



Labour

Union coverage in Canada 2011

***Workplace Information Division
Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate
Labour Program***

April 2012

You can order this publication by contacting:

Publishing Services

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
140 Promenade du Portage
Place du Portage, Phase IV, 10th Floor
Gatineau, Québec
K1A 0J9

Fax: 819-953-7260

Online: <http://www12.hrsdc.gc.ca>

This document is available on demand in multiple formats (large print, Braille, audio cassette, audio CD, e-text diskette, e-text CD, or DAISY), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232).

If you use a teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2012

PDF

Cat. No.: HS21-6/2011E-PDF

ISSN: 1929-2228

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact
Public Works and Government Services Canada at: 613-996-6886 or
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/corporate/important_notices/index.shtml

Introduction

The Workplace Information Division conducts an annual survey of international, national, and other labour organizations, as well as of independent Canadian unions consisting of bargaining units of 50 or more members.

Overall coverage

As of January 2011, 4,625,777 workers were covered by collective agreements. This corresponds to a union density rate (union coverage as a percentage of non-agricultural paid workers) of 30.2%, practically unchanged since 2003.¹

Coverage by type of organization

Examining coverage by type of organization (Table 1), national unions represent 68.0% of coverage whereas international unions claim 26.4%.² Those figures were stable for almost 20 years; from 1995 to 2011, nearly the same proportion exists by type of organization.

Table 1:
Composition of unions in Canada, by type of organization, 2011

	Unions		Coverage	
	Number	Percentage	Workers	Percentage
National	184	23.7	3,145,473	68.0
International	39	5.0	1,222,512	26.4
Independent local organizations	265	34.1	181,337	3.9
Directly chartered unions	290	37.3	76,455	1.7
Total	778	100.0	4,625,777	100.0

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Coverage by union size

Unionized workers in Canada are highly concentrated in a small number of unions. Table 2 shows that almost 50% of national and international unionized workers belong to just nine unions, each covering at least 100,000 workers. At the other end of the spectrum, 162 unions having fewer than 10,000 members represent just 8% of workers, with an average size of 2,160 workers.

Affiliation

Among labour congresses in Canada and the United States, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) represents the largest share of workers covered by collective agreements at 69.9%, as shown in Table 3, a slight increase from last year's share of 69.6%. The remainder of the affiliated workers are covered by the *Confédération des syndicats nationaux* (CSN) representing 6.7%, the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ) 2.7%, the *Centrale*

1. Slightly lower than Statistics Canada estimate (31.9%), see Appendix table 1. Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 0282-0077. Statistics Canada defines coverage as union members and persons who are not union members but covered by collective agreements. Data are collected by the Labour Force Survey, sample survey based on self-reporting. For more information on Statistics Canada's unionization data, see [Perspectives on Labour and Income—Unionization](#).

2. "National unions" represent only workers in Canada, whereas "International unions" represent workers in Canada and the United States. "Independent local organizations" represent workers that have no affiliation. "Directly chartered unions" are locals representing workers that are directly affiliated to a labour congress.

Union coverage in Canada, 2011

des syndicats démocratiques (CSD) 1.6%, Change-to-Win (CtW) 1.5%, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) 0.8%, and the Confederation of Canadian Unions 0.2%. Unions representing the remaining 16.5% of workers covered are not affiliated to any congress.

Table 2:
National and international unions, by size, 2011

	National		International		Total	
	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers
Under 999.....	75	27,700	6	2,234	81	29,934
1,000–9,999.....	67	266,386	14	53,536	81	319,922
10,000–29,999.....	17	302,054	7	103,339	24	405,393
30,000–49,999.....	8	298,090	4	154,590	12	452,680
50,000–99,999.....	11	678,750	5	318,935	16	997,685
100,000 and over.....	6	1,572,493	3	589,878	9	2,162,371
Total.....	184	3,145,473	39	1,222,512	223	4,367,985

Note: Directly chartered and independent local unions are not included.

