

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

How Canadians Feel About Public Service Employees

Report

April 2003



1.0 Study Highlights

- Municipal public servants are the most efficient and courteous.

Question: *As far as you know or in your own experience, which of the following public service employees do you consider to be the most efficient and courteous? Are they the federal, provincial or municipal government ones?*

n=1501	Federal	Provincial	Municipal	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	16%	17%	30%	36%

- Two out of five Canadians think public service employees are better paid than those in the private sector.

Question: *Do you think that government employees are BETTER PAID, JUST AS WELL PAID or LESS WELL PAID than private sector employees carrying out equivalent jobs?*

n=1501	Better paid	Just as well paid	Less well paid	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	43%	24%	14%	19%

- Two out of five Canadians think public service employees work less than private sector employees.

Question: *Do you think that government employees WORK MORE, JUST AS MUCH, or LESS THAN private sector employees carrying out equivalent jobs?*

n=1501	Works more	Works just as much	Works less	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	6%	39%	42%	13%

- The majority of Canadians feel public service employees are in a privileged position.

Question: *Do you think public service employees are in a privileged position as workers?*

n=1501	Yes	No	Don't know
Canada	58%	32%	10%

- Over half of the population has little or no contact with public service employees.

Question: *How often do you contact public service employees (civil servants) of the municipal, provincial or federal governments, either by phone or in person? Is it...?*

n=1501	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Canada	15%	28%	38%	19%

57%

2. Results

2.1 Municipal public servants are the most efficient and courteous

Nearly one out of three Canadians (30%) thinks municipal public service employees are the most efficient and courteous. In comparison, 16% of Canadians feel federal employees are the most efficient and polite, while 17% think these qualities apply most to provincial employees.

Anglophones (34%), British Columbians (39%) and Ontarians (37%) seem to appreciate the efficiency and courteousness of municipal employees more than francophones (21%) and residents of the Atlantic Provinces (30%) who seem to prefer municipal employees in proportionally higher numbers.

It should be highlighted that more than a third (34%) of Canadians did not know and 2% refused to answer this question. Women (38%), Quebecers (43%) and francophones (42%) were more numerous in not answering.

Question: *As far as you know or in your own experience, which of the following public service employees do you consider to be the most efficient and courteous? Are they the federal, provincial or municipal government ones?*

n=1501	Federal	Provincial	Municipal	Don't know / Refusal
Mother Tongue:				
French	14 %	21 %	20 %	45 %
English	16 %	16 %	34 %	33 %
Other	18 %	18 %	28 %	36 %
Atlantic Provinces				
Quebec	22 %	30 %	28 %	20 %
Quebec	18 %	20 %	16 %	46 %
Ontario	15 %	13 %	37 %	35 %
Prairies	10 %	18 %	36 %	36 %
Alberta	18 %	23 %	25 %	34 %
British Columbia	15 %	12 %	39 %	34 %
Canada	16 %	17 %	30 %	36 %

2.2 Two out of five Canadians think public service employees are better paid than those in the private sector

43% of Canadians think government employees are more highly paid than private sector employees are for an equivalent position. However, 24% think the former are just as well paid, and 19% feel they are less well paid. 19% did not have an opinion.

Manual workers and home makers (53%) were more likely to think that government employees are better paid, while professionals (22%), university graduates (22%), and those with an income above \$60,000 (21%) thought government employees were not as well paid.

Question: *Do you think that government employees are BETTER PAID, JUST AS WELL PAID or LESS WELL PAID than private sector employees carrying out equivalent jobs?*

n=1501	Better paid	Just as well paid	Less well paid	Don't know / Refusal
Occupation:				
Service/sales/office	48 %	22 %	12 %	18 %
Manual workers	53 %	23 %	8 %	16 %
Professionals	39 %	27 %	22 %	12 %
Home makers	53 %	21 %	7 %	19 %
Students	34 %	23 %	20 %	23 %
Retirees	37 %	28 %	12 %	23 %
Unemployed	41 %	22%	13 %	24 %
Canada	43 %	24 %	14 %	19 %

2.3 Two out of five Canadians think public service employees work less than private sector employees

42% of Canadians think government employees work less than private sector employees in an equivalent position do. 39% think government employees work just as much, and 6% think they work more. 13% did not know.

Mostly manual workers (54%) thought government employees worked less. In comparison, 46% of university graduates felt government employees worked just as much as private sector employees in an equivalent position.

It should be highlighted that those who had more contact with government employees (44%) were more likely to believe that public service employees work as much as private sector employees.

