2025 Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey Methodological Report

Prepared for the Public Service Commission of Canada

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Accessibility

As of December 16, 2025, I, Nael Hajjar, confirm that the accessibility of this document has been verified.

Candidate for Open Government

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February 2026

This report presents the methodological details for the 2025 Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey conducted by Advanis Inc. on behalf of the Public Service Commission of Canada. The survey was sent to 268 584 employees of the Government of Canada, between June 5 and August 14, 2025.

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Sondage sur la dotation et l'impartialité politique de 2025 : rapport méthodologique*

1. Executive summary

1.1 Background

The Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey (SNPS) was first introduced in 2018 as a biennial survey covering all federal departments and agencies that fall under the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA). This online survey helps the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) fulfill its mandate and responsibilities to oversee the integrity of the federal public service staffing system and ensure non-partisanship. It gathers key information on the integrity of the public service staffing system and is currently the only tool the PSC can use to gauge employees' perceptions of the public service staffing system and the political impartiality of the public service.

For the fourth cycle of the survey in 2025, the PSC contracted Advanis to administer the survey.

1.2 Objectives

The survey results are important to achieving the PSC's mandate. Answers to the 2025 survey questions help the PSC explore and understand employees' perceptions of the federal public service staffing system and assess their awareness of rights and responsibilities related to political activities and non-partisanship.

Key themes covered in this survey include perceptions of employees, hiring managers, supervisors, and staffing advisors on:

- transparency, fairness and the merit-based nature of the staffing process
- organizational staffing policies and practices
- perspectives on staffing services and advice
- political activities and non-partisanship
- priority placement for veterans and public servants with priority entitlements

In 2025 new lines of questioning were added to reflect current priorities such as the use of artificial intelligence in staffing processes and alternative recruitment methods.

1.3 Methodology

The PSC developed the 2025 Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey questionnaire. The content was updated from the 2023 survey cycle. A pretest was conducted as part of the

development process. Pretest participants were encouraged to provide feedback and screenshots on the survey content while completing the survey.

The 2025 questionnaire was formatted as an electronic survey (to be completed online) that was fully compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA or higher.

The survey was administered from June 5 to August 14, 2025, to public service employees who worked in federal departments and agencies that fall under the *Public Service Employment Act*. The survey was also administered to members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Armed Forces with civilian direct reports employed under the act.

The sample frame was created using the most current available lists of all eligible employees provided by human resources services in each participating department or agency. The PSC verified, cleaned, and combined these lists to create the entire sample frame and provided it to Advanis. All eligible employees with valid email addresses were sent an invitation to complete the electronic questionnaire. Invitations were sent out over a period of 4 days. Reminder emails were also sent to participants who had not responded.

During fielding, departments and the PSC could also add new employees to the sample frame through a self-serve support website hosted by Advanis throughout the data collection period.

Of the 268 584 employees eligible to participate, 82 987 completed the survey, for a response rate of 30.9%. Among respondents, 77% (64 174) completed the survey in English and 23% (18 814) completed it in French.

Considering that the survey was administered as a census, the results can be extrapolated to the broader population of employees within the participating federal departments and agencies that fall under the *Public Service Employment Act*.

Although all eligible employees were included in the sample for the 2025 survey, responses were weighted so that they were representative of the target population. The weight adjusts for the non-response within gender and age groups, within each department or agency. Although the value of the bootstrap was discussed for a census-type study like this one, 500 bootstrap weights were provided in a separate file.

1.4 Contract value

The contract value for this survey was $299,969.83 (including HST).

1.5 Political neutrality requirement

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Advanis that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and the Directive on Management of Communications'* requirements for public opinion research reports. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.
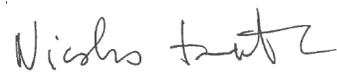
Nicolas Toutant

Vice President, Research and Evaluation

Advanis

nicolas.toutant@advanis.ca

2. Background

The PSC is responsible for promoting and safeguarding a merit-based, representative and non-partisan public service that serves all Canadians. To achieve these goals, the PSC seeks to:

- promote diversity and inclusion in public service appointments
- enable effective and efficient hiring processes across the federal public service
- support departments and agencies in hiring talent that they need.

