

No Safe Harbour

Precarious Work and Economic Insecurity
Among Skilled Professionals in Canada

Trish Hennessy and Ricardo Tranjan





CCPA
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Executive Summary

“The labour laws just haven’t caught up with the loopholes. The ’60s, which was like the golden age of employment, where you got a job, buy a house and you’re set for life.... I feel like it’s as much a generational thing.... Governments really have to step in and say we have to think about a new way the economy is going to work. There’s got to be big picture thinking by the government on this issue.” – Justin, journalist

THE 1950S TO the 1980s marked a period in Canada’s labour market where job security through full-time, permanent work was seen as not only the goal but the golden standard. However, the rise of precarious work – unstable, lacking predictable income, sick pay, benefits and pension – has been an expanding feature in the world of Canadian work. Precarious work tends to be seen as jobs that require less formal education, jobs that pay less, jobs that require less skill and judgment, but is that truly the case?

This study reports on the first of its kind: a national survey of professionals in Canada in order to assess how many of them are in precarious jobs, who is in those precarious jobs, and what professionals think about the future of secure work in their field. The findings indicate that the hallmark characteristics of precarious work are seeping into professional work, despite professionals’ high level of education, credentials, and even experience.

Among the 1,000 survey respondents across Canada, 22 per cent of professionals are in precarious jobs compared to 78 per cent who are in standard employment relations. No region stands out as hosting more

precarious professional jobs than others; the national trend line is generally reflective of what's happening across the country.

Even those with full-time jobs are not immune to economic insecurity: 26 per cent of precarious professionals in Canada have full-time, permanent jobs. But among the precarious professionals who responded to this survey, 37 per cent work contract-to-contract, 34 per cent work part-time, and 15 per cent work as freelancers. There is a lot of uncertainty among precarious professionals: more than half have fluctuating incomes and 60 per cent don't have pension plans or sick pay. In sharp contrast, 85 per cent of professionals in secure jobs have a pension plan or company-based RRSP plan and 94 per cent get paid if they're sick.

Income can be unpredictable for professionals in precarious jobs. Half (53 per cent) say their income varies a lot, compared to only 21 per cent of professionals in secure jobs. In terms of compensation, precarious professionals (45 per cent) are more likely than secure professionals (17 per cent) to make less than \$60,000 a year but there is surprisingly a similar share of precarious (11 per cent) and secure (13 per cent) professionals who earn \$150,000 or more.

Precarious workers are found in all age groups, with a surprisingly higher incidence of precarious professionals among workers aged 55 to 64 years and among professionals with more 10 years of work experience. The precarious are more likely to be women (60 per cent, compared to 40 per cent of men).

There is no safe harbour: you can see precarious professionals in every sector, though they're more likely to work in the private sector (40 per cent), while 30 per cent work in the public sector and 24 per cent are self-employed. Precarious professionals can also be seen in every occupation, though there is a higher proportion working in education (28 per cent), health care (18 per cent), business, finance and administration (19 per cent).

We found a widespread sense of economic insecurity among both securely and precariously employed professionals. There is a sense that stable jobs in their field are increasingly hard to find: 58 per cent of all respondents, precarious or not, say that jobs in their profession used to be more secure. There is an interesting split among young professionals, aged 22–34: 45 per cent of professionals in this age bracket say a full-time, permanent job in their field is almost non-existent for anyone entering the profession while 50 per cent disagree.

Our findings also challenged the idea that well-paid professionals opt for non-traditional working conditions: 57 per cent of professionals who work part-time, contract-to-contract, or freelance say they would prefer better job

stability but it's hard to find these days and 43 per cent of them say the lack of employment stability keeps them up at night.

Meanwhile, many public sector professionals blame government policies for making their profession less stable: 59 per cent blame government funding cuts, 33 per cent blame privatization, and 37 per cent blame contracting out of public sector jobs.

Professions have long been seen as the domain of Canada's elite: well-educated, highly credentialized, well-compensated, white-collar workers. Precarious work has, for the most part, been seen as a blue-collar workers' problem, but the findings from this survey indicate that there is no safe harbour from precarious work and economic instability in Canada.

Introduction

RESEARCH BY THE Poverty & Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) project has heightened awareness about increased precariousness in the labour market: as of 2017, 45 per cent of residents in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area experience some form of job precarity.¹ PEPSO studies have also looked at the drivers and dynamics behind this trend² and examined the impact of job precariousness on household well-being,³ paying particular attention to women and immigrants.⁴ This report builds on this timely, policy-relevant research agenda.

While the original focus, and much of the research to date, has been on low-income earners,⁵ this report looks at precarious work among professionals across Canada. It does so by using two original data sources: four focus group sessions with professionals in two provinces and a national survey of 1,000 professionals from all occupational backgrounds — the first survey of its kind. Environics Research led the focus groups and conducted the survey on behalf of the CCPA.

Our findings are organized into two sections.

1. Precarious work: Using PEPSO's definition of Standard Employment Relationship (SER), the first section assesses the prevalence of job precariousness among professional workers in Canada. We found that precarious work cuts across all employment sectors, professional occupations, wage levels, ages, and career stages.

2. Economic insecurity: The PEPSO project has fruitfully combined quantitative and qualitative data, objective and self-assessed measures to de-

pict the impact of precarious work on people’s lives. With the same goal in mind, the second section discusses the results of survey and focus group questions focused on the experiences and perceptions of Canadian professionals. We found a pervasive sense of economic insecurity and a pessimistic outlook on the job market.

