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## Analysis in Brief

# Workforce insights: Demographics in the motion picture, video and sound recording industries, 2015 to 2023

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# Workforce insights: Demographics in the motion picture, video and sound recording industries, 2015 to 2023

by **Megan McMaster**

Businesses in the motion picture, video and sound recording subsector are often influenced by external factors, such as changing economic conditions and household discretionary spending on leisure. These factors directly affect employment levels, particularly during periods of financial uncertainty, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper, the second of a three-study series,<sup>1</sup> explores the demographic differences among employees in the motion picture, video and sound recording industries subsector. In recent years, the fast-rising costs of essentials have restricted household spending on other goods and services, affecting operational activities and employment in these industries.

This paper leverages administrative data to examine the distribution of this subsector's workforce by gender,<sup>2</sup> age and full-time work status.<sup>3</sup> Results in this paper are based solely on employees who received a T4 slip from employers and on self-employed individuals, excluding other employment types, such as contract workers.

## The motion picture and video industry group

The motion picture and video industry group includes businesses engaged in the film, television and video production industry; the film, television and video post-production industry; the film and video distribution industry; and the motion picture theatres industry. Within the motion picture and video industry group, supply chains are closely interconnected, with the outputs from one industry serving as the inputs for another, all the way to the end consumer. As a result, disruptions to the production industry affect the post-production, the distribution and the motion picture theatres industries, resulting in a lagged effect on each subsequent industry. Following the pandemic in 2020, this interdependence led to significant variations in the effects on and the recovery of the different industries, as activities were entirely disrupted.

After the pause of activities throughout most of 2020 because of the pandemic, a backlog of delayed projects, the introduction of new initiatives, and an increased demand for streaming fuelled a rebound for the motion picture and video industry group in 2021. Consequently, revenue levels for the production (Statistics Canada, March 16, 2023) and the post-production (Statistics Canada, October 9, 2024) industries rose to historic highs in 2021, as an unprecedented number of projects were underway in the year. However, given the lack of content readily available for distribution in the same year, the distribution industry continued to see sales decline in 2021, only to bounce back in 2023 with revenues reaching 87.6% of 2019 pre-pandemic levels (Statistics Canada, October 3, 2024). In 2022, the motion picture theatre industry experienced significant growth, with operating revenues increasing 171.4% as pandemic-related restrictions were removed and backlogged film projects finally made their way to the big screen. Despite the significant improvement in revenues compared with the first year of the pandemic, operating revenue in the motion picture theatres industry remained 22.5% below 2018 levels (Statistics Canada, October 2023).

The changing operational and economic conditions in the motion picture and video industry group are also directly reflected in the total number of employees at any given time. After years of steady growth from 2015 to 2019, where employment increased 34.4%, this industry group saw total employment fall 17.1% in 2020. However, given the increasing demand for content brought about by the pandemic, operating activities in this industry group quickly picked up, leading to recovery and growth in 2021 and 2022, surpassing 2019 levels (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Total employees in this industry group declined in 2023, in part because of labour disruptions by the Writers Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, though they remained above pre-pandemic levels.