As part of the PSC's mandate and responsibilities to oversee the integrity of the federal public service staffing system and ensure non-partisanship, the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey was first introduced in 2018 as a biennial public service-wide survey. This online survey gathers key information on the integrity of the public service staffing system. The survey is currently the only means by which the PSC can gauge employees' perceptions of the public service staffing system and the political impartiality of the public service.

The survey was administered by Statistics Canada on behalf of the PSC in 2018, and with a delay due to the pandemic in 2021. The first cycle of the survey was conducted between February and April 2018; it was a redesign of the Survey of Staffing that was also conducted by Statistics Canada on several occasions in the past, starting in 2009.

For the third and fourth cycle of the survey in 2023 and 2025, the PSC contracted Advanis to administer the survey.

All public servants employed during the collection period, by departments and agencies that conduct staffing under the *Public Service Employment Act* were eligible to take part in the survey. Employees of separate agencies (for example, the Canada Revenue Agency) were not eligible to participate in the survey.

The survey gathers information from a broad range of audiences (employees, hiring managers and staffing advisors) on key aspects of the staffing system (for example, merit). As in previous cycles, the survey also gathers critical information on employees' understanding of their rights and responsibilities regarding political activities and non-partisanship.

3. Objectives

The survey results are key to achieving the PSC's mandate. Answers to the survey questions help the PSC explore and understand the perceptions of employees on the federal public service staffing system and assess their awareness of their rights and responsibilities related to political activities and non-partisanship.

Key themes covered in this survey include perceptions of employees, hiring managers, supervisors, and staffing advisors on:

- merit, fairness, and transparency in federal public service staffing processes
- organizational staffing policies and practices
- perspectives on staffing services and advice
- political activities and non-partisanship
- priority placement for veterans and public servants with priority entitlements

In 2025, new lines of questioning were added to reflect current priorities such as the use of artificial intelligence in staffing processes and alternative recruitment methods.

The 2025 survey results support the PSC, as well as participating departments and agencies, in identifying areas where progress was made, as well as gaps and opportunities for improvement. The information collected helps the PSC ensure that its policies, programs and practices are responsive to the public service population it

serves. Survey results will help support efforts to safeguard non-partisanship and promote diversity and inclusion within the public service.

The survey will provide important information to managers, human resources advisors and deputy ministers to improve staffing within their own departments and agencies. The information will also be used to support reporting to Parliament in the PSC's annual report.

4. Survey methodology

The survey was administered from June 5 to August 14, 2025 to public service employees who worked in federal departments and agencies that fall under the *Public Service Employment Act* and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Armed Forces with civilian direct reports employed under the act.

Each person in the sample was contacted by email and asked to complete an electronic questionnaire hosted by Advanis.

4.1 Population coverage

The survey targeted public service employees who worked in federal departments and agencies that fell under the *Public Service Employment Act* during the collection period. The survey was also administered to members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Armed Forces with civilian direct reports employed under the act.

All eligible employees from the in-scope departments and agencies with valid email addresses were sent an invitation to complete the electronic questionnaire. Invitations were sent out over a period of 4 days.

The survey questionnaire targeted 3 distinct populations:

- all eligible public service employees, who were asked questions about staffing activities and political activities in their departments/agencies
- staffing advisors, defined as individuals whose principal duties involve providing advice to managers about staffing activities and appointments under the *Public Service Employment* Act, in an operational context
  - o staffing advisors were asked questions about their role within their department/agency and interactions with hiring managers
- managers and supervisors, defined as individuals with 1 or more civilian employees reporting to them, with no delegated staffing authority required

- o   this also includes members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who supervise public servants hired under the *Public Service Employment Act*
- o   managers were asked questions on hiring they undertook between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, and their views of staffing practices within their departments/agencies

4.2. Participating departments and agencies

For the list of participating departments and agencies, please refer to the table in section 7.1 Response rates: departments and agencies.