For the purposes of this study, a professional worker is engaged in work that requires advanced or specialized credentials, such as an advanced degree or certificate; work that is considered to require a high level of skill and judgment; work that is more intellectual in nature, as opposed to manual, mechanical, or physical work. Some professionals belong to a regulated, designated profession — such as lawyers and doctors. In the national survey, we relied on Statistics Canada’s National Occupational Classification (NOC) categories for professionals. Survey respondents were asked to identify the industrial category and occupation that defines their work. We know these professionals are highly educated and/or specialized and that they are paid at a higher rate than many workers in the labour market. But are they also vulnerable to the rise of precarious work?

Section 1: Precarious professional work

WE USED TWO survey questions to determine whether respondents were precariously employed. The first, which is a standard PESPO question, asked respondents:

Does the following describe your current job? “I have one employer, who I expect to be working for a year from now, who provides at least 30 hours of work a week, and who pays benefits.”

The second question requested respondents to select, from the list below, the options that describe their current working arrangement.

- My job is a full-time, permanent position
- My job is from contract-to-contract
- I work part-time
- I work freelance

The 78 per cent of respondents who answered **Yes** to the first question and reported having a full-time permanent job comprise the *secure professionals* group. The 22 per cent who answered **No** or answered **Yes** but do not have a full-time permanent job comprise the *precarious professionals* group. The 78/22 per cent split at the national level was also found in Ontario and

Quebec; slightly different splits were found in British Columbia (80/20), the Prairies (75/25), and the Maritimes (83/17).

26 per cent of precarious professionals have full-time permanent jobs

“I thought it would be stable. The faculty brags about the statistics they have about employment ... I’m getting the rude awakening that maybe engineering isn’t as stable as you thought it would be.” – Andrew, engineer

Among the precarious professionals, 26 per cent have full-time jobs, 37 per cent work contract-to-contract, 34 per cent work part-time, and 15 per cent work as freelancers.

60 per cent of precarious professionals don’t have pension plans and sick days

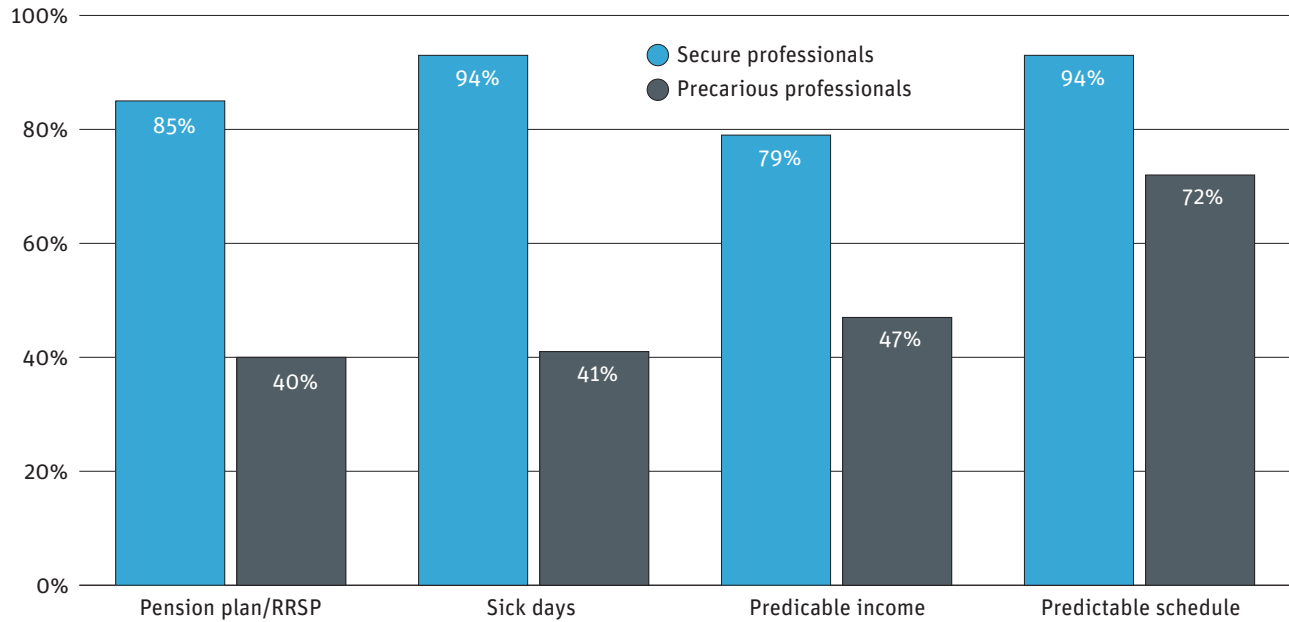
“I did have a permanent position. I had an injury. I can’t work in my job.... It was ideal until I had my accident. It sort of ruined my career.” – Janet, social worker

“You always worry: what if something happens to us? Without benefits there’s no security that way. There’s always that fear. I worry about my retirement. I don’t have that nest egg put away.” – Gary, recreation manager

Along with the lack of full-time permanent work, the hallmarks of precarious work include jobs that don’t come with benefits, pension plans, and sick pay.

The majority (85 per cent) of secure professionals who responded to this survey have a pension plan or company-based RRSP plan and 94 per cent get paid if they’re sick. Compare that to the precarious professionals, where only 40 per cent have a pension plan or company-based RRSP plan and only 41 per cent get paid if they’re sick.

FIGURE 1 Access to benefits and predictable schedules by employment status (secure versus precarious)



Source Environics Research.

