

How well is the government meeting its diversity targets? An intersectionality analysis

With the latest [Employment Equity report](#), we now have six years of data that provides a breakdown of visible minority and Indigenous groups, as well as gender. The data shows that representation of visible minorities has been increasing at a faster rate than the non-visible minority and non-Indigenous (NVMIP) public servant population. However, Indigenous representation, with the exception of Inuit, has experienced a slight decline. The proportion of women in the public service continues to rise across most visible minority and Indigenous groups. The government's commitment in the 2020 Speech from the Throne to implement an action plan to increase representation in hiring, appointments, and leadership development within the public service is being fulfilled.

The elimination of the Canadian citizenship preference in public service hiring had a small but notable effect in 2022, almost doubling compared to the average of the previous five years.

Based on the 2016 census data, the workforce availability for all employees is 17.2 percent, while it is 11.2 percent for executives.

Visible minorities

Regarding visible minorities, Figure 1 examines the overall representation of visible minorities, comparing the total visible minority population with the [Employment Equity report](#) numbers for 2021-22. It also measures the degree of under-representation of various groups in the all-employee and EX levels compared to the 2021 census data. The gaps are most significant for the South Asian, Filipino, and Chinese groups in both all-employee and executive levels, and least pronounced for the Black group at the all-employee level, and for Japanese and Korean groups at the executive level.

Figure 1: Visible Minority Representation 2022 Compared to Population

Group	2021 Census	2022 EE Report		Population Benchmark	
	Population	All	EX	Gap All	Gap EX
Total VisMin population	26.5%	20.2%	14.0%	-6.3%	-12.6%
South Asian	7.1%	3.7%	3.0%	-3.4%	-4.1%
Chinese	4.7%	3.3%	1.6%	-1.4%	-3.1%
Black	4.3%	4.2%	2.3%	-0.1%	-1.9%
Filipino	2.6%	0.8%	0.3%	-1.8%	-2.4%
Latin American	1.6%	0.9%	0.4%	-0.7%	-1.2%
Arab/West Asian	2.9%	2.3%	2.1%	-0.6%	-0.8%
Southeast Asian	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	-0.2%	-0.6%
Korean	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	-0.3%	-0.4%
Japanese	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.2%	-0.2%
Visible minority, n.i.e	0.5%	2.1%	1.5%	1.7%	1.0%
Multiple visible minorities	0.9%	1.6%	1.9%	0.7%	1.0%
Not a visible minority, nor Indigenous	68.5%	75.9%	81.2%	7.4%	12.7%

Highlighting: Red, less than -2 percent, Green, greater than 5 percent

Figure 2 illustrates the hiring rates, which represent the percentage of public servants in each group compared to the total group number, using the 2021-22 data and the percentage change between 2017 and 2022. In general, the hiring of visible minorities has been slightly higher than that of non-visible minority and non-Indigenous people, with a gradual increase since 2016-17. The most significant change from 2017 has been observed in the hiring of Filipino, Black, and Southeast Asian men, while the greatest increase has been for South Asian and Black women.

Figure 2: Visible Minority Hiring Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-22			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Black	16.1%	17.0%	16.6%	100.0%	82.5%	90.0%
South Asian	14.4%	17.1%	15.9%	88.5%	109.5%	99.5%
Chinese	9.5%	11.4%	10.6%	88.7%	65.6%	73.5%
West Asian, Arab	12.6%	14.6%	13.6%	77.0%	66.1%	71.1%
Latin American	17.4%	16.1%	16.8%	82.3%	56.8%	65.1%
Southeast Asian	12.4%	13.5%	13.0%	91.9%	53.9%	68.5%
Filipino	17.0%	14.7%	15.6%	149.6%	75.0%	100.0%
Korean			15.5%			3.5%
Japanese			9.0%			1.0%
Mixed Origin	14.2%	17.4%	16.3%	82.3%	125.2%	107.1%
Other	7.5%	10.0%	9.0%	-71.3%	-65.0%	-67.4%
All visible minorities	13.2%	14.8%	14.1%	40.3%	35.9%	37.5%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	11.2%	12.7%	11.8%	37.3%	33.5%	31.8%
Difference	2.0%	2.0%	2.3%	3.7%	2.1%	5.8%

Note: Given small numbers, gender breakdowns for Korean and Japanese not available, 0 hirings in 2016-17 and 2017-18 so baseline used for those two groups is 2018-19. Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer hirings), Green greater than 75 percent

Figure 3 captures the flip side of hiring, which is separations, including retirement, leaving the public service for the private sector, or other reasons. Overall, separation rates are lower for visible minorities, especially men, when compared to non-visible minority and non-Indigenous public servants. Although not explicitly controlled in this data, age and length of employment are likely factors, given the younger demographics of most visible minority public servants. It is worth noting that Black public servants have the lowest separation rates.