4.3 Sample design

This survey is a voluntary census with a cross-sectional design.

The sampling unit is the employee.

The survey frame is made up of all in-scope employees.

The sample frame was created using the most current available lists of all eligible employees provided by human resources (HR) services in each participating department or agency. The PSC provided an Excel template to the HR contact that specified the fields required to conduct the survey. The PSC then verified, cleaned, and combined these lists to create the entire sample frame and provided it to Advanis.

Twice during the fieldwork period, Advanis provided lists of bounced and otherwise invalid email addresses to the PSC, and the PSC provided these to departments and agencies to have them corrected, if possible. During this same review, departments and agencies could indicate email addresses that should be deleted (for example, for employees who left the public service during fieldwork).

After June 10, 2025, departments and agencies and the PSC could also add new employees to the sample frame through a self-serve support website hosted by Advanis throughout the data collection period. Employees that were added through the support website were reviewed by the PSC to ensure they qualified to participate in the study. The support website is described in greater detail in section 5.3: Employee support.

5. Data collection

5.1 Questionnaire design

The PSC developed the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey questionnaire. The content was updated from the 2023 survey cycle.

A pretest was conducted prior to collection to test the survey content. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback and screenshots on the survey content while completing the survey. A total of 10 questionnaires (8 in English and 2 in French) were completed.

The 2025 questionnaire was formatted as an electronic survey (to be completed online). The average time to complete the survey online was 14.1 minutes.

The online survey was required to be fully compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, 2.0 level AA or higher. Thus, the online survey development process was exhaustive. Advanis worked with the Government of Canada to subject the survey to thorough testing and review, and the result was a fully compliant and accessible survey. The questionnaire was also fully tested by Advanis and the PSC to ensure that all questions in the online version matched those in the questionnaire provided to Advanis and that all skip and branching in the survey worked as intended.

5.2 Data collection

Responding to this survey was voluntary. Data were collected directly from survey respondents.

The PSC announced the launch of the survey to deputy heads and heads of HR of all participating departments and agencies. Template messages to promote participation were shared with participating departments and agencies. Weekly response rates were provided to the PSC.

The PSC also arranged 2 group meetings, between:

- o the PSC, information technology (IT) department and agency representatives, and Advanis
- o the PSC, human resources (HR) department and agency representatives, and Advanis

At these meetings, the PSC and Advanis shared information about the timeline, logistics and support. In particular, Advanis shared details to allow departments and agencies to ensure that emails from Advanis would be accepted by Government of Canada servers and reach employees. Advanis also sent a specially designed survey to the IT representatives, which allowed them to test the process themselves.

Advanis used its proprietary software to send email invitations and reminders. Each employee in the sample frame received an email containing an invitation to complete the electronic questionnaire with a link to the questionnaire hosted by Advanis. The link had a unique embedded access code that provided access to the survey questionnaire. This unique link allowed the employee to stop the survey and return to it at another time, exactly where they left off. It also meant that each employee could only complete the survey once.

Advanis sent email invitations to the PSC, Shared Services Canada, and the Department of National Defence, a week before the main launch of the survey, to ensure that the process worked properly. This soft launch occurred from May 29 to June 4, 2025. Advanis then sent the email invitations to the remaining departments and agencies over 4 business days from June 5 to June 10, 2025. For some large departments, such as Employment and Social Development Canada, Advanis sent the emails over a few days to reduce overload on their servers.

During collection, up to 7 reminder emails were sent to participants who had not responded.

5.3 Employee support

Advanis provided support to employees in 3 ways: through a customized support website, by email and by telephone.