More than half of precarious professionals have fluctuating incomes

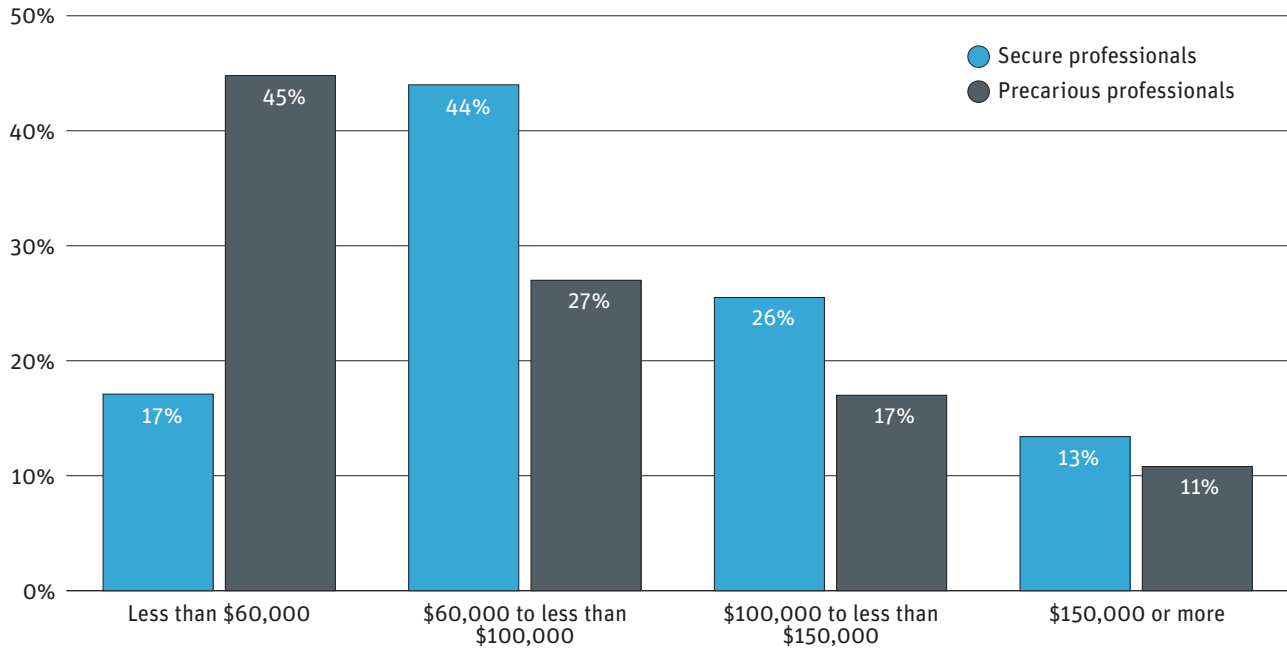
“I get paid based on what clients I bring.... I never know what my paycheque is gonna look like. It surprisingly is harder to find work than I thought. I’m happy where I am, I like where I am, it’s just unpredictable.” — Shanna, therapist

Unpredictable income is another aspect of working as a precarious professional in Canada: only 47 per cent of precarious professionals have predictable incomes, compared to 79% of secure professionals.

Almost 30 per cent of precarious professionals have unpredictable schedules

“I’m at a stage where I’m working mostly every day but there are stresses. You don’t get a call and you’re logging on waiting for a call.... there’s an element in the school where you are a second class citizen. You’re a sub.” — Stuart, teacher

FIGURE 2 Annual gross income by employment status (secure versus precarious)



Source Environics Research.

Working on call might be a part of the job for some professionals, such as doctors, but there is a marked distinction on this front: 27 per cent of precarious professionals say they work on call all or most of the time, compared to only 12 per cent of secure professionals.

Another characteristic of precarious work is that workers cannot control their work schedule. Ninety-four per cent of secure professionals know their schedule at least one week in advance, always or most of the time, compared to only 72 per cent of precarious professionals. While only two per cent of secure professionals never know their schedule in advance, 11 per cent of precarious professionals have no predictability.

Precarious professionals are twice as likely to make less than \$60,000

When asked about their gross annual income, 45 per cent of precarious professionals and 17 per cent of secure professionals reported earning less than \$60,000. These percentages are inverted in the \$60,000 to \$100,000 bracket, with 27 per cent of precarious professionals and 44 per cent of secure

professionals reporting having an income in this range. Precarious professionals catch up a bit in the next two income brackets: 17 per cent are in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 bracket, compared to 26 per cent of secure professionals; and 11 per cent are in the \$150,000 and more bracket, compared to 13 per cent of secure professionals.

The upshot: precarious professionals are more likely than secure professionals to earn less than \$60,000, but top-earning (\$150,000 and more) precarious professionals make about the same as top-earning secure professionals. So precarious working conditions are correlated with lower professional earnings but not cemented in stone.

“I’ve seen colleagues been let go. Today it’s all about the bottom dollar. You see the worry.” – Nitesh, accountant

To summarize the findings so far, though a full-time permanent job tends to be associated with security, this is not a guarantee in professional work today: 26 per cent of respondents with full-time jobs are precarious. Only 40 per cent of the precarious professionals in this survey have a pension plan and get paid if they take sick time off. More than half of precarious professionals have unpredictable income and almost one third have unpredictable schedules. These are the hallmarks of precarious work and they have crept into professional work in Canada.

But who are the precarious professionals and what types of jobs do they have?