Figure 3: Visible Minority Separation Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-2022			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Black	4.4%	5.0%	4.7%	-13.3%	-39.5%	-30.7%
South Asian	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	21.4%	10.3%	15.1%
Chinese	3.5%	3.7%	3.6%	18.4%	9.1%	13.0%
West Asian, Arab	3.6%	3.0%	3.3%	0.1%	-13.2%	-6.8%
Latin American	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	76.5%	-13.0%	10.5%
Southeast Asian	4.6%	4.3%	4.4%	49.7%	9.3%	25.1%
Filipino	4.6%	3.7%	4.0%	22.5%	-25.2%	-9.7%
Korean	4.8%	4.2%	4.5%			55.4%
Japanese	11.1%	3.9%	6.5%			-21.7%
Mixed Origin	5.6%	5.1%	5.3%	24.4%	12.5%	17.0%
Other	4.9%	5.1%	5.0%	-52.3%	-62.1%	-58.5%
All visible minorities	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	-6.3%	-28.1%	-19.8%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	7.7%	7.4%	7.3%	18.2%	-1.7%	4.1%
Difference	-3.4%	-3.1%	-3.1%	-24.5%	-26.4%	-23.9%

Note: Given small numbers, gender breakdowns for Korean and Japanese not available, no separations in 2016-17. Change is from 2017-18. Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer separations)

Moving on to promotions, Figure 4 examines the promotion rates by group and gender. The promotion rates for most visible minority groups are significantly higher than those for non-visible minority and non-Indigenous public servants, especially for women, except for West Asian/Arab, Filipino, and Japanese men, and Latin American and Japanese women. Among visible minority groups, Korean, Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Black men have the highest promotion rates, while Southeast Asian, Black, Chinese, and South Asian women have the highest promotion rates.

Figure 4: Visible Minority Promotion Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-2022			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Black	12.7%	15.4%	14.2%	43.5%	68.4%	57.8%
South Asian	11.8%	14.5%	13.3%	44.9%	41.2%	43.3%
Chinese	10.6%	14.4%	12.7%	32.3%	44.0%	40.1%
West Asian, Arab	14.3%	18.5%	16.5%	17.8%	36.6%	28.6%
Latin American	12.0%	14.5%	13.5%	14.8%	21.8%	18.4%
Southeast Asian	11.6%	16.9%	14.6%	70.7%	93.1%	85.1%
Filipino	8.9%	13.9%	12.0%	-2.5%	43.9%	26.7%
Korean	16.8%	18.1%	17.6%	74.7%	30.7%	46.3%
Japanese	9.1%	9.0%	9.0%	1.1%	-33.8%	-23.5%
Mixed Origin	15.9%	16.6%	16.3%	65.4%	34.4%	45.3%
Other	13.2%	17.0%	15.5%	18.1%	53.2%	39.3%
All visible minorities	12.5%	15.6%	14.3%	35.7%	48.5%	43.8%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	10.2%	12.3%	11.1%	17.3%	23.6%	18.7%
Difference	2.3%	3.3%	3.1%	18.4%	25.0%	25.1%

Note: No promotions in 2016-17 for Korean and Japanese, 2018-19 used instead. Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer promotions), Green greater than 40 percent

Indigenous peoples

Figure 5 compares the overall Indigenous representation, including the total Indigenous population, the 2021-22 [Employment Equity report](#) data, and the degree of over or under-representation of groups at the all-employee and executive (EX) levels, as compared to the 2021 census data. The gaps are relatively small for all public servants, with Métis being over-represented and First Nations being under-represented. The workforce availability, based on 2016 census data, is 3.8 percent for all Indigenous employees and 5.2 percent for Indigenous executives.

Figure 5: Indigenous peoples Representation 2022 Compared to Population

Group	2021 Census	2022 EE Report		Population Benchmark	
	Population	All	EX	Gap All	Gap EX
Total Indigenous population	5.0%	5.2%	4.9%	0.2%	-0.1%
Inuit	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	-0.0%	-0.1%
Métis	1.7%	2.2%	2.1%	0.5%	0.4%
First Nations	2.9%	2.2%	2.0%	-0.7%	-0.9%
Other	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	68.5%	75.9%	81.2%	7.4%	12.7%

Highlighting: Red, less than 0, Green, greater than 5 percent

Figure 6 focuses on the hiring rates of Indigenous public servants, using the 2021-22 data and the percentage changes. Overall, the hiring of Indigenous peoples has been slightly lower than that of non-visible minority and non-Indigenous people. The hiring of Inuit and Métis men is stronger than that of First Nations men, while the opposite is true for First Nations women when compared to men.

