



*Fair, safe and productive workplaces*

# Labour

## **Union coverage in Canada, 2013**

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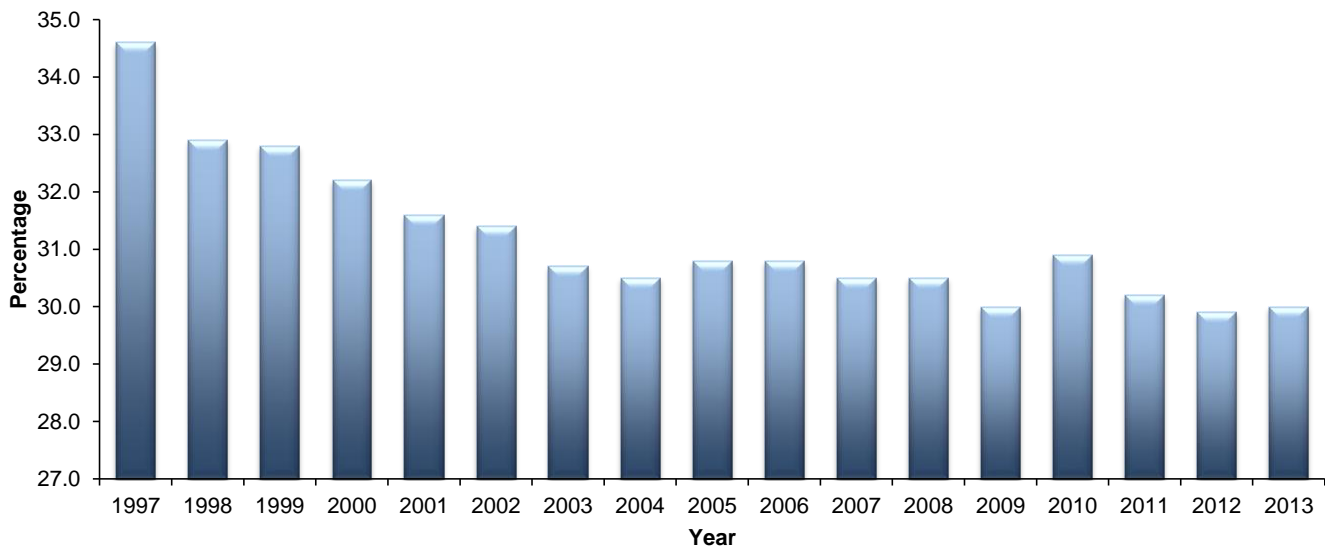
## Introduction

The Workplace Information and Research Division of the Labour Program conducts an annual survey of labour organizations in Canada that represent bargaining units of 50 or more workers. The survey provides aggregate statistics on union coverage by organization type and affiliation.

## Overall Coverage

In 2013, a total of 4,735,367 workers were covered by collective agreements, an increase of 1.5% compared to 2012. This corresponds to a union coverage rate of 30.0% (as a share of non-agricultural paid workers), a slight increase from the previous year's rate of 29.9% (see Methodology). This is comparable to Statistics Canada coverage rate of 31.5%.<sup>1</sup>

**Chart 1**  
**Union coverage rate in Canada, 1997-2013**



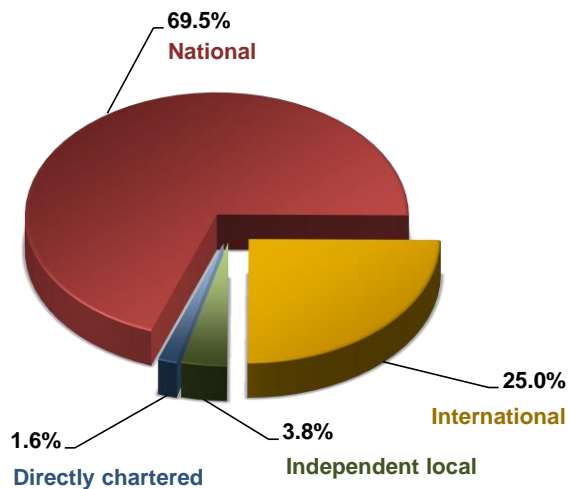
Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada; and Statistics Canada, the Labour Force Survey, Labour Statistics Division, CANSIM 282-0002 and 282-0011.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada coverage data from the Labour Force Survey is collected monthly from a sample of working age individuals, whereas the data collected in this annual survey is directly from all labour organizations.