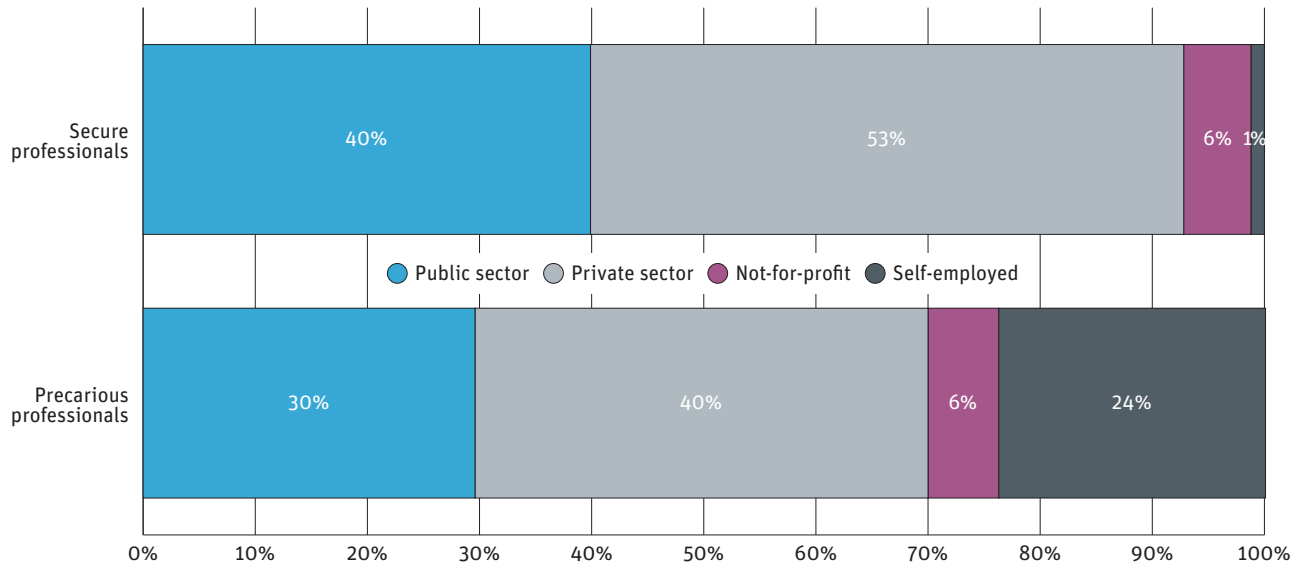
Women professionals are more likely to be precarious

Patterns of gender inequality can be seen even at the professional level of work. Women comprise a disproportionately larger portion of precarious professionals (60 per cent) than men (40 per cent). On average, the incidence of precarious employment among professionals who identify as racialized is similar to that of non-racialized professionals.⁶

40 per cent of precarious professionals work in the private sector

It is evident that self-employed professionals (24 per cent of precarious professionals in this survey) are in precarious jobs: they tend to work on contracts, without benefits, sick pay, or workplace pensions. It might also

FIGURE 3 Secure and precarious professionals by economic sector



Source: Environics Research.

be expected that the greater percentage of precarious workers are in the private sector (40 per cent), which tends to have lower unionization rates. It is, however, somewhat surprising that 30 per cent of precarious professionals work in the public sector, given that public service jobs have historically been more secure than other jobs.

The high percentage of precarious professionals in the public sector may be due to the fact that professionals are likely to hold mid- to high-management positions, which have lower levels of unionization than front line positions. Or it may be the result of austerity measures targeting a broad range of public services, including education. Further analysis must examine whether job precariousness in the public sector is a growing trend and, if so, which factors are driving it.

The increase of precarious work in the education sector has been documented,⁷ but as *Table 1* shows, our survey found precarious professionals in all occupations.

TABLE 1 Occupations of secure and precarious professionals

	Secure professionals	Precarious professionals
Business, finance and administration	32%	19%
Natural and applied science	11%	6%
Health	14%	18%
Education	17%	28%
Law, social, community or gov. services	9%	7%
Arts and culture	2%	5%
Building trades	4%	2%
Other profession	12%	16%
	100%	100%

Education is not a ticket to a stable job

“Just to get into an entry-level job you need a bachelor’s degree. To get that degree you’re having to pay back the loan for going to school. It’s a never-ending cycle.” — Shanda, paralegal

