020 (-10.6% to \$14,820), the 25th percentile of wages for 2021 (\$16,680) rebounded to a level similar to that seen in 2019 (\$16,580). While this recovery was a positive sign, growth in earnings from 2019 to 2021 of lower-wage workers was less than the growth in earnings of the median worker, suggesting a small increase in earnings inequality.

Wage earners below the 25th percentile most commonly worked in the retail, food service and entertainment industries, as half of the workers in these industries had wages below this level. These industries are among the [largest employers of minimum wage workers](#). These tax filers could also be working part-time, for part of the year or occupied seasonal positions. Assuming a wage of \$13/hour (the minimum hourly wage was between \$12 and \$15 in most provinces and territories in 2021), an annual wage of less than \$16,680 would mean working less than 25 hours per week for 52 weeks.

In most census metropolitan areas, median annual earnings are back up to their 2019 levels

In all census metropolitan areas (CMAs), median annual earnings for 2021 were above 2019 values, excluding Windsor and Red Deer. The drop in the median wages in 2020 in these two CMAs was too large to be compensated by the 2021 growth as they were among the three CMAs with the fastest declines in 2020. St. Catharines–Niagara was the third CMA, but there, the large increase in 2021 was more than enough to compensate the 2020 drop.

In 2021, median annual wages increased the most in the CMAs of St. Catharines–Niagara (+9.1%), Kelowna (+7.7%), Nanaimo (+7.7%), Vancouver (+7.3%) and Peterborough (+7.2%). In June 2021, [British Columbia raised the minimum wage from \\$14.60 to \\$15.20](#), the highest among all provinces, which may be a factor underlying the increases in median annual wages in CMAs in that province.

In 2021, the number of wage earners increased in Sherbrooke (+4.4%), Trois-Rivières (+4.4%), Drummondville (+4.4%) and Saguenay (+4.1%), while the number of wage earners decreased in Toronto (-0.2%), Hamilton (-0.4%), Edmonton (-0.5%) and Greater Sudbury (-0.6%).

Table 4
Tax filers with wages, salaries and commissions by census metropolitan area, 2019 to 2021

	Wage earners				Median wage			
	2019	2020	2021	Change in number of wage earners, 2020 to 2021	2019	2020	2021	Change in median wages, 2020 to 2021
	number				%	2021 constant dollars		
St. John's ¹	106,760	107,140	109,350	2.1	43,430	43,290	43,670	0.9
Halifax ¹	222,510	227,850	235,260	3.3	40,610	41,670	42,370	1.7
Moncton	78,880	79,850	81,640	2.2	38,040	38,610	39,280	1.7
Saint John	64,270	63,380	63,980	0.9	38,270	38,670	39,480	2.1
Fredericton ¹	52,360	53,040	54,000	1.8	40,000	40,760	41,520	1.9
Saguenay ¹	84,870	84,270	87,720	4.1	38,230	38,460	40,360	4.9
Québec ¹	440,480	439,670	452,220	2.9	44,480	45,190	46,800	3.6
Sherbrooke	108,450	109,510	114,380	4.4	37,990	38,200	40,340	5.6
Trois-Rivières	77,130	76,780	80,170	4.4	36,750	37,570	39,420	4.9
Drummondville ¹	51,060	51,020	53,270	4.4	37,770	37,660	39,750	5.5
Montréal ¹	2,151,180	2,159,950	2,204,420	2.1	40,130	40,120	42,520	6.0
Ottawa–Gatineau ¹	705,700	720,900	737,070	2.2	49,450	51,480	53,210	3.4
Ottawa–Gatineau, Quebec ¹	170,970	173,710	178,600	2.8	47,330	48,670	50,280	3.3
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario ¹	534,740	547,190	558,470	2.1	50,170	52,540	54,250	3.3
Kingston	77,850	78,250	79,050	1.0	39,440	39,920	41,680	4.4
Belleville–Quinte West	48,460	49,190	50,680	3.0	38,320	38,660	39,930	3.3
Peterborough ¹	57,200	58,030	58,310	0.5	36,170	35,690	38,270	7.2
Oshawa	195,730	200,350	204,200	1.9	44,220	43,800	46,220	5.5
Toronto	3,054,300	3,074,160	3,066,570	-0.2	42,490	42,790	45,000	5.2
Hamilton	371,250	374,930	373,500	-0.4	43,020	43,230	45,590	5.5
St. Catharines–Niagara	199,890	200,240	200,720	0.2	34,780	32,490	35,460	9.1
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	286,510	290,700	297,380	2.3	43,300	43,410	44,800	3.2
Brantford	67,790	68,930	69,770	1.2	41,270	40,720	42,560	4.5
Guelph	83,330	84,280	85,310	1.2	45,820	46,450	47,980	3.3
London	249,700	255,070	258,780	1.5	39,470	39,450	40,450	2.5
Windsor ¹	202,980	205,380	207,840	1.2	37,390	35,360	36,670	3.7
Barrie	101,270	102,960	105,270	2.2	41,150	41,260	43,600	5.7
Greater Sudbury ¹	84,820	84,390	83,870	-0.6	43,180	43,860	46,290	5.5
Thunder Bay	58,140	58,130	58,890	1.3	41,110	41,260	43,170	4.6
Winnipeg ¹	416,370	417,450	419,730	0.5	39,560	39,620	40,420	2.0
Regina ¹	126,780	126,470	126,630	0.1	47,590	47,510	48,430	1.9
Saskatoon	157,090	157,570	157,720	0.1	43,750	43,340	45,230	4.4
Lethbridge	59,150	59,030	59,290	0.4	43,730	43,020	44,290	3.0
Calgary	746,790	743,650	749,700	0.8	48,150	46,820	48,500	3.6
Red Deer	50,760	49,070	49,070	0.0	45,730	43,040	44,480	3.3
Edmonton	708,420	699,520	696,110	-0.5	49,600	47,850	49,880	4.2
Kelowna	103,700	101,300	103,140	1.8	37,180	39,810	42,870	7.7
Kamloops	57,980	55,490	55,540	0.1	38,780	42,680	45,270	6.1
Chilliwack	50,970	48,710	50,240	3.1	37,160	41,200	43,280	5.0
Abbotsford–Mission	93,210	93,000	93,810	0.9	36,720	38,930	41,440	6.4
Vancouver	1,344,690	1,325,610	1,333,320	0.6	41,060	42,890	46,000	7.3
Victoria	194,150	185,980	187,680	0.9	41,360	46,010	48,120	4.6
Nanaimo	52,260	49,580	50,140	1.1	36,010	39,640	42,710	7.7