## Coverage by type of organization

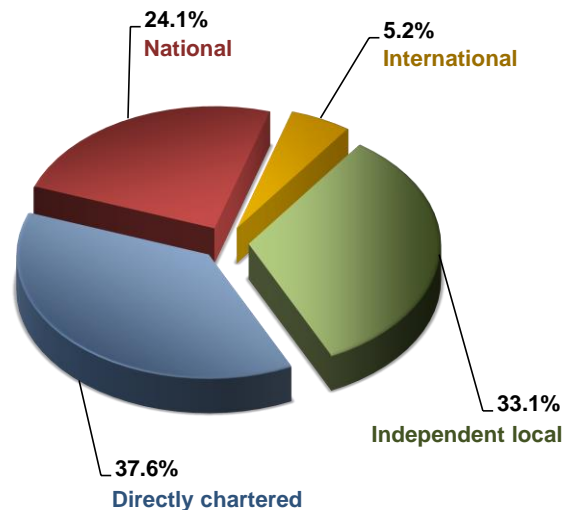
Unions in Canada can be divided into four types of labour organizations: national, international, independent local, and directly chartered (see Definitions). The vast majority (94.5%) of covered workers are represented by national (69.5%) and international (25.0%) unions. Of the remainder, 3.8% are represented by independent local unions and 1.6% by directly chartered unions<sup>2</sup>. Nonetheless, the number of independent local unions and directly chartered unions account for the majority of all unions in Canada (70.7%).

**Chart 2A**  
Share of covered workers, by organization type, 2013



Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

**Chart 2B**  
Share of unions, by organization type, 2013



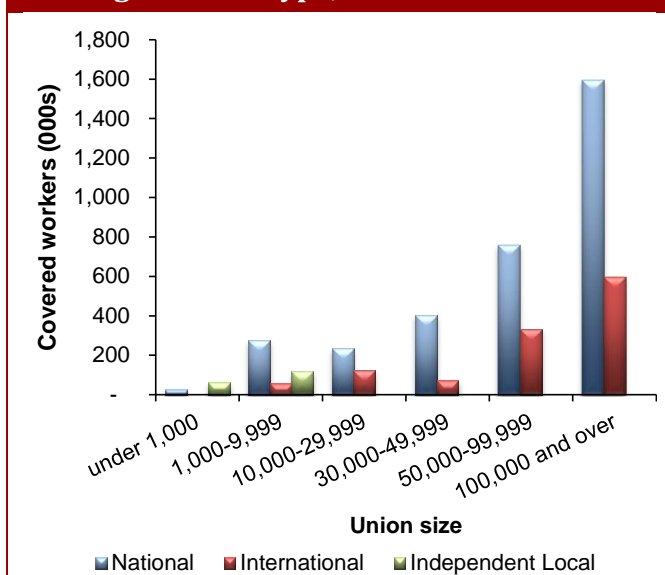
Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Due to number rounding, the proportions may not add-up to 100%.

## Coverage by union size

On average, a union in Canada represented 6,142 workers in 2013, up slightly from the previous year's average of 6,018. However, the distribution was highly concentrated in a small number of large unions. As seen in appendix 6, 46.2% of all unionized workers belonged to only eight major unions, all of which are national or international unions. Each of these unions covers over 100,000 workers with an average size of 273,710 workers. Conversely, only 11.7% of all unionized workers belong to 421 unions, 60.6% of which are independent local unions. Each of these unions covers fewer than 10,000 workers with an average size of 1,299 workers.

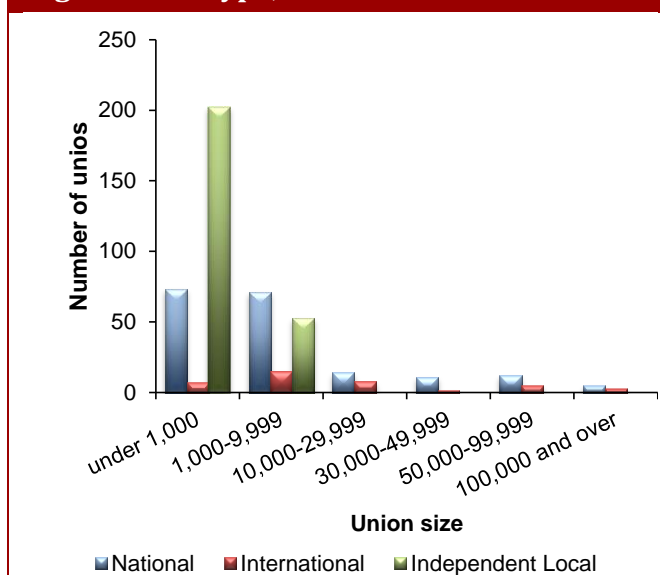
**Chart 3A**  
Number of covered workers, by union size and organization type, 2013



Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

Note: Excludes Directly Chartered Unions. Only aggregate data is available for Directly Chartered Unions.