Advanis created a support website so that employees could get help with common issues very quickly, and at any time of the day or night, 7 days a week, throughout the data collection period. When departments and agencies communicated about the survey to employees, they provided the link to this site. By visiting this support website, employees could:

- request a link to the survey
- access information about the survey:
  - overview
  - confidentiality information
  - eligibility criteria and a list of participating departments and agencies
- send comments to the PSC about the questions in the survey

- find a toll-free number to call and an email address to contact for further support

Hundreds of employees visited the support site. Of note, a total of 374 employees chose the "Request a link to the survey" option, doing so a total of 420 times. Employees "requested a link" for the following reasons:

- 63.4% (237) because it was after June 10, 2025, and they hadn't yet seen an email invitation
- 22.2% (83) because they deleted or couldn't find the email invitation
- 7.2% (27) because it was after June 10, 2025, and they were a new employee
- 6.4% (24) because their link "didn't work"
- 0.8% (3) because they shared the link with someone else

Advanis monitored and responded to 492 emails from employees who needed support. The breakdown of the reasons for emailing is as follows:

- 63.8% (314) requesting a link
- 8.5% (42) general survey feedback
- 6.3% (31) opting out from further reminders
- 5.5% (27) technical issue Advanis source
- 5.1% (25) different email associated with employee
- 2.3% (11) technical issue Government source
- 1.8% (9) needing clarity on how to answer a question
- 1.5% (4) requesting mail-out, copy of questions, or results
- 0.6% (3) wanting to confirm legitimacy and not spam
- 0.6% (3) wanting to change answers or re-do entire survey
- 0.4% (2) referring to the PSC
- 0.2 (1) wants to re-do survey
- 4.1% (20) other reasons

Advanis provided a toll-free number that employees could call with questions. Employees could also leave a voicemail, to which an Advanis interviewer would respond the same or next business day. In total, Advanis dealt with 5 calls. Employees called for these reasons:

- 40% (2) requesting a link
- 20% (1) referred to the PSC, survey feedback
- 20% (1) wanting to confirm legitimacy and not SPAM
- 20% (1) called SNPS support line in error

6. Data processing

The main outputs of the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey include a "clean" microdata file. The microdata file consists of data processed from the electronic questionnaire. This section presents a brief summary of the processing steps involved in producing these files.

6.1 Data capture

Responses to all survey questions were entered directly by the respondents. The electronic questionnaire reduces processing time and costs associated with data entry, transcription errors and data transmission. The responses were secured through industry standard encryption protocols, firewalls, and encryption layers.

Some editing was done directly when the electronic questionnaire was completed. When a response was outside the range (too large or small) of expected values, or inconsistent with the previous entries, the respondent was prompted, through message screens, to verify the information. The respondents also had the option of not answering questions if they did not know the answer or refused to answer. In these cases, the data were subjected to further edit processes after they were submitted.

6.2 Data cleaning

The information from all respondents who submitted the electronic questionnaire was retained and the data processed.

Editing can occur at several points throughout the survey process. It ranges from simple preliminary checks to more complex automated verifications performed by a computer program after the data have been captured. In general, edit rules are based on what is logically or validly possible.

There were 2 categories of edits used for this survey: validity and consistency edits. Validity edits:

- verify the syntax of responses
- include checking for non-numeric characters reported in numeric fields and checking for missing values
- check that the coded data lie within an allowed range of values
  - for example, a range edit might be put on the number of dependents living in a respondent's household to ensure that it lies between 0 and 50

Consistency edits verify that relationships between questions are respected. Consistency edits can be based on logical, or structural relationships between questions or parts of a question.

Example

The first type of error treated involved errors in questionnaire flow, where questions that did not apply to the respondent (and should therefore not have been answered) were found to contain answers. In this case a computer automatically eliminated superfluous data by following the flow of the questionnaire implied by answers to previous questions.

The second type of error treated involved a lack of information in questions that should have been answered. For this type of error, a non-response or "not-stated" code was assigned to the item.

6.2.1 Pre-edits

For all records where values were missing (blank) from the collection, the value of "9," "99," "999," and so on, was assigned to indicate that no information was collected.