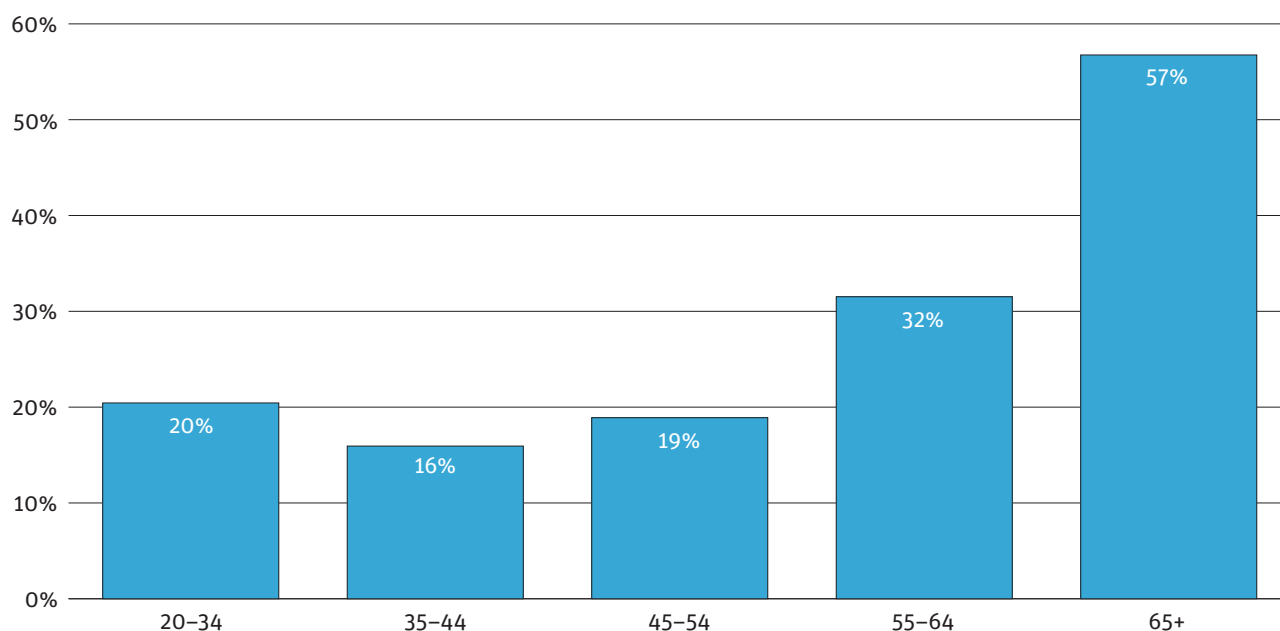
The professionals who responded to this survey are a well-educated lot. Looking at all respondents, 11 per cent have a college or technical certificate, 64 per cent have an advanced bachelor’s degree, and 24 per cent have a postgraduate university degree (i.e. master’s degree, doctoral degree, or equivalent).

A higher than average percentage of precarious professionals have a postgraduate degree (30 per cent) compared to secure professionals (23 per cent).

A university education in a profession is supposed to be the ticket into a stable job but the survey reflects that more than half (53 per cent) of the respondents who have a university or bachelor’s degree work contract-to-contract, part-time, or freelance, while 31 per cent of those who completed a postgraduate university degree work on contract, part-time, or freelance.

Related to education and training is the question of whether regulated professions are more or less precarious than other professions. Sixty eight per cent of both precarious and secure professionals say they are in a regulated profession, suggesting that being a member of a regulated profession is not a key determinant of job security.

FIGURE 4 Incidence of precarious work by age group



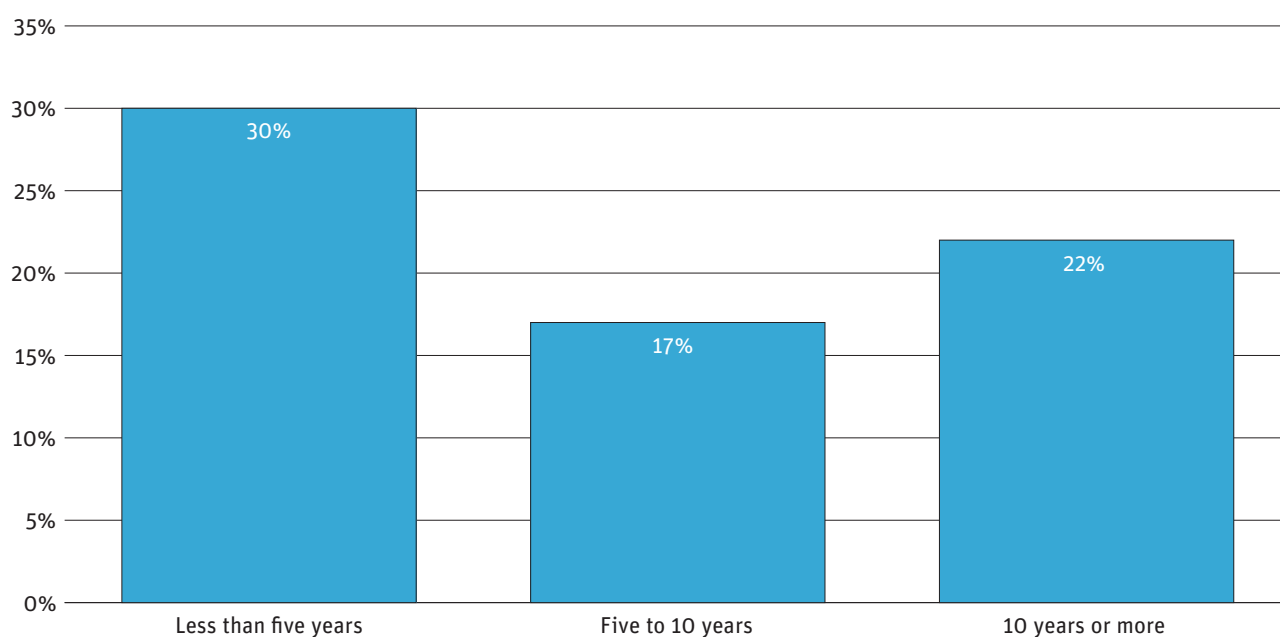
Source Environics Research.