**Chart 3B**  
Number of unions, by union size and organization type, 2013



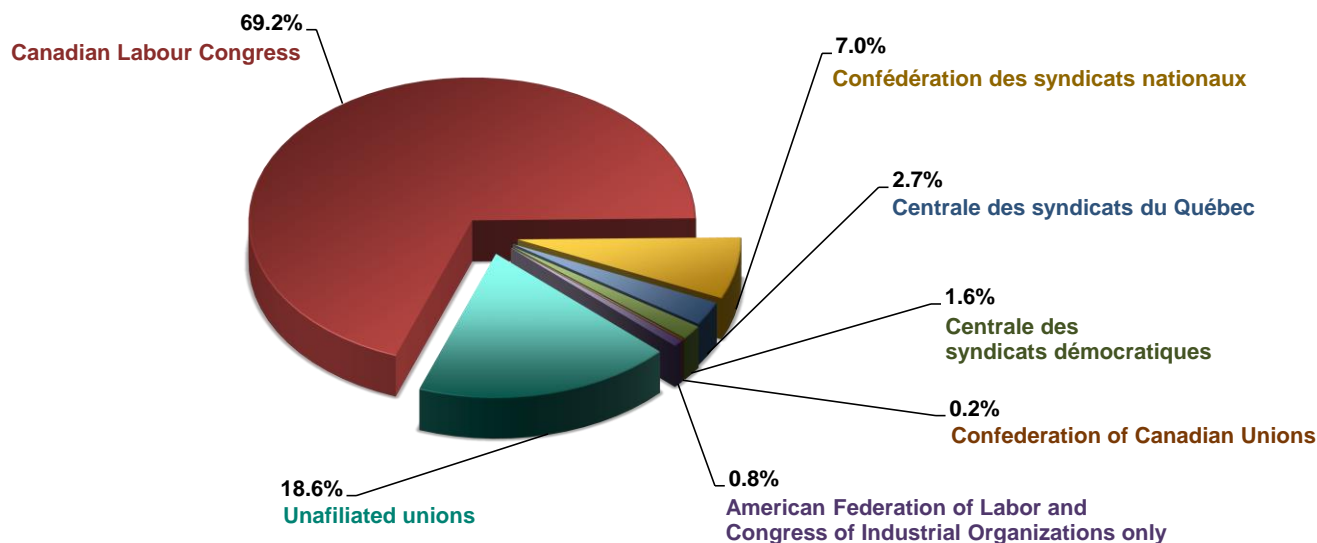
Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

Note: Excludes Directly Chartered Unions. Only aggregate data is available for Directly Chartered Unions.

## Affiliation

Unions affiliate with labour congresses for assistance at national and international levels. Among the labour congresses in Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) represented the largest share of workers covered by collective agreements at 69.2% in 2013 (Table 3), a modest decline from last year (70.2%). The remainder of affiliated workers were covered by the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) representing 7.0%; the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) at 2.7%; the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD) at 1.6%; the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) at 0.8%; and the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) at 0.2%. Unions representing the remaining 18.6% of all workers covered were not affiliated to any congress.

**Chart 4**  
**Share of union coverage, by congress affiliation, 2013**



Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Affiliation changes and union mergers

Two affiliation changes occurred during 2013: the *Syndicat du personnel technique et professionnel de la Société des alcools du Québec* and its 695 members affiliated with the CSN, and the British Columbia Nurses' Union (40,000 members) disaffiliated from the CLC and became an independent national union, resulting in a slight decrease in the CLC's share of total union coverage.

The merger of the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), announced last year and formalized on August 31, 2013, has resulted in the creation of Unifor. Representing approximately 308,000 workers, Unifor is now Canada's largest private-sector union and third largest overall.

On December 2, 2013, the Chalk River Technicians and Technologist Union (900 members) joined with the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW – 230,700 members).

## Legislative and Regulatory Changes


In the past year, there have been few significant legislative changes affecting unions and union membership.

In Saskatchewan, Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (SEA), which was tabled on December 4, 2012, received Royal Assent on May 15, 2013.

