



Workforce survey template

Guidance and template
to collect employee
self-identification data
for employment equity



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Canada

Workforce survey template: Guidance and template to collect employee self-identification data for employment equity

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01 Introduction for employers

Under federal employment equity programs, you must rely on voluntary self-identification to collect data on employees who are Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. You must then use that information to support your employment equity efforts and mandatory reporting to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

In the past, some employers have indicated that members of designated groups sometimes refuse to self-identify.

This document provides a template that you can use to help you collect self-identification data from employees.

This template is optional. You may choose not to use it or to adapt portions of it to fit with your organizational context. For instance, you could include additional questions relating to employment equity as part of a more detailed survey. If you opt to use a different instrument to collect employee self-identification information, you must ensure that you meet the basic requirement for the collection of workforce information for the purpose of employment equity. If you have any questions about these requirements, please contact us at ee-eme@servicecanada.gc.ca.

Some of the language used in the template is from the *Employment Equity Act* (the Act) and may differ from the language you use in other communications with employees. Some terms and definitions have been retained so employers can report employee data in accordance with the Act and the *Employment Equity Regulations* (the Regulations) or the Federal Contractors Program. Where possible, we have included footnotes with additional context, but employers may wish to provide additional information for employees. Other language has been retained so employers can understand their workforce over time (i.e., asking questions in consistent ways facilitates comparisons to national statistics and year-over-year comparisons).

There are several notes with additional guidance (highlighted in boxes) for employers throughout the questionnaire, as well as a section at the end of this template with instructions for how to code responses. These are for employers only, and are meant to be removed from the questionnaire when implementing it.

You may wish to include additional context or create opportunities to address employee concerns about the purpose of the questionnaire and/or the questions. For example, hosting a Q&A session for employees or adapting the introduction to provide more information specific to your organization. We also have the guide “Collecting Employee Self-Identification Data” for employers who are looking to run an extended campaign to collect self-ID data.

02 Example of a workforce survey

Introduction to the workforce survey

As part of our employment equity program, we are gathering information to help us accurately capture the diversity of our workforce.

Below you will find more details about the survey and why we are sharing this survey with you.

What is this survey

This survey helps us understand the representation of four designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

Why am I asked to share information about my identity and what are the benefits

The information you provide will help us in making this workplace more inclusive and equitable for everyone. Your information will help identify employment barriers and plan actions to improve equality in the workplace.

How will my information be protected

Your responses will be confidential and will be securely stored according to our data protection policies. Please consult the [Privacy Notice](#) for other protections of your information.

How will the information I share be used

Your information will only be used to pursue equality in the workplace under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program. Responses to the survey or any requests for accommodations will not negatively affect training, promotion, or retention opportunities. This data will only be shared for authorized purposes under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program, such as annual reporting and, for employers subject to the *Employment Equity Act*, publication on Equi'Vision (no personal information is published on [Equi'Vision](#)). Please consult the [Privacy Notice](#) for other uses of your information.

Important information

It is **mandatory** to:

- provide your name and employee number (Section A), and
- return this form to human resources.

Completing sections B to E is **voluntary** but recommended.

You can review and update your information anytime. This questionnaire is available in Braille, large print or audio format upon request.

Example of workforce survey questionnaire

A. Employee information (Mandatory)

Name: _____

Employee number: _____

Note to employers: Employees who return the questionnaire must be identifiable, but means of identification are flexible (e.g., asking for name and email instead of employee number). Organizations can also include additional employee information fields (e.g., position title, section/division, employment status).

B. Data to support employment equity (Voluntary)

You may identify as belonging to more than one designated group. Definitions of each group, according to the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program, are available at the end of this document.

1. Do you identify as a woman?

Note to employers: Under the *Employment Equity Act*, organizations do not have to rely on self-identification to count women. Employers can use information obtained from payroll or personnel records. If such information is not available, organizations can ask if employees identify as a woman in their workforce survey.

Do you identify as a woman:

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

2. Do you identify as an Aboriginal person¹?

You do not need legal or official status to identify with this term under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program.

Do you identify as:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Indigenous group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inuk (Inuit) | (e.g., Indigenous peoples from other regions in the world) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Métis | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

Note for employers: For the purposes of employment equity, you should count as Aboriginal peoples only employees who identify as First Nations, Inuk (Inuit), or Métis. Employees who identify as belonging to other Indigenous groups are not included in the definition under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program, and should not be included in the statistics on Aboriginal peoples.

¹ Aboriginal peoples is the legal term used in the *Employment Equity Act* and the Federal Contractors Program. In the Act, Aboriginal peoples refer to “persons who are Indians, Inuit or Métis.” ‘First Nations’ is now more commonly used than ‘Indians.’

3. Do you identify as a person with a disability?

An official medical diagnosis is not necessary to identify as having a disability.

Do you have an impairment that has lasted or is expected to last 6 months or more?

Impairments may be long-term or recurring, and relate to physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric, or learning conditions that limit daily activities.

- Yes, I have an impairment
- No, I do not have an impairment
- Prefer not to say

If you answered yes, which of the following, if any, apply to you:

- I consider myself disadvantaged in employment because of this impairment
- Employers / potential employers may consider me disadvantaged in employment because of that impairment
- I may require accommodations to be able to work
- I do not have an impairment
- Prefer not to say

Your responses will not negatively impact your training, promotion, or retention in the organization. We are available to discuss any additional support you may need.