Precarious professionals are not younger or less experienced

“Going through school it was kind of drilled into us that they’re always hiring nurses. The reality wasn’t quite like that. What they didn’t tell you is that it’s always on seniority. So getting a permanent position is hard.... A lot of people start casual to get their foot into the door and then they can start applying for permanent positions, which is unnerving when you have bills to pay.” – Magda, nurse

Contrary to what may be expected, we found that precarious professionals are not necessarily young professionals struggling to break in. The age distribution of our sample of professionals closely mirrors the age distribution of Canada’s labour force, 25 and older, with at least a college degree.⁸ Whereas the incidence of precarious employment in our total sample is 22 per cent, 20 per cent of workers 25 to 34 years of age are precariously employed. The incidence goes down for professionals 35 to 44 years of age (16 per cent), before starting to climb up again. Notably, 32 per cent of work-

FIGURE 5 Incidence of precarious work by years of professional experience



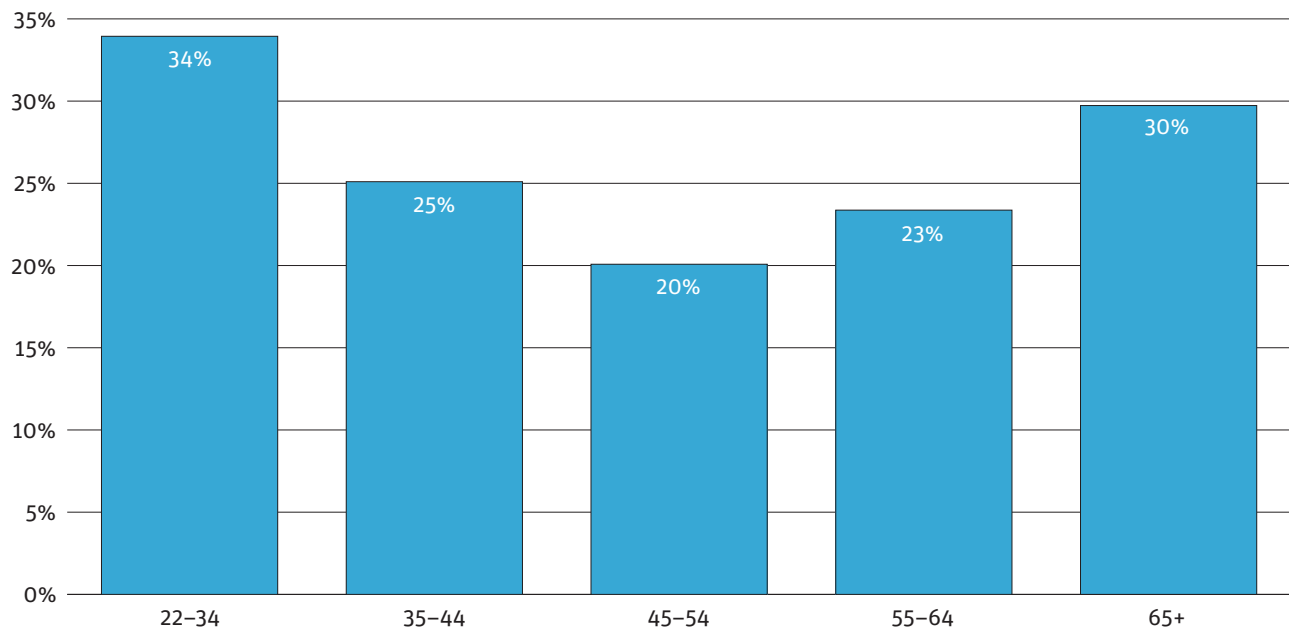
Source: Environics Research.

ers aged 54 to 65 years of age find themselves in jobs that are not full-time permanent jobs with benefits such as a pension plan.

If age is not positively correlated with job security, does workplace experience in a professional job make a difference? Not necessarily. The incidence of precarious employment in our total sample is 22 per cent. As expected, it is higher for professionals with less than five years of experience: 30 per cent. It then drops by almost half (17 per cent) for professionals with between five and 10 years of experience, suggesting that experience pays off. Surprisingly, it rises again for professionals with more than 10 years of experience, reaching 22 per cent. *Figure 5* presents the same U-shaped curve found in *Figure 4*, which denotes that precarious work is higher than average for labour market debutants, less common for mid-career professionals, and higher for experienced workers.

This may be reflective of more experienced professionals choosing to go out on their own, having built a nest egg and a reliable source of clientele. Some middle-aged participants in our focus groups avowed to have chosen working contract-to-contract in order to have more independence, freedom, and flexibility. They've tried the full-time permanent route. It

FIGURE 6 Share of professionals who assessed their job as totally or somewhat precarious



Source Environics Research.

wasn't for them. They may have to rely on a partner in a stable job to fill the holes — no benefits, etc. — but they have the earning power and employment history (and contacts) to piece things together. There may be underlying worry about what happens if illness or other forms of bad luck strike, but they're gambling on the balance between choice and freedom versus permanence and guarantees.

This is not the average story, however. One of the survey questions asked professionals to assess their job as totally precarious, somewhat precarious, or not precarious. *Figure 6* presents how different age groups answered this question. Once again, we see the U-shaped curve, where a higher than average percentage of young professionals assess their job as precarious, a smaller portion of workers between 35 and 54 years of age feel precarious, and things begin to become harder for professionals 55 years of age or older. It could be that the labour market is squeezing older professionals out of secure jobs, but more research is required to understand the nature of the age differential.

Section 2: Economic Insecurity

IN ADDITION TO documenting the objective working conditions of skilled professionals, we were interested in learning about their overall economic situation, their employment experiences, and their perceptions of today's labour market. While the well-being of low-wage earners is an utmost policy priority, the gradual deterioration of middle class jobs is extremely disconcerting, as it is likely to create pressures on already overloaded social services and income benefit systems. The results presented in this section suggest the majority of professionals are aware of this trend and are concerned, with a small portion willing to take risks for more flexible working conditions.