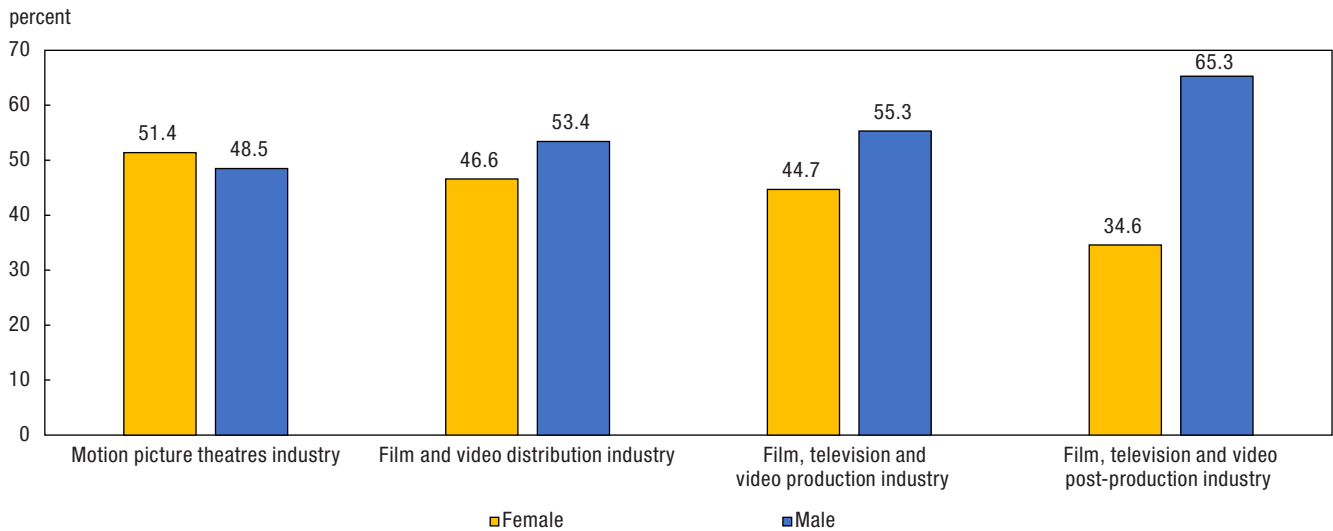
1. The first paper on the entertainment and recreation industries, released November 28, 2024, can be found [here](#).

2. The number of individuals identifying as non-binary has been steadily rising since 2019. However, the proportion of non-binary employees in 2023 remains too low to report.

3. Based on the definition of [full-time work status](#), the employees were classified as either full time or part time. With the average hourly wage by industry from the [Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours](#), a proxy value was established to represent a full-time salary. This approach is the same as that used in [Statistics Canada's AgZero modernization project](#), which studied agricultural employees.

Across the motion picture and video industry group, notable differences exist in the composition of the workforce. With respect to the distribution of employees by gender, the proportion of men and women in this industry group remained stable. The film and video distribution industry; the film, television and video production industry; and the motion picture theatres industry exhibited a relatively balanced distribution of female and male employees, with only small differences. In contrast, larger disparities were present in the film, television and video post-production industry, where men made up the vast majority of the workforce. In 2023, 65.3% of employees in the post-production industry were male.

**Chart 1**  
**Proportion of men and women employed in the motion picture and video industry group, 2023**



**Note:** Categories do not sum to 100%, as the non-binary category was removed because of size.  
**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

Within the motion picture and video industry group, differences in the type of employment were also present, with the motion picture theatres industry having the largest difference between full-time and part-time employment. In 2023, full-time employees made up 4.2% of this industry’s workforce. Given the operational needs of this industry, there is a higher demand for part-time staff in customer-service roles, compared with full-time managerial or corporate positions.

Part-time workers also outnumbered full-time workers in the film, television and video production industry. Although the total number of employees in this industry increased during the boom of 2021, the number of part-time employees increased at a slightly higher rate. In 2023, part-time employees made up 67.1% of this industry’s workforce.

The film, television and video post-production industry and the film and video distribution industry employed a fairly even mix of full-time and part-time employees.

**Table 1**  
**Proportion of workers in full-time and part-time positions in the motion picture and video industry group, 2016 to 2023**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	percent							
<b>Motion picture theatres industry</b>								
Full-time positions	4.1	4.2	4.6	5.0	5.0	3.3	3.9	4.2
Part-time positions	95.9	95.8	95.4	95.0	95.0	96.7	96.1	95.8
<b>Film, television and video production industry</b>								
Full-time positions	28.7	30.8	31.9	32.3	28.9	26.1	29.5	32.9
Part-time positions	71.3	69.2	68.1	67.7	71.1	73.9	70.5	67.1
<b>Film, television and video post-production industry</b>								
Full-time positions	42.1	45.7	47.4	51.3	48.0	40.8	47.6	55.1
Part-time positions	57.9	54.3	52.6	48.7	52.0	59.2	52.4	44.9
<b>Film and video distribution industry</b>								
Full-time positions	56.4	58.8	53.6	56.2	41.1	44.5	49.0	58.7
Part-time positions	43.6	41.2	46.4	43.8	58.9	55.5	51.0	41.3

Sources: Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

Examining the composition of employment by age shows that employees in the motion picture and video industry group were younger, with almost 60% of workers aged 34 and younger in 2023. The largest age group was consistently those aged 25 to 34, making up around one-third of total employment from 2019 to 2023. Within this industry group, the motion picture theatres industry had the highest proportion of younger workers, with 61.8% of all employees aged 24 and younger in 2023. However, given the reliance on part-time staff and the need to fill entry-level positions that do not require significant work experience, the younger composition of this industry's workforce is to be expected.

