

# Young Workers (15 to 24)

## Demographic Profile of Tourism Sector Employees 2011\*



Tourism **HR**  
Canada

In 2011, Canada's tourism sector had an employed labour force of 1,651,440 workers. This represented 10% of Canada's employed workers, making tourism the third largest sector in terms of total employment share, ahead of manufacturing (9.2%), educational services (7.5%) and public administration (7.3%).<sup>1</sup> The following demographic profile presents tourism sector data from the 2011 National Household Survey, and represents only a sample of the available data. For more information, contact Tourism HR Canada at [research@tourismhr.ca](mailto:research@tourismhr.ca).

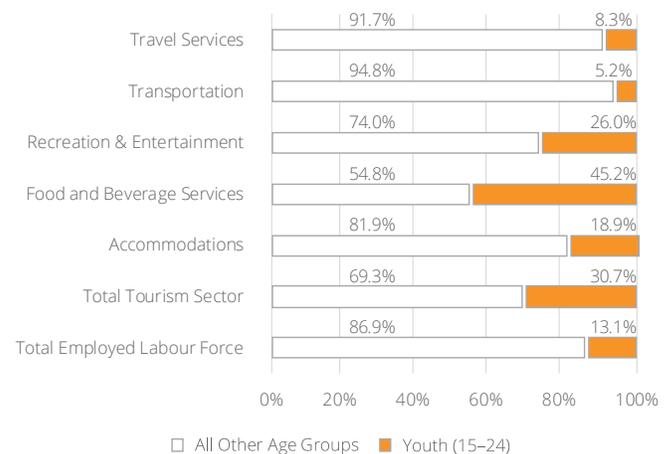
### Youth Employed in Tourism

Young workers, or youth, are those who fall between the ages of 15 and 24. They are an important group of workers for the tourism sector, making up 30.7% of the labour force. Considering that only 13.1% of Canada's labour force falls in the 15 to 24 year range, youth are a demographic group on which tourism businesses rely very heavily.<sup>2</sup>

### Youth by Industry Group

This reliance on youth workers is concentrated in the food and beverage industry group: almost half of workers at food and beverage businesses are younger than 25. Recreation and entertainment and accommodation businesses also rely on youth, although not to the same degree (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Youth as a Percentage of the Labour Force –  
By Industry Group



### Youth by Occupation

These industry groups rely on youth to this degree because certain occupations, which make up a large percentage of the industry group's workforce, tend to employ young workers, some almost exclusively. Within the tourism sector, there are five occupations in which over 50% of workers are 15-24 (See Table 1).

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Portrait of Canada's Labour Force.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Portrait of Canada's Labour Force

\* Customized Tabulations: National Household Survey, 2011.

Table 1: Youth as a Percentage of Occupation—  
By Industry Group

Occupation	Tourism Sector (%)	Food & Beverage Services (%)	Accommodation (%)	Recreation & Entertainment (%)
Maîtres d'hôtel, hosts/hostesses	82.9	85.4	46.0	48.2
Cashiers	63.0	65.4	34.5	53.9
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers, related support occupations	62.7	63.1	40.1	71.2
Operators, attendants in amusement, recreation, sport	54.3	77.8	43.6	55.0
Program leaders, instructors in recreation, sport, fitness	52.3	48.6	80.8	50.3

## Youth in Tourism by Gender

The general labour force and the tourism labour force are roughly balanced between men and women. This is also true of young workers in the general labour force. However, among young tourism workers, the percentage of females in the labour force exceeded males by about 13 percentage points. This increased prevalence of female workers among those aged 15–24 can be seen among all five industry groups (See Table 2).

Table 2: Male and Female Youth in Tourism—By Industry Group

	All Age Groups (%)		Youth (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Employed Labour Force	52.0	48.0	50.6	49.4
Total Tourism Sector	48.9	51.1	43.6	56.4
Accommodations	39.4	60.6	37.8	62.3
Recreation & Entertainment	52.8	47.2	49.3	50.7
Food & Beverage Services	42.3	57.7	41.9	58.1
Transportation	72.0	28.0	65.2	34.8
Travel Services	30.2	69.8	28.1	71.9

## Demographics of Young Tourism Workers

As might be expected, young workers reported a lower incidence of disability. They were more likely to identify as Aboriginal, but were less likely to come from a visible minority group than people in the general labour force. They were also less likely to have a language other than English or French as their mother tongue (See Table 3). This may be because young workers were also much less likely to have been born outside Canada, reflecting Canada's preference for economic migrants who have higher levels of education, specific skills and work experience—all items which older workers are more likely to have acquired.