Job stability worries many

“You control your own destiny but, at the same time, it does lack stability... People have to be more entrepreneurial. My dad had a long-term job. It was very stable. But everybody seems to have a side gig — a second or third job. You have to go get it and keep it.” — Jason, technical writer

“You’re constantly fluctuating. You’re like, I got the contract. Ah. It’s just a contract.” — Antoinetta, university program coordinator

TABLE 2 Respondents who strongly or somewhat agree with the following statements

	Strongly or somewhat agree	Strongly or somewhat disagree	Does not apply
We asked all respondents:			
Jobs in professions like mine used to be more secure.	58%	35%	7%
We asked young professionals 22 to 34 years of age:			
A full-time permanent job in my field is almost non-existent for anyone entering the profession.	45%	50%	5%
We asked public sector professionals:			
Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because of government funding cuts.	59%	35%	6%
Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because of privatization.	33%	51%	16%
Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because government contracted out jobs that used to be permanent public sector jobs.	37%	46%	17%
We asked part-time, contract-to-contract, and freelance professionals			
I would prefer better job stability but it's hard to find these days.	57%	36%	7%
Lack of employment stability keeps me up at night.	43%	57%	-

Source Environics Research.

“A full-time permanent job is almost non-existent.... It’s not at all what was conveyed to me. Everybody wants several years of experience. It’s been depressing and I have tons of student loans.... We shouldn’t accept it but we’re stressed and we’re busy. It will take a group of people, because otherwise, what will change?” – Lisa, social worker

“Fleeting. It’s up in the wind. You never know. It’s not certain. You never know.” – Samantha, nurse

“For the bigger firms they do have salaries but I chose not to go that road because they do 60-hour weeks. I do feel there’s more competition now. I feel sometimes like the profession is a little saturated.” – Jon, lawyer

We asked respondents to assess today’s labour market. For instance, we asked them about the prospect of finding full-time employment in their profession. We asked them if government spending cuts were affecting the security of their job. We asked them about the impact of privatization and contracting out. As shown in *Table 2*, between one third and two thirds of professionals hold dim views on these topics.

What stands out among these responses is just how insecure professionals in Canada are today: 58 per cent say jobs used to be more secure. Forty five per cent of young professionals say a full-time, permanent job is almost non-existent for anyone entering the profession. Fifty nine per cent of public sector professionals say that jobs are increasingly unstable because of government funding cuts; 33 per cent say contracting out government jobs is making jobs unstable; and 37 per cent think privatization is playing a role too. Among professionals who work part-time, contract-to-contract, and freelance, 57 per cent say they would prefer more job stability but it's hard to find and 43 per cent say that the lack of employment stability keeps them up at night. Job insecurity is definitely a running theme for professionals, whether they are precariously employed or not.

What keeps part-time and contract workers up at night

Respondents who reported working part-time, contract-to-contract, or as freelancers were asked to identify the three top challenges as a result of their current terms of employment (out of a list of 13 choices). All groups reported the same top three concerns: not making enough money, not getting paid if I get sick, and not having benefits. There was one exception: professionals who go from contract-to-contract are more likely to include 'not knowing if my contract will be renewed' among their top worries.

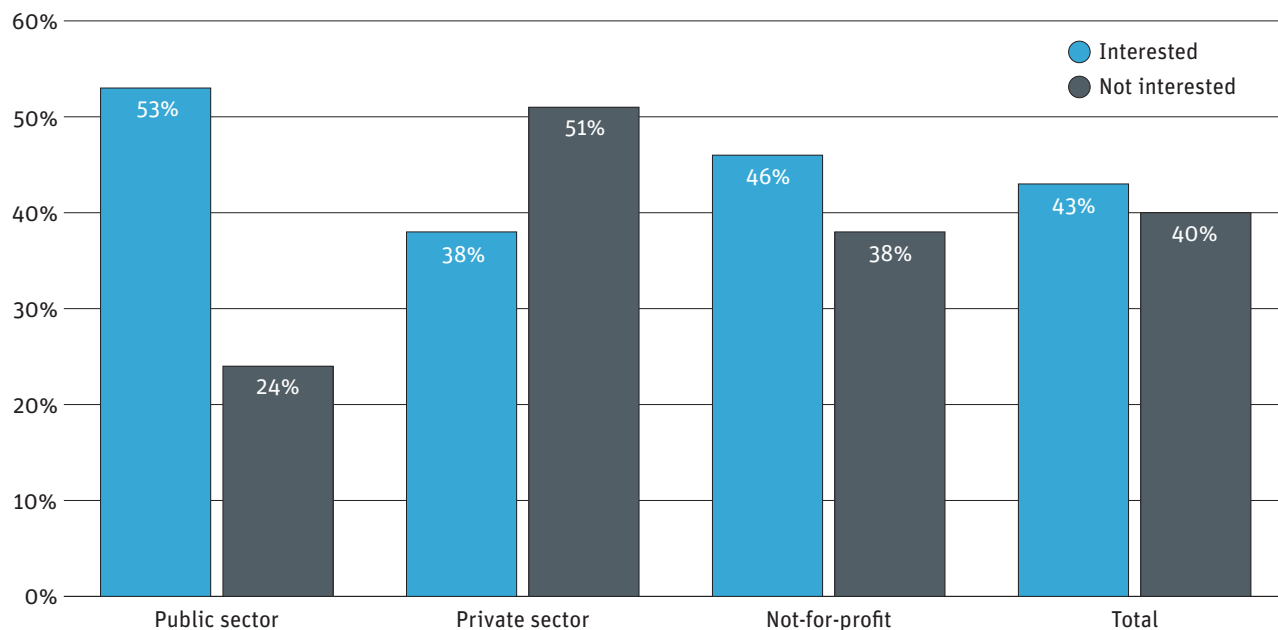
Professionals and unionization

Expectedly, a significantly larger percentage of secure professionals (37 per cent) are unionized compared to precarious professionals (28 per cent). But unionization might not be prevalent in some professions – say, lawyers – so we wanted to get professionals' assessment of the role of unionization in advancing job security.