**Table 2**  
**Proportion of employees in the motion picture and video industry group by age group, 2023**

	Film and video distribution industry	Motion picture theatres industry	Film, television and video post-production industry	Film, television and video production industry
	percent			
17 and younger	0.4	10.7	0.0	0.2
18 to 24	4.9	51.1	5.2	8.3
25 to 34	29.6	23.2	42.3	36.8
35 to 44	25.8	7.3	33.0	27.4
45 to 54	21.2	3.8	13.2	15.6
55 to 64	14.9	2.6	5.0	8.8
65 to 74	2.7	1.2	1.1	2.6
75 to 84	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3

Sources: Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

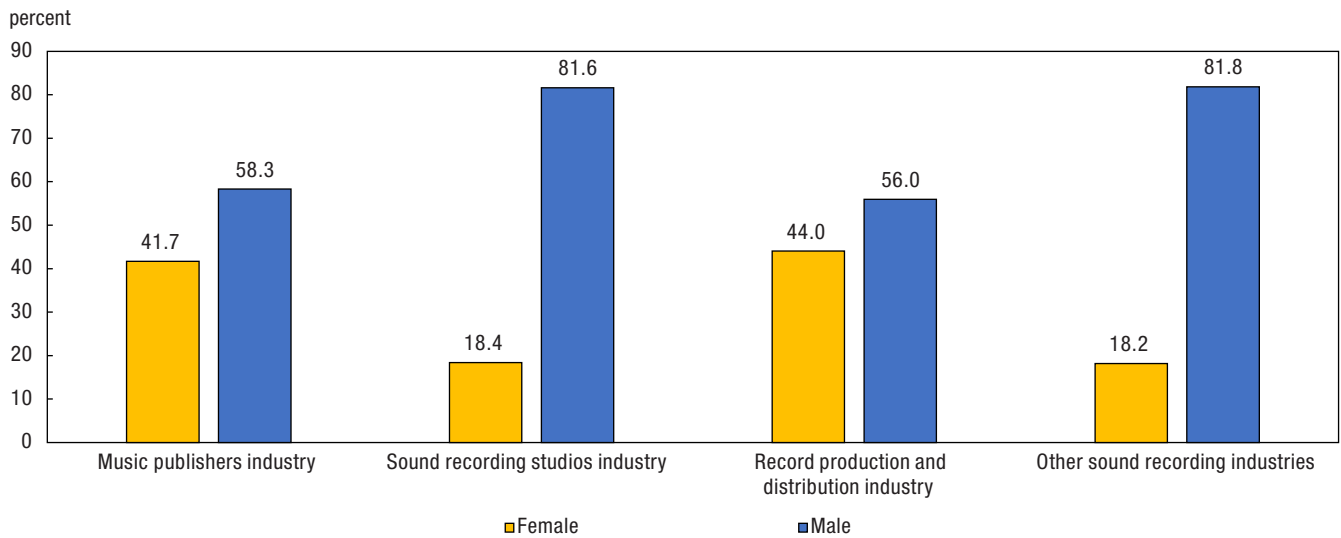
## The sound recording industry group

The sound recording industry group comprises the music publishers industry, the sound recording studios industry, the record production and distribution industry, and the other sound recording industries. In recent years, a major driver of growth for the sound recording industry group has been the continued shift in demand for streaming services. Because of the higher demand for digital activities, this industry group was one of the few industry groups in the cultural sector that was able to navigate the changing landscape of the pandemic without seeing significant declines in revenue. Some industries in this group, such as the record production and distribution industry and the music publishers industry, may have benefitted from changing consumer behaviour during the pandemic, further bolstering demand for streaming (Statistics Canada, March 28, 2024). The sound recording studios industry, the industry most affected by pandemic-related restrictions, was further affected by delays in the film, television and video production industry in 2021, as some recording studios specialize in audio post-production services for the film, television and video industries.