6.2.2 Flow edits

The flow edits replicate the flow patterns from the questionnaire. Variables that are skipped based on flows were converted from "Skipped" to "Valid skip" codes ("6," "96," "996," and so on). For skips based on the answer to certain questions, skipped questions were set to "Valid skip."

6.3 Coding of open-ended questions

There were 3 open-ended questions in the survey (COM_10B, STA_02, STA_06B) and 21 other specify open text (GEN_07A_151_, GEN_07B_24_, HMN_03_6_, HMN_04_9_, HMN_05B, HMN_07_11_, HMN_10B_20_, MAN_04B_9_, MAN_06A_6_, STA_03_6_, STA_06_20_, STA_11_7_, STA_12C_12_, STA_12F_5_, STA_16B_6_, GDR_10_3_, GDR_11A_7_, GDR_11B_8_, DIS_01_16_, PG_05_12_, PG_08). The answers written into these questions were reviewed and any personal identifying information was redacted.

6.4 Imputation

There was no imputation of data in the survey.

6.5 Creation of derived variables

A number of variables included on the microdata file have been derived by grouping answer categories or by combining variables on the questionnaire to facilitate data analysis.

6.6 Weights

Statistical weights were calculated for each respondent to indicate the number of employees in the population that the respondent represents.

The weights appear on the microdata file and must be used to derive estimates from the survey. For example, if the number of employees who worked in Quebec and participated in a staffing process in the last 12 months is to be estimated, it is done by selecting the records referring to employees in the sample with these characteristics and summing the weights entered on those records.

Details of the method used to calculate these weights are presented in section 8.

6.7 Suppression of confidential information

As described in section 6.3, answers to open-ended questions were reviewed by Advanis, and any personal identifying information was redacted. All results made available to the public through reports, data visualization tools, or the Open Government Portal are suppressed when there are fewer than 10 responses to the question.

7. Data quality

7.1 Response rates: departments and agencies

At the conclusion of data collection, all sample records were provided back to PSC along with the status code of each record (no detailed response data was included). PSC reviewed the data and determined which records should be included in the sample frame and which should be excluded. Based on that, 268 584 employees were found to be eligible to participate in the survey. Of these employees eligible to participate, 82 987 completed the survey, for a response rate of 30.9%. The response rate was calculated by dividing the 82 987 completed surveys (Responding Units (R)) by the 268 584 employees that were eligible to participate (Participation Rate (Responding units (R) + In-scope non-responding (IS) + Unresolved Cases (U)).

Such that Response Rate = R/(U + IS + R).

Note that the department assigned for each respondent was either what was provided in sample or what they provided in the survey (among those who completed the survey and provided a different department).

In total, 77% (64 173 people) completed the survey in English and 23% (18 814 people) completed it in French.

Department	Completed Surveys	Valid Sample Records	Response Rate
Accessibility Standards Canada	30	56	53.6%
Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada	219	548	40.0%
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	1342	4905	27.4%
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	234	553	42.3%
Canada Border Services Agency	4087	16174	25.3%
Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions	194	358	54.2%
Canada Energy Regulator	195	549	35.5%
Canada School of Public Service	226	591	38.2%
Canada Water Agency	68	172	39.5%
Canadian Grain Commission	222	444	50.0%
Canadian Heritage	651	1835	35.5%
Canadian Human Rights Commission	116	247	47.0%
Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat	20	38	52.6%
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	55	109	50.5%
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission	286	643	44.5%
Canadian Space Agency	340	936	36.3%
Canadian Transportation Agency	142	362	39.2%
Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police	48	89	53.9%