The SEA consolidates a number of different labour statutes, including *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and *The Trade Union Act*. With respect to labour relations and union certification rules, a few key changes will be implemented.

The definition of "employee" clarifies that employees whose primary duties are confidential in nature are excluded from collective bargaining. Similarly, a new definition of "supervisory employee" has been added. Employees fitting within this category are restricted from belonging to the same bargaining unit as employees they are supervising, except in specific circumstances.





A new procedure allows for separate certification of sub-components of bargaining units. New grounds under which a union may be decertified have been added (e.g., where the union ceases to be a union). In addition, the period within which a decertification application can take place has been significantly extended.

The SEA includes accountability requirements for unions, which will have to provide detailed financial statements to their members on a yearly basis and disclose the results of all secret ballot votes to the employees entitled to vote. The ability of unions to fine their members for crossing a picket line will be removed.

Also in Saskatchewan, the Court of Appeal issued its decision in *R. v. Saskatchewan Federation of Labour*, 2013 SKCA 43, concerning changes made by the *2008 Trade Union Amendment Act*. Among other things, the Act changed the certification procedure from a card-check system to a mandatory secret ballot vote system, and increased the level of employee support to file a certification application from 25% to 45%. It also decreased the level of employee support to file a union decertification application from 50% to 45%. The Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the trial judge, who had concluded that the Act did not violate freedom of association as protected by section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was granted on October 17, 2013.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Union coverage in Canada, 1997-2013

Year	Workers* (000s)	As a percentage of non-agricultural paid workers**
1997	4,074	34.6
1998	3,938	32.9
1999	4,010	32.8
2000	4,058	32.2
2001	4,111	31.6
2002	4,174	31.4
2003	4,178	30.7
2004	4,261	30.5
2005	4,381	30.8
2006	4,441	30.8
2007	4,480	30.5
2008	4,592	30.5
2009	4,605	30.0
2010	4,645	30.9
2011	4,626	30.2
2012	4,664	29.9
2013	4,735	30.0

\*Source: Workplace Information Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

\*\*Source: Statistics Canada, the Labour Force Survey, Labour Statistics Division, CANSIM 282-0002 and 282-0011.

Note: Non-agricultural paid workers data used are annual averages of the preceding year; data shown for covered workers are as of January of the years shown. Labour force includes total employed and unemployed.

## Appendix 2

### Labour organizations with 30,000 or more covered workers, 2013

Name	Affiliation	Number
Canadian Union of Public Employees	CLC	630,050
National Union of Public and General Employees	CLC	340,000
UNIFOR	CLC	308,000
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	187,587
Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux	CSN	129,032
Service Employees International Union	CtW / CLC	118,991
Teamsters Canada	CtW / CLC	93,351
Alberta Union of Provincial Employees	Ind.	80,107
Laborers' International Union of North America	AFL-CIO / CLC	80,000
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	CLC	76,166
FTQ Construction	CLC	69,914
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	CLC	65,642
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec	Ind.	62,292
Fédération des employées et employés de services publics inc.	CSN	60,700
Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement	CSQ	60,000
Ontario Nurses' Association	CLC	59,500
Christian Labour Association of Canada	Ind.	58,826
Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada	Ind.	58,703
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	AFL-CIO / CLC	57,130
Canadian Union of Postal Workers	CLC	54,470
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	CLC	50,000
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	AFL-CIO / CLC	50,000
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association	CLC	48,630
Alberta Teachers' Association	Ind.	44,465
British Columbia Teachers' Federation	CLC	43,563
International Union of Operating Engineers	AFL-CIO / CLC	41,993
British Columbia Nurses' Union	Ind.	40,000
Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union	CLC	36,287
Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec et parapublique du Québec	Ind.	35,489

**Appendix 2 (continued)**  
**Labour organizations with 30,000 or more covered workers, 2013**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Number</b>
Fédération du commerce inc.	CSN	32,750
Fédération autonome de l'enseignement	Ind.	32,000
Amalgamated Transit Union	AFL-CIO / CLC	30,000
Fédération de l'industrie manufacturière	CSN	30,000
Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec	CSN	30,000
Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux	Ind.	30,000

**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

Ind.: Independent National Organization

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Appendix 3 Union coverage, by type of union and affiliation, 2013