1. Data for 2019 and 2020 initially based on 2016 Census geography are adjusted to align with 2021 data which are based on 2021 Census geography.
Source(s): Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File (4106) and table 11-10-0072-01.

Note to readers

The term "earnings" in the release includes the wages, salaries and commissions declared by tax filers.

The term "wage earner" in this release refers to tax filers with wages, salaries and commissions.

This release provides data on wages, salaries and commissions from all sources received throughout the year for paid employment as reported on T1 Income Tax and Benefit returns. Data for this release are produced using the preliminary version of the T1 Family File, which is based on an early version of the T1 file received by Statistics Canada from the Canada Revenue Agency.

The extension by the Canada Revenue Agency of the deadlines for filing 2019 tax returns and for the payment of taxes without penalty impacted the completeness of the 2019 data used in this release. The number of tax filers appearing in the preliminary income tax data, generally speaking individuals who filed taxes before September, edged down by 0.8% in 2019, increased by 2.5% in 2020 and was up by 0.9% in 2021, while the number of tax filers in the preliminary tax file increased on average by 1.3% yearly since 2009. Therefore, caution should be used with these data when interpreting moderate changes in counts of earners between 2019 and 2021. The increase in the number of earners between 2019 and 2021 could be overstated by approximately 1.3 percentage points.

These estimates cover all tax filers 15 and older (as of December 31 of the year) who reported wages, salaries or commissions. This group includes workers employed full and part time, as well as full and part year. It excludes tax filers who only reported income from self-employment during the year.

Wages, salaries and commissions reported by tax filers on their T1s are based on the employment income recorded on their T4 Statement of Remuneration Paid. In addition to employment income, wages, salaries and commissions includes training allowances, tips, gratuities and royalties received from employers during the tax year. Tax-exempt employment income earned by registered Indians is also included. Self-employment income is excluded.

Sectors refers to the two-digit sector assigned to a tax filer using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS Canada 2017 Version 3.0). A sector is assigned to each tax filer based on the industry that accounted for the highest share of their total employment income during the tax year over all of their T4 slips. The category "not available" in the main sector table represents tax filers for whom an industry code could not be assigned.

Data source on employment, median hourly wages and hours worked is the [Labour Force Survey](#).

Data source on average weekly earnings is the [Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours](#).

The **median** is the value in the middle of a group of values (i.e., half of people have wages, salaries and commissions above this value and half of people have wages, salaries and commissions below this value).

The **25th percentile** is the value in a distribution where one-quarter of values are below and three-quarters of values are above.

All figures for previous years are in constant dollars and have been adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, table [18-10-0005-01](#).

All data in this release have been tabulated according to the 2021 Standard Geographical Classification used for the 2021 Census.

A census metropolitan area (CMA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (also known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core.

Available tables: [11-10-0072-01](#) and [11-10-0073-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4106](#).

The document *Technical Reference Guide for the Preliminary Estimates from the T1 Family File* ([11260001](#)) presents information about the methodology, concepts and data quality for the data available in this release.

Data on wages, salaries and commissions ([11230001](#), various prices) and Canadian tax filers ([17C0010](#), various prices) are now available for Canada, provinces and territories, economic regions, census divisions, census subdivisions, census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census tracts, and postal-based geographies. These custom services are available upon request. Tables [11-10-0072-01](#) and [11-10-0073-01](#) for this release are available for free on the Statistics Canada website for Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations.

The [Income, pensions, spending and wealth statistics](#) portal, which is accessible from the *Subjects* module of the Statistics Canada website, provides users with a single point of access to a wide variety of information related to income, pensions, spending and wealth.

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).