Copyright Board of Canada	9	20	45.0%
Correctional Service Canada	4187	17819	23.5%
Courts Administration Service	244	787	31.0%
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	538	1742	30.9%
Department of Finance Canada	345	880	39.2%
Department of Justice Canada	1612	5336	30.2%
Employment and Social Development Canada	14353	35607	40.3%
Environment and Climate Change Canada	2354	7953	29.6%
Farm Products Council of Canada	5	9	55.6%
Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario	52	99	52.5%
Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	99	230	43.0%
Financial Consumer Agency of Canada	94	233	40.3%
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	3799	14824	25.6%
Global Affairs Canada	2242	7141	31.4%
Health Canada	2214	8985	24.6%
Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada	530	1688	31.4%
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada	522	2502	20.9%
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	3080	10840	28.4%
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada	239	573	41.7%
Indian Oil and Gas Canada	35	73	47.9%
Indigenous Services Canada	2260	8148	27.7%
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada	1869	5975	31.3%
International Joint Commission	10	30	33.3%
Law Commission of Canada	4	9	44.4%
Library and Archives of Canada	490	1105	44.3%
Military Grievances External Review Committee	27	49	55.1%
Military Police Complaints Commission of Canada	11	25	44.0%
National Defence	8551	30790	27.8%
Natural Resources Canada	1383	5464	25.3%
Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Canada)	431	1251	34.5%
Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada	28	64	43.8%
Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections	24	58	41.4%
Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada	21	29	72.4%
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages	81	163	49.7%
Office of the Correctional Investigator	18	34	52.9%
Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada	47	114	41.2%
Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada	99	228	43.4%
Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada	13	31	41.9%
Office of the Secretary to the Governor General	40	155	25.8%

Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions	342	1251	27.3%
Pacific Economic Development Canada	66	181	36.5%
Parole Board of Canada	167	416	40.1%
Patented Medicine Prices Review Board Canada	43	78	55.1%
Prairies Economic Development Canada	141	312	45.2%
Privy Council Office	362	1057	34.2%
Public Health Agency of Canada	756	3095	24.4%
Public Prosecution Service of Canada	356	1074	33.1%
Public Safety Canada	539	1526	35.3%
Public Service Commission of Canada	431	767	56.2%
Public Services and Procurement Canada	6028	18245	33.0%
Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada	71	224	31.7%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	4061	12270	33.1%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee	13	24	54.2%
Secretariat of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians	1	5	20.0%
Shared Services Canada	2225	8777	25.4%
Statistics Canada	2469	6973	35.4%
Transport Canada	2137	6208	34.4%
Transportation Safety Board of Canada	87	222	39.2%
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	829	2130	38.9%
Veteran Affairs Canada	1247	3618	34.5%
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	34	122	27.9%
Women and Gender Equality Canada	147	337	43.6%
Total	**82987**	**268584**	**30.9%**

7.2 Survey errors

The survey is subject to various survey errors that may occur at almost every phase of a survey operation. Respondents may misunderstand instructions or make errors in answering questions; the answers may be incorrectly entered on the questionnaire and errors may be introduced in processing and tabulating the data.

Over a large number of observations, randomly occurring errors will have little effect on estimates derived from the survey. However, errors occurring systematically will contribute to biases in the survey estimates. Considerable time and effort were taken to reduce non-sampling errors in the survey. Quality assurance measures were implemented at each step of the questionnaire development, data collection and processing cycle to monitor the quality of the data. These measures include survey pre-testing to detect problems of questionnaire design or misunderstanding of instructions, highly tested computerized questionnaire applications, procedures to ensure that data capture errors were minimized, and edit quality checks to verify the processing logic.

7.3 Data collection

A description of the survey objectives was provided to the respondents on the survey login page. The Advanis survey support website also provided links to the Government of Canada survey information page as well as contact information in case respondents had any questions for the PSC.

The Advanis support team (accessed through a toll-free number and email address) provided support for participants who had questions during collection or needed technical assistance.

7.4 Data processing

Data processing of the survey was done in a number of steps including verification, editing, estimation and confidentiality. At each step, a copy of the output files is kept, and an easy verification can be made comparing files at the current and previous step.

7.5 Non-response

There is the potential for non-response bias in that response rates varied by department and agency and for certain demographic characteristics (for example, response rates for younger employees tend to be lower than for older employees). To adjust for this possible source of error, Advanis weighted the data by age, sex, and department.