Table 3: Select Demographic Characteristics of Youth  
Employed in Tourism

Demographic Characteristic	Youth (%)	All Age Groups (%)
Born in Canada	87.4	74.1
Born Outside Canada	12.6	25.9
Population With Disabilities	6.7	12.3
Aboriginal Identity Population	4.5	3.5
Visible Minority Population	17.4	22.6
Mother Tongue Not English or French	14.1	23.9

## Education and Part-Time Employment

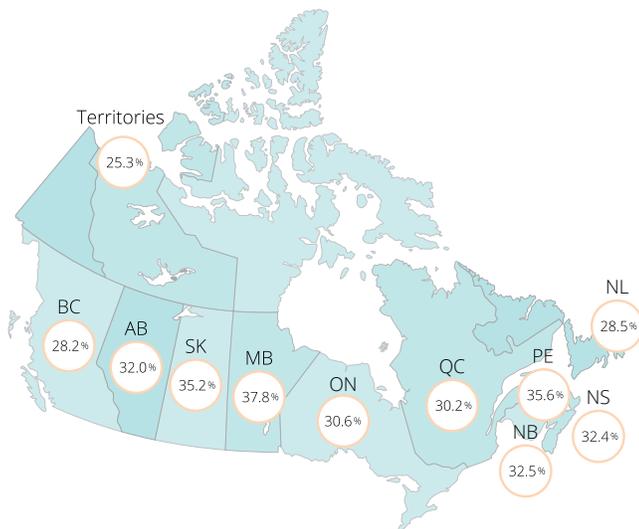
Not surprisingly, the youth demographic showed lower levels of education than their older counterparts. Among youth tourism workers, 27.9% had no certificate diploma or degree, and for almost half (47.6%) a high school degree was their highest achieved level of education. However, 68.1% of tourism workers aged 15–24 reported that they had attended school within the past nine months, suggesting that a large number of young tourism employees are working and continuing their education concurrently.

Young workers were also more likely to work part-time. Across the entire Canadian labour force, 52.7% of workers aged 15–24 work part-time. In tourism, the prevalence of part-time work is even higher with 69.5% of youth working part-time. Those occupations that had the highest proportion of part-time workers were the same occupations that employed the highest proportions of young workers in general (See Table 1). This overlap between jobs with a high proportion of youth workers and a high proportion of part-time work supports the belief that young workers are attracted to work that allows a flexible schedule.

## Young Workers by Province

When comparing the number of youth working in tourism with each province's overall share of young workers, an interesting trend appears. The participation rates of youth in tourism were highest in Manitoba, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percent of Young Workers—By Province



## Moving Towards the Future

Tourism’s reliance on young workers presents a problem that will grow more acute in the near future. Those who are currently 15–24, often referred to as millennials or echo boomers, were born during a period of increased birth rates during the 1980s and early 1990s. Consequently, there were a large number of people in the echo generation relative to those born before and after them.

As they age, the total number of people in the 15–24 age group will decrease. This can already be seen by comparing the total number of people aged 20–24 (2.18 million people) and aged 15–19 (2.17 million people) to those aged 10–14 (1.9 million people).<sup>3</sup>

According to Statistics Canada, the number of people aged 15–24 is set to decline in Canada, even under high growth scenarios.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Statistics Canada, Population Projections for Canada (2013 to 2063) Projection scenario M1: medium-growth, 1991/1992 to 2010/2011 trends, May 26, 2015, Catalogue no. 91-520-X.

Using the more likely medium growth scenario, the number of people aged 15–24 began to drop in 2013.

The total population of people aged 15–24 is in the process of decreasing from roughly 4.6 million people in 2013 to 4.3 million people by 2021, an overall decrease of about 300,000 persons (See Figure 3). Only in 2022 will the youth demographic group begin to grow once more. Under these circumstances, if they wish to rely on young workers to the same degree that they currently do, tourism employers will need to be more competitive as all industries look for workers in a shrinking pool of labour.

Figure 3: Number of Canadians Aged 15–24, 2013 to 2030<sup>3</sup>