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Table 3:
Union coverage, by congress affiliation, 2011

	Workers	Percentage
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).....	3,234,361	69.9
CLC only.....	2,118,476	45.8
AFL-CIO/CLC.....	613,871	13.3
CtW/CLC.....	501,959	10.9
Directly chartered unions.....	55	0.0
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).....	316,313	6.7
Federation.....	310,313	6.7
Directly chartered unions.....	6,000	0.1
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ).....	125,329	2.7
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD).....	75,400	1.6
Federation.....	5,000	0.1
Directly chartered unions.....	70,400	1.5
Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU).....	7,902	0.2
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only.....	36,040	0.8
Change-to-Win (CtW) only.....	68,650	1.5
Unaffiliated unions.....	761,782	16.5
National.....	578,453	12.5
International.....	1,992	0.0
Independent local organizations.....	181,337	3.9
Total.....	4,625,777	100.0

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Affiliation changes and mergers

During 2011, three independent unions affiliated with the CLC: the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (50,733 members), the Ontario Public Service Staff Union (320 members), and the York University Faculty Association (1,385 members). Conversely, two nationally affiliated unions became independent: The Laurentian University Staff Union (236 members) disaffiliated from the CCU; and the *Association des travailleurs(euses) de la Caisse populaire de Victoriaville* (125 members) disaffiliated from the CLC. Lastly, The Laborers' International Union of North America (68,650 members) changed affiliation from CtW to AFL-CIO/CLC.

The *Fédération de l'industrie manufacturière* (approximately 30,000 members) was formed through the merger of *Fédération de la métallurgie* and *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du papier et de la forêt* in February 2011.

Legislative and regulatory changes

There were no significant legislative changes in Canada in 2011 regarding union certification rules.

Amendments to first contract arbitration provisions under *Newfoundland and Labrador's Labour Relations Act* came into force in May 2011. These amendments allow a union or employer, where unsuccessful in negotiating a first collective agreement, the ability to apply directly to the Newfoundland Labrador Labour Relations Board to inquire into the dispute, and if the boards considers it advisable, to settle the terms and conditions of the contract. The duration of collective agreements resulting from first contract arbitration also increased from one year to a minimum of 18 months, with a maximum term of up to three years. Previously, only the provincial Minister of Labour could refer labour disputes to the board for first contract arbitration, after conducting an investigation. The process was streamlined with the elimination of these two steps.

In addition, on April 29, 2011, the Supreme Court of Canada released a key decision regarding the right to collective bargaining. In *Fraser vs. Ontario (Attorney General)*, the Court confirmed the constitutional validity of *Ontario's Agricultural Employees Protection Act, 2002 (AEPA)*, which excludes farm workers from the general collective bargaining regime under the Labour Relations Act but gives them the right to form associations and make collective representations to their employers about terms and conditions of employment.

The Court found that the AEPA did not violate section 2(d) (freedom of association) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In its view, section 2(d) of the Charter protects the right to associate to achieve collective goals. It also requires that both the employer and employees meet and engage in meaningful dialogue on workplace issues, and that the employer consider employees' representations in good faith. However, section 2(d) does not impose a specific collective bargaining process, a particular model of labour relations or a particular outcome. The AEPA was found to meet these constitutional requirements by protecting the right of farm workers to associate and make representations to their employer, and providing access to a tribunal for resolving disputes regarding compliance with the Act. While the AEPA does not expressly impose a duty on employers to consider their employees' representations in good faith, the Court found this duty to be implied in the legislation.

**Appendix table 1:
Union coverage in Canada, 1995–2011**

Year	Workers (000s)	As a percentage of	
		Civilian labour force	Non-agricultural paid workers
1995	4,003	27.5	34.7
1996	4,033	27.5	34.4
1997	4,074	27.4	34.6
1998	3 938	26.1	32.9
1999	4,010	26.2	32.8
2000	4,058	26.0	32.2
2001	4,111	26.0	31.6
2002	4,174	25.9	31.4
2003	4,178	25.2	30.7
2004	4,261	25.1	30.5
2005	4,381	25.5	30.8
2006	4,441	25.7	30.8
2007	4,480	25.6	30.5
2008	4,592	25.7	30.5
2009	4,605	25.3	30.0
2010	4,645	25.3	30.9
2011	4 626	25.0	30.2

Sources: Statistics Canada, the Labour Force Survey, Labour Statistics Division, CANSIM 282-0002.

Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

**Appendix table 2:
Labour organizations with 30,000 or more covered workers, 2011**

Name	Affiliation	Workers
Canadian Union of Public Employees	CLC	611,827
National Union of Public and General Employees	CLC	340,000
United Food and Commercial Workers Canada	CtW/CLC.....	245,327
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	230,700
Public Service Alliance of Canada.....	CLC	192,080
National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada.....	CLC	191,500
Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux.....	CSN.....	122,193
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada.....	CLC	114,893
Teamsters Canada.....	CtW/CLC.....	113,851
Service Employees International Union	CtW/CLC.....	92,781
Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.....	Ind.	79,004
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	CLC	73,325
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (Directed chartered unions)	CSD	70,400
FTQ Construction	CLC	69,914
Laborers' International Union of North America.....	CtW.....	68,650
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.....	CLC	63,113
Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement	CSQ.....	60,000
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec - FIQ	Ind.	58,173
Alberta Teachers' Association	Ind.	57,644
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.....	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	57,130
Ontario Nurses' Association.....	CLC	57,000
Fédération des employées et employés de services publics inc.	CSN.....	55,700
Canadian Union of Postal Workers	CLC	54,144
Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada	CLC	50,733
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	50,374
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America	CtW/CLC.....	50,000
UNITE HERE Canada.....	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	46,000
British Columbia Teachers' Federation	CLC	45,232
Christian Labour Association of Canada	Ind.	45,000
International Union of Operating Engineers	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	41,993
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.....	CLC	38,311
Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec	Ind.	37,581
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.....	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	36,597

**Appendix table 2 (continued):
Labour organizations with 30,000 or more covered workers, 2011**

Name	Affiliation	Workers
Fédération du commerce inc.	CSN.....	36,274
Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union	CLC.....	35,692
Fédération de l'industrie manufacturière.....	CSN.....	30,000
Amalgamated Transit Union	AFL-CIO/CLC.....	30,000

Legend

AFL-CIO – American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
 CCU – Confederation of Canadian Unions
 CLC – Canadian Labour Congress
 CSD – Centrale des syndicats démocratiques
 CSN – Confédération des syndicats nationaux
 CSQ – Centrale des syndicats du Québec
 CtW – Change-to-Win
 Ind. – Independent local organization

Note: Data is collected from labour organizations using a self-reporting survey. When the required information is not received in the year of the survey, we use the latest reported figures. This assumption allows us to aggregate the data by affiliation to congresses and at the national level.

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

**Appendix table 3:
Union coverage, by type of union and affiliation, 2011**

	Unions	Locals	Coverage	
			Workers	Percentage
National Unions	184	10,752	3,145,473	68.0
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	46	7,188	2,118,476	45.8
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).....	11	1,785	310,313	6.7
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ).....	14	408	125,329	2.7
Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU).....	5	26	7,902	0.2
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD).....	1	53	5,000	0.1
Unaffiliated unions	107	1,292	578,453	12.5
International unions	39	3,805	1,222,512	26.4
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	27	3,533	613,871	13.3
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only	4	72	36,040	0.8
CLC only				0.0
Change-to-Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).....	4	164	501,959	10.9
Change-to-Win (CtW) only	1	29	68,650	1.5
Unaffiliated unions	3	7	1,992	0.0
Directly chartered unions	290	0.0	76,455	1.7
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD).....	287	0.0	70,400	1.5
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	2	0.0	55	0.0
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).....	1	0.0	6,000	0.1
Independent local organizations	265	25	181,337	3.9
Total	778	14,557	4,625,777	100.0

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

**Appendix table 4:
Canadian Labour Congress coverage, by affiliation, 2011**

	Workers	Percentage
National unions	2,118,476	65.5
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) only.....	2,118,476	65.5
International unions	1,115,830	34.5
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	613,871	18.9
Change-to-Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	501,959	15.5
CLC only		0.0
Directly chartered unions	55	0.0
Total	3,234,361	100.0

Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

*The **Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada** is a searchable database that provides the following informations: affiliation, membership, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail and Web site addresses of labour organizations in Canada. For more information, visit the [Directory of Labour Organizations](#).*