The extent of non-response varies from partial non-response (failure to answer just one or some questions) to total non-response. Total non-response occurred because employee contact information from the department or agency was not obtained, the contact information was incorrect, the respondent had problems accessing the electronic questionnaire, or the respondent refused to participate in the survey. Total non-response was handled by adjusting the weight of employees who responded to the survey to compensate for those who did not respond.

In most cases, item non-response to the survey occurred when the respondent did not understand or misinterpreted a question, refused to answer a question, or could not recall the requested information. For item non-response a "Not stated" code was assigned to the item.

7.6 Measurement of sampling error

Following Statistics Canada's methodology previously used to maintain consistency, respondents are treated as a sample of the population due to the level of non-response. In this approach, non-response error is addressed analytically as sampling error. However, because the survey was a census and all members of the population were invited to participate, sampling error serves only as a methodological proxy; any differences between the reported estimates and the true population values are due to non-sampling error. Given this methodological consideration, the term sampling error will be used interchangeably with survey error for the purposes of the 2025 survey.

This section outlines the sampling error measures and indicates which of these users of the microdata file should use when producing estimates.

The basis for measuring the potential size of sampling errors is the standard error of the estimates derived from survey results.

However, because of the large variety of estimates that can be produced from a survey, the standard error of an estimate is usually expressed relative to the estimate to which it pertains. This resulting measure, known as the coefficient of variation (CV) of an estimate, is obtained by dividing the standard error of the estimate by the estimate itself and is expressed as a percentage of the estimate.

For example, suppose that one estimates that 52% of federal public servants participated in a staffing activity and this estimate is found to have a standard error of 0.005. Then the coefficient of variation of the estimate is calculated as:

$$\left(\frac{0.005}{0.52}\right) \times 100\% = 0.96\%$$

Determining the quality of the estimates and calculating coefficients of variation (CV) for the SNPS requires the use of the bootstrap method of variance estimation.

8. Weighting

Although all eligible employees were included in the sample for the 2025 survey, because of the levels of non-response it was necessary to weight the responding units by department or agency so that they were representative of the target population. The weight adjusts for the non-response within gender and age groups, within each department or agency. There is one weight for each record.

8.1 Non-response adjustment

Total non-response can be a major source of non-sampling error in many surveys, depending on the degree to which respondents and non-respondents differ with respect to the characteristics of interest. In the SNPS, total non-response occurred when an eligible employee did not participate in the survey. In 2025, 30.9% of the eligible employees in the survey population responded to the SNPS. Non-response groups were formed using sex and age groupings in order to compute non-response weight adjustment factors for each department and agency.

Weights were calculated using the ratio of the population and respondent counts for each age and gender combination, within each department and agency. Where age and/or gender were unknown or non-binary, values were randomly assigned based on the overall age and gender proportions within all participating departments and agencies. When age and gender population were missing, weights were developed by combining with age groups that were older if possible (and younger if not possible). A weight was then calculated for each respondent.

The purpose of adjusting for non-response is to account for the under-representation of age and gender groups in the respondent group by aligning to the population counts. In this way, the respondent group will better represent the department's or agency's composition of age and gender groups.

8.2 Post-stratification adjustment and final weight

Post-stratification is one of the calibration estimation techniques widely used in social surveys. The weights produced for the 2025 survey were calibrated to the number of employees in the public service population at each department or agency. Post-strata were additionally defined using age and gender information.

For each response in department or agency i and non-response group j, the weight w_{ij} is equal to:

$$W_{ij} = \frac{N_{ij}}{n_{ij}}$$

where:

N_{ij} is the number of public service employees in department or agency i and non-response group j, and

n_{ij} is the number of respondents in department or agency i and non-response group j.

The total weighted count of respondents in a non-response group sums to the public service population of that group. For example, the total weighted count of the respondents from the female, 25 to 29 age group at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) sums to the total count of all female employees aged 25 to 29 at ESDC.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

2025 Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey