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# Labour Organizations in Canada 2015



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## **Labour Organizations in Canada 2015**

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## Introduction

Every year, the Workplace Information and Research Division of the Labour Program undertakes a survey of all labour organizations in Canada that represent bargaining units of 50 or more workers.<sup>1</sup> The results from the 2015 survey are presented in this report, along with updates on union mergers and changes to legislation affecting collective bargaining in Canada in 2015.

### The number of unionized workers in Canada increased from 2014

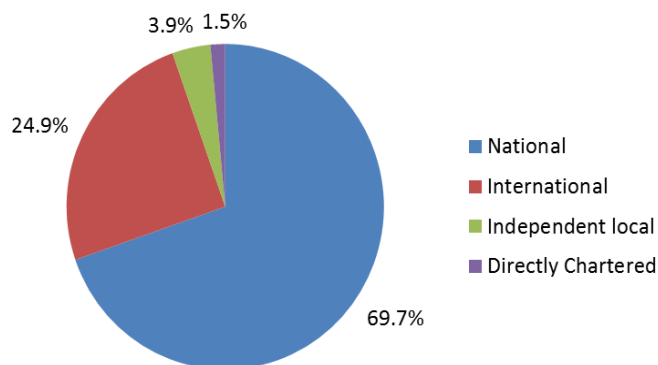
As reported by labour organizations, the total number of workers paying dues to a union in Canada was 4.83 million at the end of 2015, up from 4.75 million at the end of 2014.

Union dues-paying workers comprised 31.8% of all employees in Canada in 2015, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2014 [Appendix 1]. By comparison, the share of employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement, as calculated by Statistics Canada, was 30.6% in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

### The majority of unionized workers were represented by national unions

In Canada, unions can be divided into four main types: (1) *national*; (2) *international*; (3) *independent local organization*; and (4) *directly chartered local*.<sup>3</sup> A strong majority (69.7%) of dues-paying workers (henceforth, unionized workers) were affiliated with national unions (Chart 1 and Appendix 3) in 2015. International unions accounted for almost 25% of unionized workers, followed by independent local organizations (3.9%) and directly chartered locals (1.5%). Compared to 2014, there was little change in representation by type of organization.

**CHART 1: Share of unionized workers, by organization type, 2015**



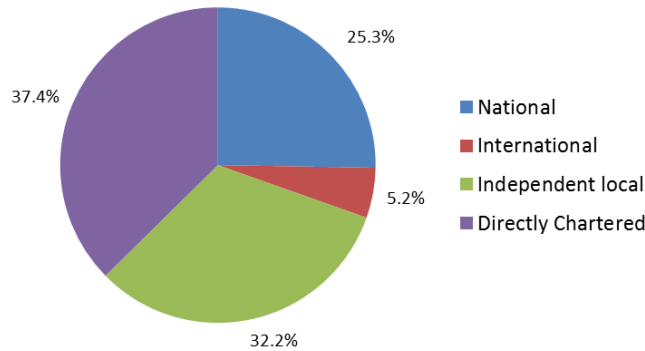
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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 8 discusses the survey methodology.

<sup>2</sup> Source: *Labour Force Survey*, Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 282-0012. See Appendix 8 for further information on the differences in methodology between the two estimates of the union coverage rate.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 9 contains the definition of each type of union. Appendix 2 contains the breakdown of union coverage by type of organization.

**CHART 2: Share of unions, by organization type, 2015**



In 2015, national and international unions represented almost 95% of unionized workers, but accounted for 30.5% of the total number of unions in Canada (Chart 2 and Appendix 3). Directly chartered locals and independent local organizations made up the majority of unions (69.6%).

### **Eight large unions represented almost half of unionized workers**

In 2015, the total number of unions stood at 776. Eight of those unions – five of which were national and three international – represented 100,000 or more workers each [Appendix 4]. The eight comprised 45.1% of all unionized workers in Canada.