Figure 6: Indigenous Hiring Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-2022			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Inuit	15.6%	10.9%	12.5%	33.9%	-35.1%	-16.8%
Métis	8.0%	10.2%	9.4%	91.9%	51.8%	64.7%
First Nation	9.0%	11.6%	10.6%	80.1%	101.8%	95.1%
Other	6.9%	8.3%	7.8%	-56.6%	-66.1%	-63.3%
All Indigenous Peoples	8.5%	10.6%	9.8%	44.1%	31.3%	35.6%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	10.7%	12.0%	11.1%	36.7%	33.8%	23.7%
Difference	-2.2%	-1.4%	-1.3%	7.5%	-2.5%	11.9%

Note: No gender breakdowns in 2016-17 for Inuit and Métis, 2018 baseline used. Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer hirings)

Figure 7 centres on overall separation rates. In 2021-22, separation rates were lower for Indigenous peoples than for non-visible minority and non-Indigenous public servants. However, over the past six years, separations of Indigenous men have decreased, while they have increased for Indigenous women.

Figure 7: Indigenous Separation Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-2022			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Inuit	10.7%	11.3%	11.1%	15.9%	29.5%	24.5%
Métis	6.5%	6.1%	6.3%	27.8%	14.7%	19.7%
First Nation	6.7%	7.6%	7.3%	9.1%	41.5%	28.8%
Other	5.5%	7.5%	6.7%	-46.3%	-33.6%	-38.8%
All Indigenous Peoples	6.5%	7.1%	6.9%	5.3%	15.2%	11.3%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	7.7%	7.4%	7.3%	18.2%	-1.7%	4.1%
Difference	-1.2%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-12.9%	16.9%	7.3%

Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer separations), Green greater than 25 percent

Figure 8 examines the relative promotion rates by group and gender. For most Indigenous groups, promotion rates are greater than those of non-visible minority and non-Indigenous public servants, with increased promotions for Indigenous women being greater than those for men for all groups. The only exception is Inuit men, who experienced a decrease in promotion rates from 2017.

Figure 8: Indigenous Peoples Promotion Rates by Group and Gender

	2021-2022			% Change 2022 from 2017		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Inuit	8.2%	15.1%	12.7%	-10.9%	87.0%	50.4%
Métis	9.9%	14.1%	12.5%	15.9%	34.0%	28.7%
First Nation	9.6%	11.7%	11.0%	22.3%	68.2%	50.2%
Other	12.8%	15.1%	14.2%	61.6%	50.6%	54.2%
All Indigenous Peoples	10.2%	13.3%	12.1%	23.8%	50.0%	40.8%
Not VisMin, Indigenous	3.2%	4.1%	3.6%	93.8%	101.3%	94.7%
Difference	6.9%	9.2%	8.5%	-70.0%	-51.3%	-53.9%

Highlighting: Red less than 0 (fewer promotions), Green greater than 50 percent

Concluding observations

These results need to be seen in the context of a public service that expanded by 27 percent during 2017-22.

Overall, the data shows that the government has made significant progress in increasing representation of visible minorities in hirings and promotions. This progress is highlighted by the lower rate of visible minority separations and an overall increase in the percentage of visible minority groups in the public service, with the exception of Japanese. Notably, despite the [class action lawsuit](#), Blacks have had some of the strongest hiring and promotion rates of all public servants over the past six years

However, the results are more mixed for Indigenous peoples, with modest improvements in representation, particularly with respect to promotion rates for both men and women. Indigenous women have lower hiring rates and higher separation rates than men.

The 2021 [Clerk Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#) does not appear to have had a major influence on increased representation as the trend predates the call to action.

Finally, should the government decide to reduce the size of the public service for fiscal reasons, the recent gains in diversity and representation could be adversely affected by seniority considerations in any Work Force Adjustment Directive.

Methodology

Data was provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat for visible minorities and Indigenous peoples for fiscal years 2016-17 to 2021-22, by occupational group and gender. Analysis highlights hiring, separation and promotion rates (percentage of hires, separations, promotions compared to the overall visible minority or Indigenous group population). 2022 data was compared to 2017 data to indicate changes over this period. Change is by percentage change (i.e., 10 percent compared to 5 percent: $(10-5)/5=100\%$).

Andrew Griffith is the author of *[“Because it’s 2015...” Implementing Diversity and Inclusion](#)*, *[Multiculturalism in Canada: Evidence and Anecdote](#)* and *[Policy Arrogance or Innocent Bias: Resetting Citizenship and Multiculturalism](#)* and is a regular media commentator and blogger ([Multiculturalism Meanderings](#)). He is the former Director General for Citizenship and Multiculturalism and has worked for a variety of government departments in Canada and abroad and is a fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and Environics Institute.