Despite the growing demand for their products and services and their ability to continue operations through much of the pandemic, businesses in the sound recording industry group experienced fluctuations in employment. Following years of increasing employment from 2015 to 2019, total employment in this industry group fell 11.3% in 2020, before rebounding in 2021 and continuing to surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2022 and 2023 (Statistics Canada, n.d.).

Notable gender differences persist in the workforce composition across the industries in the sound recording industry group. This industry group consistently employs a larger share of men than women. The music publishers industry and the record production and distribution industry had a similar proportion of male and female workers, with a marginally larger share of men employed in both industries. However, the sound recording studios industry and the other sound recording industries were significantly more male dominant, with male employees reaching 81.6% and 81.8% of the workforce, respectively, in 2023.

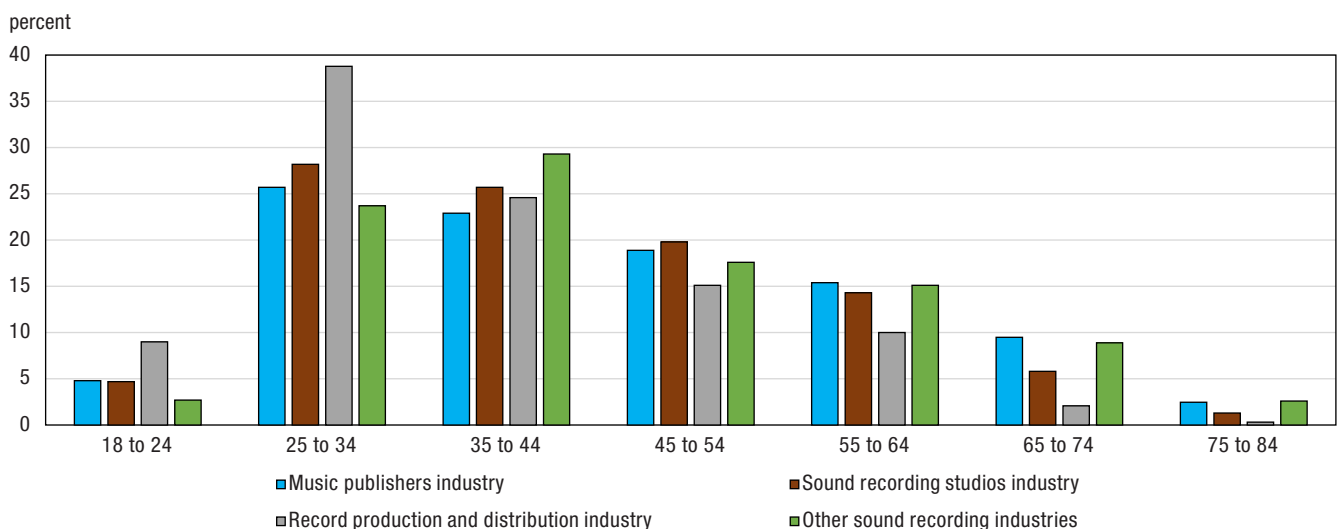
**Chart 2**  
**Proportion of men and women employed in the sound recording industry group, 2023**



**Note:** Categories do not sum to 100%, as the non-binary category was removed because of size.  
**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

The sound recording industry group employed a large proportion of younger people. Across the years studied, this trend was not only persistent but also continued to grow. In 2023, 29.4% of employees in the sound recording industry group were aged 25 to 34. The record production and distribution industry had the largest proportion of young staff, with 38.8% of employees aged 25 to 34 and over 70% of employees aged 44 and younger.

**Chart 3**  
**Proportion of employees in the sound recording industry group by age group, 2023**



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

The proportion of full-time and part-time employees varied significantly by industry within the sound recording industry group. The music publishers industry and the record production and distribution industry employed an even mix of full-time and part-time employees. Further, work statuses in these two industries were not significantly affected by the pandemic, and as a result, the proportion of full-time and part-time employees remained relatively unchanged from 2015 to 2023.