Question: *Do you think that government employees WORK MORE, JUST AS MUCH, or LESS THAN private sector employees carrying out equivalent jobs?*

n=1501	Works more	Works just as much	Works less	Don't know / Refusal
Occupation:				
Service/sales/office	5 %	43 %	37 %	15 %
Manual workers	4 %	29 %	54 %	12 %
Professionals	7 %	40 %	43 %	10 %
Home makers	7 %	37 %	43 %	13 %
Students	8 %	49 %	26 %	17 %
Retirees	5 %	37 %	42 %	16 %
Unemployed	12 %	40 %	33 %	15 %
Canada	6 %	39 %	42 %	13 %

2.4 The majority of Canadians feel public service employees are in a privileged position

58% of Canadians think public service employees are in a privileged position, compared to 32% who did not think so and 10% who did not know.

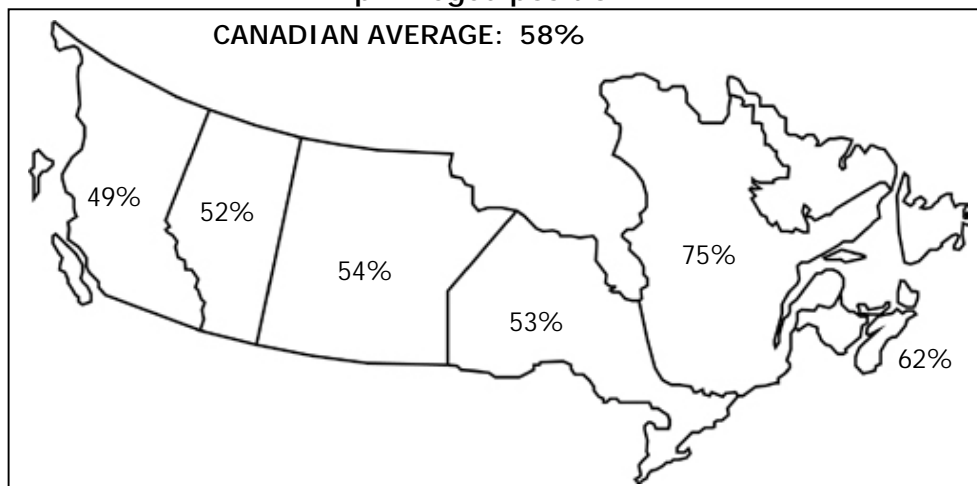
Francophones (73%), Quebecers (75%), those with an elementary school education (73%), and those with an income between \$20,000 and \$39,000 (68%) were more likely to think government employees were in a privileged position. Anglophones (36%), professionals (42%), university graduates (39%), and those with an income above \$60,000 (39%), on the other hand, did not feel government employees were in a privileged position.

It should be pointed out, that those who had more contact with government employees (37%) were proportionally more like to feel that the latter were not in a privileged position.

Question: *Do you think public service employees are in a privileged position as workers?*

n=1501	YES	NO	Don't know/Refusal
Mother tongue:			
French	73 %	23 %	4 %
English	53 %	36 %	10 %
Other	60 %	24 %	16 %
Atlantic Provinces	62 %	31 %	7 %
Quebec	75 %	22 %	4 %
Ontario	53 %	35 %	12 %
Prairies	54 %	34 %	12 %
Alberta	52 %	33 %	14 %
British Columbia	49 %	39 %	12 %
Canada	58%	32%	10%

Distribution of Canadians who think public service employees are in a privileged position



2.5 Over half of the population has little or no contact with public service employees

The degree of contact Canadians have with government employees is almost split down the middle, with 43% claiming they are often (15%) or occasionally (30%) in contact and 57% saying they are rarely (38%) or never (19%) in contact with them.

Quebecers (47%) are among those who have the most contact with government employees, as are francophones (50%), 35-64 year olds (49%), professionals (50%), those with a university education (49%), and members of the work force (47%). In comparison, 18-24 year olds (72%) and those aged 65 years and over (68%), students (77%), those not in the work force (64%) and those with an elementary (72%) or high school (63%) education had either rarely or never had contact with government employees.

Question: *How often do you contact public service employees (civil servants) of the municipal, provincial, or federal governments, either by phone or in person? Is it...?*

n=1501	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Mother tongue:				
French		50 %		50 %
English		41 %		59 %
Other		40 %		59 %
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Atlantic Provinces		50 %		49 %
Quebec		47 %		53 %
Ontario		39 %		61 %
Prairies		45 %		54 %
Alberta		44 %		55 %
British Columbia		39 %		61 %
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Canada		43 %		57 %

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1501 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between March 19 and March 23, 2003. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1501 respondents is of ± 2.5 , 19 times out of 20.