	Unions	Locals	Covered workers	
			Number	Distribution (percentage)
<b>National</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>10,565</b>	<b>3,293,404</b>	<b>69.5</b>
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	46	6,983	2,131,443	45.0
Independent national	107	1,310	698,931	14.8
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)	14	1,782	323,586	6.8
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)	14	416	126,486	2.7
Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)	4	23	7,958	0.2
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)	1	51	5,000	0.1
<b>International</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3,535</b>	<b>1,183,785</b>	<b>25.0</b>
American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	30	3,393	688,084	14.5
Change to Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	3	63	457,669	9.7
American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only	4	72	36,040	0.8
Independent international	3	7	1,992	0.0
<b>Directly Chartered</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>76,455</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)	287	0	70,400	1.5
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)	1	0	6,000	0.1
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	2	0	55	0.0
<b>Independent local</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>181,723</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>14,147</b>	<b>4,735,367</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Appendix 4 Canadian Labour Congress coverage, by affiliation, 2013

	Covered Workers	
	Number	Distribution (percentage)
<b>National unions</b>	<b>2,131,443</b>	<b>65.0</b>
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) only	2,131,443	65.0
<b>International unions</b>	<b>1,145,753</b>	<b>35.0</b>
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	688,084	21.0
Change to Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	457,669	14.0
<b>Directly Chartered</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,277,251</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Appendix 5 Composition of unions in Canada, by type of organization, 2013

	Unions		Covered Workers	
	Number	Distribution (percentage)	Number	Distribution (percentage)
National	186	24.1	3,293,404	69.5
International	40	5.2	1,183,785	25.0
Independent local	255	33.1	181,723	3.8
Directly Chartered	290	37.6	76,455	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,735,367</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Appendix 6 Composition of unions in Canada, by size, 2013

	National		International		Independent Local		Directly Chartered*		Total	
	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers	Unions	Workers
<b>under 1,000</b>	73	27,286	7	2,977	202	61,793	N/A	N/A	282	92,111
<b>1,000-9,999</b>	71	277,371	15	57,603	53	119,930	N/A	N/A	139	460,904
<b>10,000-29,999</b>	14	234,574	8	125,339	-	-	N/A	N/A	22	359,913
<b>30,000-49,999</b>	11	403,184	2	71,993	-	-	N/A	N/A	13	475,177
<b>50,000-99,999</b>	12	756,320	5	330,855	-	-	N/A	N/A	17	1,157,575
<b>100,000 and over</b>	5	1,594,669	3	595,018	-	-	N/A	N/A	8	2,189,687
<b>Grand Total</b>	186	3,293,404	40	1,183,785	255	181,723	290	76,455	771	4,735,367

Note: Only aggregate data is available for Directly Chartered Unions.

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Appendix 7 Union coverage, by congress affiliation, 2013

	Covered Workers	
	Number	Distribution (percentage)
<b>Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)</b>	<b>3,277,251</b>	<b>69.2</b>
American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	688,084	14.5
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) only	2,131,443	45.0
Change to Win (CtW) / Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	457,669	9.7
Directly Chartered	55	0.0
<b>Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)</b>	<b>329,586</b>	<b>7.0</b>
Federation	323,586	6.8
Directly Chartered	6,000	0.1
<b>Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)</b>	<b>126,486</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)</b>	<b>75,400</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Federation	5,000	0.1
Directly Chartered	70,400	1.5
<b>Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)</b>	<b>7,958</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) only</b>	<b>36,040</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Unaffiliated unions</b>	<b>882,646</b>	<b>18.6</b>
Independent international	1,992	0.0
Independent local	181,723	3.8
Independent national	698,931	14.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,735,367</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Workplace Information and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Analysis, and Workplace Information Directorate, Labour Program, Employment and Social Development Canada.



## Methodology and Definitions

Union coverage data is collected directly from labour organizations using a self-reporting survey. If the required information is not received in the year of the survey, the latest reported figures are used.

The non-agricultural paid workers (NAPW) figure is used in the calculation of the union coverage rate as it represents the workforce that could potentially be covered by unions. It includes employees, self-incorporated with paid help, self-incorporated with no paid help and excludes all workers in the agriculture industry.

*Union coverage* – all persons, whether union members or not, who are covered by a collective agreement.

*National Union* – a union that only represents workers in Canada.

*International Union* – a union that represents workers in Canada and the United States. For the purpose of this survey only workers in Canada are reported.

*Independent Local Organization* – a union that is not formally connected or affiliated with any other labour organization.

*Directly Chartered Union* – a union that is directly affiliated to a labour congress. It pays per capita dues directly to the congress and receives services from the congress.

The [Labour Organizations in Canada](#) provides key information relating to unions, congresses, and other labour organizations (e.g., name, affiliation, and covered workers).