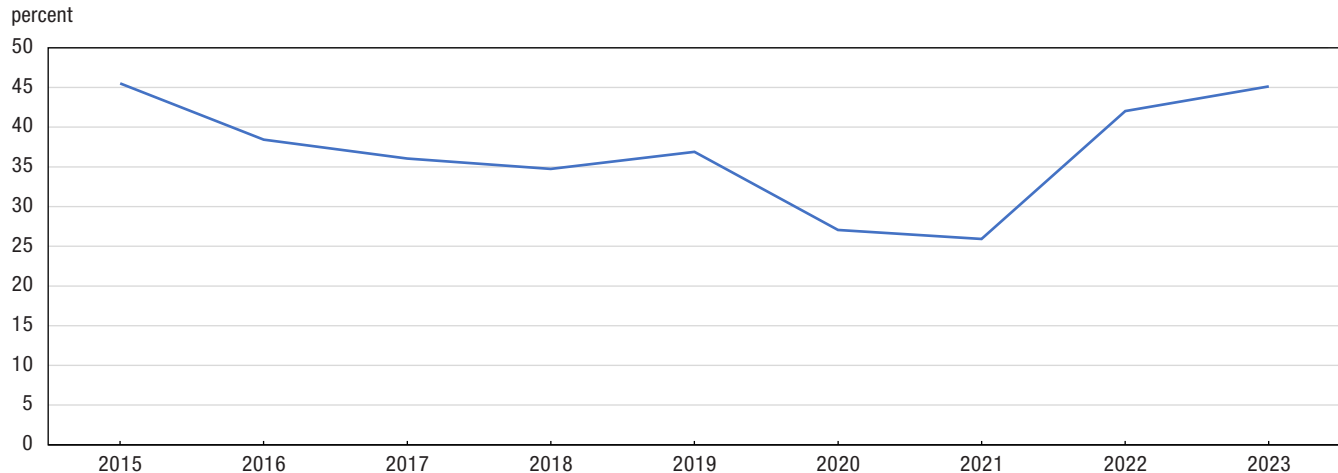
**Table 3**  
**Proportion of workers in full-time and part-time positions in the music publishers industry and the record production and distribution industry, 2015 to 2022**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	percent								
<b>Music publishers industry</b>									
Full-time positions	53.6	49.0	51.1	52.2	53.4	53.1	46.7	47.7	53.2
Part-time positions	46.4	51.0	48.9	47.8	46.6	46.9	53.3	52.3	46.8
<b>Record production and distribution industry</b>									
Full-time positions	41.2	49.2	51.6	53.5	51.7	51.1	46.1	52.0	52.1
Part-time positions	58.8	50.8	48.4	46.5	48.3	48.9	53.9	48.0	47.9

Sources: Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

Employment in the sound recording studios industry was much more affected by the pandemic than in the other sound recording industries. Although the number of full-time and part-time employees declined during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, the sound recording studios industry saw larger proportional declines in full-time employees than in part-time employees. Full-time employees fell to 27.1% of this industry's workforce in 2020, declining further to 25.9% in 2021. However, full-time employment rebounded in 2022 and 2023, making up 45.1% of the workforce in 2023.

**Chart 4**  
**Proportion of full-time employees in the sound recording studios industry, 2015 to 2023**



Sources: Statistics Canada, Business Register and administrative data, custom tabulations.

## Conclusion

The motion picture, video and sound recording industries subsector underwent systemic and structural changes throughout the period studied, resulting in significant effects in industry revenues and employment levels. Yet, many of its workforce characteristics remained stable over time. Across most of this subsector, the largest proportion of employees were aged 44 and younger, and part-time employees made up a significant proportion of the workforce. Many industries in this subsector continue to adjust to evolving consumer demands and operational requirements in the post-pandemic landscape. Additionally, external factors may affect business operations, prompting firms to adapt their workforce to navigate this environment. One significant factor transforming this subsector is the adoption of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence. As more businesses integrate these technologies, job requirements—and the skills and knowledge needed for positions—may change.



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