Note for employers: For the purposes of employment equity, only employees who answer that they have an impairment for the first question and check one of the first three options in the section below it are to be included in data on persons with disabilities. For instance, employees who select ‘Yes, I have an impairment’ and ‘I do not have an impairment’ or ‘Prefer not to say’ are **not** to be included.

4. Do you identify as a member of a visible minority²?

A person may identify as such regardless of their place of birth or citizenship.

Do you identify as belonging to any of the following racial or ethnic groups³?

(check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab | <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Inuk (Inuit), or Métis | <input type="checkbox"/> Other non-White racial or ethnic group, please specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American | |

² Under the Act and the Federal Contractors Program, members of visible minorities are defined as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

³ These categories align with the Canadian census, allowing employers to assess and compare the diversity of their workforce.

Note for employers: For the purposes of employment equity, employers should include all employees who select answers *other than* 'First Nations, Inuk (Inuit) or Métis', 'White', and 'Prefer not to say' in data on members of visible minorities.

If the system used to administer the questionnaire does not allow for more complex coding, employers can exclude the 'First Nation, Inuk (Inuit) or Métis', 'White', and 'Prefer not to say' answer options from the question, and count all employees who check any of the remaining boxes as members of visible minorities.

C. Additional information for accommodation purposes

Please let us know how we can help you more fully participate in the workplace in the space below. If we implement these accommodation measures, they will not have a negative impact on your training, promotion and retention in our organization.

We currently provide the following accommodations and are open to discussing any additional support you may need:

[List of available accommodations]

D. Employee comments

If you have any comments or feedback on equality in our workplace, please provide them in the space below or contact our employment equity representative by phone [number] or email [address].

Your comments will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation!

Please return to: [contact information]

Questions? Contact [department] by phone [number] or [email].

Definitions of designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act* or the Federal Contractors Program

Aboriginal peoples means persons who are Indians, Inuit or Métis.

Persons with disabilities means persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who:

- a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or
- b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment,

and includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

Members of visible minorities means persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

Privacy notice

The information you provide in this self-identification questionnaire is collected under the authority of sections 18 and 42 of the [Employment Equity Act](#) (the Act) to enable our organization to implement employment equity in the workplace, by collecting workforce data, identifying employment barriers and correcting any underrepresentation of members of designated groups.

While participation in the self-identification survey is voluntary, refusal to provide personal information will result in the incomplete or inaccurate capture of our workforce data and limit our ability to achieve equality in our workplace.

The information you provide will be deidentified and reported with other employees' data to the [Labour Program](#) of Employment and Social Development Canada for the purpose of complying with requirements under the [Legislated Employment Equity Program](#) (LEEP) or the [Federal Contractors Program](#) (FCP). Subject to the Act, information from LEEP annual reports will be shared with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and made publicly available on [Equi'Vision](#) (no personal information is published on Equi'Vision). LEEP and FCP information may also be used or shared with other entities established by Employment and Social Development Canada for policy analysis, research and evaluation purposes.

The personal information you submit is administered in accordance with the [Employment Equity Act](#), the [Department of Employment and Social Development Act](#), and the [Privacy Act](#). You have the right to the protection of, and access to, your personal information, which is described in [Personal Information Bank ESDC PPU 739 – Workplace Equity](#). Read [How access to information and personal information requests work](#) for instructions on how to access this information or visit your [Service Canada Office](#).

You have the right to file a complaint with the [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#) regarding government institutions' handling of your personal information.

03 Guidance for employers on coding responses

Coding for:

Do you identify as an Aboriginal person

A person is counted as an Aboriginal person if they check the “First Nations”, “Inuk (Inuit)”, or “Métis” boxes.

Coding for:

Do you identify as a person with a disability

A person is counted as a person with a disability if they answer in the affirmative to both questions, as outlined below:

1. “Yes, I have an impairment”

And

2. At least one of the following:

- “I consider myself disadvantaged in employment because of this impairment”
- “Employers / potential employers may consider me disadvantaged in employment because of that impairment”
- “I may require accommodations to be able to work”

Examples

Is a person with a disability

Employee who selects both ‘Yes, I have an impairment’ **and** ‘Employers / potential employers may consider me disadvantaged in employment because of that impairment’

Is not a person with a disability

Employee who selects ‘Prefer not to say’ to the first question, **and** ‘I may require accommodations to be able to work’ to the second.

Coding for:

Do you identify as a member of a visible minority

A person is counted as a member of a visible minority if they select any option, **excluding**:

- “First Nations”, “Inuk (Inuit)” or “Métis”
- “White”
- “White” in combination with ‘Arab’
- “White” in combination with ‘Latin American’
- “White” in combination with ‘West Asian’
- “Prefer not to say”

This coding reflects the interpretation from Statistics Canada (Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021).

Examples

Is a member of a visible minority	Employee who identifies as both ‘Chinese’ and ‘White’
Is a member of a visible minority	Employee who identifies as both ‘Chinese’ and ‘Arab’
Is not a member of a visible minority	Employee who identifies as both ‘West Asian’ and ‘White’
Is not a member of a visible minority	Employee who identifies as ‘First Nations, Inuk (Inuit) or Métis’