The 18 unions with between 50,000 and 100,000 workers represented 25.9% of all unionized workers. Just 1.9% of unionized workers were members of the 282 unions representing less than 1,000 workers each.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Canadian Labour Congress represented more than two-thirds of unionized workers**

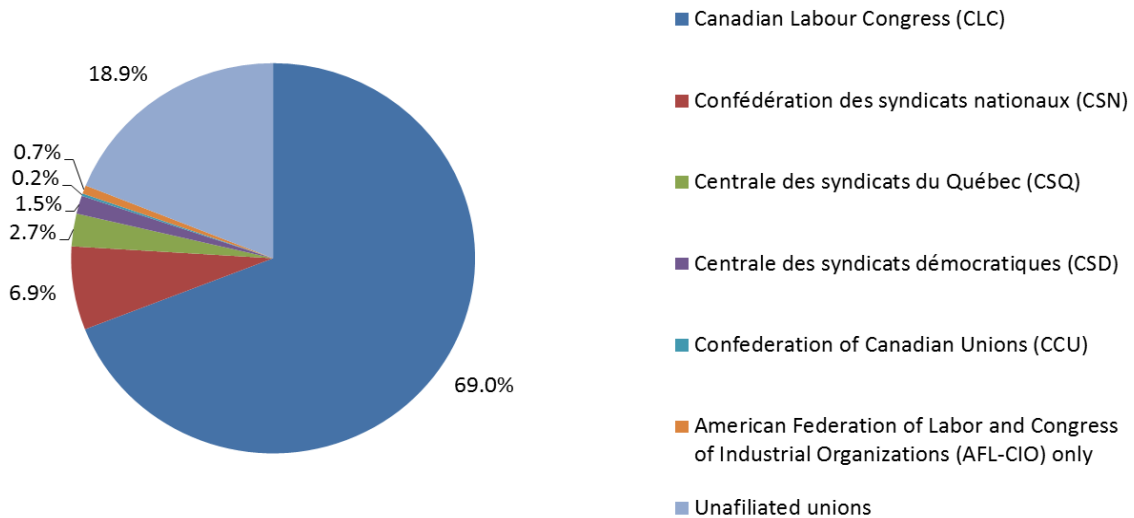
In 2015, the vast majority of unionized workers (81%) were affiliated with a labour congress. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) represented more than two-thirds of all unionized workers (69.0%),<sup>5</sup> followed by the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), which represented 6.9% of unionized workers (Chart 3 and Appendix 7). Almost 19% of unionized workers were not affiliated with any labour congress. This situation was relatively unchanged from 2014. While affiliation with the CLC rose slightly (0.2 percentage points), there was no change for the CSN.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 5 contains the detailed list of labour organizations with 30,000 or more workers.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 6 for details of the CLC's coverage by affiliation.

CHART 3: Share of unionized workers, by congress affiliation, 2015



## Union mergers

In 2015, two independent unions joined a larger labour organization: the *University of New Brunswick Employees Association* and its 320 members merged with *Unifor* to form Local 4504; and the *New Frontier Independent Association*, with 50 members, merged with the *Service Employees International Union* to form Local 800.

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## Legislative changes

In 2015, there were a number of legislative changes affecting unions and collective bargaining in Canada.

A significant change was made to the federal labour relations system with the coming into force of Bill C-525, the *Employees' Voting Rights Act*, on June 16, 2015. Bill C-525 modified the union certification and revocation of certification (decertification) rules under three federal relations statutes: the *Canada Labour Code*, the *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act* and the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*. On January 28, 2016, the Government of Canada tabled Bill C-4 (*An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations Act and the Income Tax Act*) which, if enacted, would reverse the changes made by Bill C-525 and restore the card-check certification system.

In November 2015, the Government of Saskatchewan enacted *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015*, which obliges public service employers and unions to negotiate essential services agreements prior to a work stoppage. In the event an essential service agreement substantially interferes with the right to strike, collective bargaining impasses must be resolved through binding mediation-arbitration. This legislation was enacted in response to a January 2015 finding of the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) that the province's *Public Service Essential Services Act* was unconstitutional for, among other things, allowing public sector employers to unilaterally designate which workers are essential, thereby substantially interfering with workers' freedom of association and their right to strike.

A number of other legislative changes affecting unions and labour relations were made throughout Canada in 2015. For example, Bill 51 in New Brunswick (*An Act to Amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act*) amended the provincial *Public Service Labour Relations Act* to increase the period within which notice to bargain collectively - where a collective agreement or arbitral award is in force - may be given from two to six months. Bill 51 came into force on June 5, 2015. In Alberta, Bill 6 (*Enhanced Protection for Farms and Ranch Workers Act*) received Royal Assent on December 11, 2015. Bill 6 amended a number of provincial Acts, including amending the *Labour Relations Code* to no longer exclude certain farm and ranch workers from its application. This amendment will come into force on proclamation.

Appendix 1: Unionized workers in Canada, 1999–2015

Year	Unionized workers <sup>a</sup> (000s)	All Employees <sup>b</sup> (000s)	Unionized workers as a share of all employees (%)
1999	4,058	11,961	33.9
2000	4,111	12,379	33.2
2001	4,174	12,654	33.0
2002	4,178	12,967	32.2
2003	4,261	13,249	32.2
2004	4,381	13,459	32.5
2005	4,441	13,607	32.6
2006	4,480	13,892	32.2
2007	4,592	14,171	32.4
2008	4,605	14,360	32.1
2009	4,645	14,035	33.1
2010	4,626	14,283	32.4
2011	4,664	14,559	32.0
2012	4,735	14,760	32.1
2013	4,710	14,961	31.5
2014	4,753	15,077	31.5
2015	4,828	15,187	31.8

a. Source: Labour Program, ESDC

b. Source: *Labour Force Survey*, Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 282-0012

Appendix 2: Union Affiliation, 2015				
	Unions	Locals	Unionized workers	
			Number	Distribution (%)
<b>National</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>10,652</b>	<b>3,364,739</b>	<b>69.7</b>
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	51	7,105	2,167,858	44.9
Independent national	107	1,294	721,703	15.0
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)	17	1,742	329,335	6.8
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)	14	429	130,427	2.7
Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)	5	33	10,478	0.2
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)	2	49	4,938	0.1
<b>International</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,200,415</b>	<b>24.9</b>
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	30	1,137	932,732	19.3
Change to Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	3	83	230,007	4.8
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only	4	72	35,684	0.7
Independent international	3	8	1,992	0.0
<b>Directly chartered</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>74,490</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)	287	N/A	68,435	1.4
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)	1	N/A	6,000	0.1
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	2	N/A	55	0.0
<b>Independent local</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>188,609</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>12,227</b>	<b>4,828,253</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Labour Program, ESDC



Appendix 3: Type of union, 2015

	Unions		Unionized workers	
	Number	Distribution (%)	Number	Distribution (%)
National	196	25.3	3,364,739	69.7
International	40	5.2	1,200,415	24.9
Independent local	250	32.2	188,609	3.9
Directly chartered	290	37.4	74,490	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,828,253</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Labour Program, ESDC

(Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding)

Appendix 4: Union Size and Type, 2015

	National		International		Independent local		Total*	
	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers
Fewer than 1,000	81	30,478	8	3,307	193	57,978	282	91,763
1,000-9,999	70	263,352	14	58,501	56	120,631	140	442,484
10,000-29,999	20	362,271	8	130,506	1	10,000	29	502,777
30,000-49,999	8	320,162	1	38,000			9	358,162
50,000-99,999	12	776,280	6	405,450			18	1,181,730
100,000 and more	5	1,612,196	3	564,651			8	2,176,847

Source: Labour Program, ESDC

\*Directly chartered unions are not included

Appendix 5: Unions with 30,000 or more unionized workers, 2015

Name	Affiliation	Number
Canadian Union of Public Workers	CLC	635,500
National Union of Public and General Workers	CLC	360,000
UNIFOR	CLC	300,152
United Food and Commercial Workers Canada	AFL-CIO/CLC	247,543
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union	AFL-CIO/CLC	190,452
Public Service Alliance of Canada	CLC	181,017
Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux	CSN	135,527
Service Workers International Union	CtW/CLC	126,656
Labourers' International Union of North America	AFL-CIO/CLC	97,000
Teamsters Canada	CtW/CLC	93,351
Alberta Union of Provincial Workers	Independent national	85,803
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	CLC	78,204
FTQ Construction	CLC	77,300
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	CLC	73,311
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec	Independent national	66,000
Christian Labour Association of Canada	Independent national	61,501
Fédération des employées et employés de services publics inc.	CSN	60,700
Ontario Nurses' Federation	CLC	60,000
Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement	CSQ	59,000
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	AFL-CIO/CLC	57,130
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada	AFL-CIO/CLC	55,643
Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada	Independent national	53,930
International Union of Operating Engineers	AFL-CIO/CLC	52,326
Canadian Union of Postal Workers	CLC	50,531
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	AFL-CIO/CLC	50,000
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America	CLC	50,000

Appendix 5: Unions with 30,000 or more unionized workers, 2015 (continued)

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association	CLC	48,545
British Columbia Nurses' Union	Independent national	46,291
British Columbia Teachers' Federation	CLC	43,563
Alberta Teachers' Association	Independent national	42,572
Amalgamated Transit Union	AFL-CIO/CLC	38,000
Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union	CLC	36,287
Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec	Independent national	34,904
Fédération autonome de l'enseignement	Independent national	34,000
Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec	CSN	34,000

Affiliations legend:

- AFL-CIO - American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
- CLC – Canadian Labour Congress
- CSN - Confédération des syndicats nationaux
- CSQ - Centrale des syndicats du Québec
- CtW - Change to Win

Source: Labour Program, ESDC

Appendix 6: Affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), 2015

	Unionized workers	
	Number	Distribution (%)
<b>CLC affiliation only</b>	<b>2,167,858</b>	<b>65.1</b>
<b>CLC and international affiliation</b>	<b>1,162,739</b>	<b>34.9</b>
AFL-CIO/CLC	932,732	28.0
CtW/CLC	230,007	6.9
<b>CLC directly chartered</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total affiliation with the CLC</b>	<b>3,330,891</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Labour Program, ESDC

Appendix 7: Union coverage, by congress affiliation, 2015

	Unionized workers	
	Number	Distribution (%)
<b>Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)</b>		
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	932,732	19.3
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) only	2,167,858	44.9
Change to Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	230,007	4.8
Directly chartered	55	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,330,652</b>	<b>69.0</b>
<b>Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)</b>		
Federation	329,335	6.8
Directly chartered	6,000	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>335,335</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,427</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)</b>		
Federation	4,938	0.1
Directly chartered	68,435	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,373</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,478</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,684</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Unaffiliated unions</b>		
Independent international	1,992	0.0
Independent local	188,609	3.9
Independent national	721,703	14.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>912,304</b>	<b>18.9</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,828,253</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Labour Program, ESDC

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## Appendix 8: Methodology

The Labour Program's data is collected directly from labour organizations using a self-reporting survey. Small labour organizations (i.e. fewer than 50 workers) are not part of the sampling frame for the survey, since the Labour Program does not have a systematic count of them.

For each labour organization, the survey asks about the number of union dues-paying workers, the number of locals represented, and the union's affiliation with the labour congresses. The information is requested as of December 31 of the reporting year. The survey is sent out in mid-December with responses requested by the end of January the following year. When labour organizations do not respond to the survey by the time the results are consolidated, figures from the most recent year available are used instead.

The Labour Program's survey of labour organizations and Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Survey (LFS)* provide different estimates of the union coverage rate. The numerator of the rates differ because of how the data is collected (i.e. the LFS is a survey of households, and it is a monthly survey) and what is measured (i.e. the LFS asks persons who have paid employment whether they are covered by a collective bargaining agreement as well as whether they are members of a union). The denominator used to calculate the coverage rates is the same, the number of employees in Canada, as reported in the LFS.

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## **Appendix 9: Definitions**

*Union:* Labour organization that organizes and charters locals, sets general policy for its locals, assists them in the conduct of their affairs, and is the medium for co-ordinating their activities.

*Labour congress:* An umbrella organization of unions that provides assistance and support to its members.

*Unionized workers:* All workers that are paying unions dues to a labour organization.

*Union coverage:* Unionized workers as a share of all employees in Canada.

*Local:* The basic unit of labour organizations formed in a particular plant or establishment. The members participate directly in the affairs of their local, including the election of officers, financial and other business matters, and relations between their organization and the employer, and they pay dues to the local.

*National union:* A union that represents its members in Canada only.

*International union:* A union that represents its members in Canada and the United States. In Labour Program's survey, only workers in Canada are reported.

*Independent local organization:* A union that is not formally affiliated with any other labour organization.

*Directly chartered local:* A union that is organized and receives its charter from a labour congress. It pays per capita dues to the congress and receives services from the congress.