We found that experience with unions is the most important variable in determining how one views the topic. Of the 35 per cent of respondents who are unionized, 84 per cent agree with the statement "I have more security because my job is unionized." In contrast, only 30 per cent of those who do not belong to a union, nor have a household member who does, agree with the statement "I would welcome union representation in my line of work."

Interest in union representation also varies across sectors. Between 17 and 23 per cent of the respondents say the matter does not apply to them.

FIGURE 7 Interest in union representation



Source: Environics Research.

This group aside, 53 per cent of all public sector workers, 38 per cent of all private sector employees, and 46 per cent of all not-for-profit workers would welcome union representation.

Among professionals without union representation, 42 per cent of public sector workers who are not unionized say they are interested in becoming part of a union, compared to 29 per cent of private sector employees who aren't unionized.

Implications of economic insecurity

“You don’t just work for one company and retire and get a gold watch.”
— **AJ, journalist**

“My parents worked in a hospital for 27 years. Now all the nurses are casual.”— **Bryan, social worker**

In advance of the national survey of professionals, Environics Research held focus groups with professionals to gauge their sense of precarious work and how it relates to their field. The quotes throughout this study

come from real professionals who shared their experiences in those focus groups. The combination of concerns expressed in those focus group sessions and the strong theme of economic insecurity reflected in the national survey responses indicate signs of worry, even among Canadian professionals who are in secure jobs.

Canadians have been told to get an education, hone their skills, get credentialized, work hard, prepare to be flexible — and that’s the ticket to success. But the survey results reveal that higher education is not necessarily a ticket to a stable job. More than half (53 per cent) of respondents who hold a university or bachelor’s degree work contract-to-contract, part-time, or freelance. Sixty eight per cent of precarious professionals in Canada are a member of a regulated profession. They are among Canada’s working elite, yet many professionals are experiencing job instability and economic insecurity.

It’s yet another reflection of the changing nature of work in Canada. In the “golden age” of employment — the 1950s to the late-1970s — the key to a middle class lifestyle was a permanent job where you could work for 30 years, afford a mortgage, a car, a family, and you’d retire with a gold watch and a pension plan. But many working Canadians are discovering that the social contract is broken. Evidence of economic insecurity and job instability creeping into professional work reveals the tenuousness of the middle class dream: it’s premised on permanency; on guarantees that no longer exist for many workers, professional or not.

On this front, the fact that 58 per cent of all professionals in this survey say jobs in their profession used to be more secure should be a red flag to policy makers, who will be tasked to find strategies to help Canadians — professionals and non-professionals — securely attach to the labour market. New strategies are also needed to support those workers — professionals and non-professionals — who have unstable employment with no benefits. Unless Canada’s labour market becomes more stable, there will be greater pressure on governments at every jurisdictional level to address the consequences of workers who do not have workplace benefits or pension plans. The findings in this survey also reflect the fact that government austerity programs only serve to make jobs more insecure and unstable. Government cutbacks and privatization schemes are contributing to the problem.

Labour law and employment standards reforms that require employers to pay for sick days, that extend minimum vacation day requirements, that require employers to schedule hours well in advance of any given work week, and that require equal pay for part-time workers are examples of policies that would better address the changing nature of work in Canada.

Given the fact that women tend to be more precariously employed than men, policies aimed at closing the gender pay gap are an important part of the solution to economic insecurity, even among professionals. Improving Canada's public pension plan is another part of the solution, especially since women are more likely to be represented among Canada's poor seniors.

Further research must zoom in on the experience of racialized and foreigner professionals. CCPA and PEPSO reports,⁹ as well as other studies, have found racism and discrimination to have a pervasive negative impact on labour market outcomes in Canada, but the sample size of this survey didn't allow us to explore these dynamics.

For young workers and professionals who are entering the labour market during a time of significant change, it is critical that governments address the fact that those workers have fewer options for stable, permanent jobs with benefits — and that lack of security will catch up with them as they age. Young professionals have invested heavily in education and may be carrying an even greater student debt burden as they enter the workforce. Government policies that make university and college tuition more affordable for all students and that focus on student debt forgiveness for workers who are unable to maintain monthly debt payments due to the nature of unstable work would go a long way toward acknowledging the reality of Canada's labour market. The creation of a national portable benefits program for precarious workers, whether they are professional or not, would be another piece of the puzzle. So, too, would a revitalization of the Employment Insurance program, which was created for another place and time in Canadian history.

Finally, the findings in this survey indicate that a significant proportion of Canadian professionals see the value of being able to collectively bargain through a union. And yet we know that the unionization rate in Canada has been on the decline, especially in the private sector. Governments would be wise to reform labour laws in order to make workers' ability to join a union easier; that is a crucial part of the tool kit to ensure more stable jobs with benefits.

Appendix 1

Categories of professional jobs

Professional occupations NOCS

- **Specialized middle management occupations**
 - Administrative service managers
 - Financial managers
 - Human resource managers
 - Purchasing managers
 - Other administrative services managers
 - Managers in financial and business services
 - Insurance real estate and financial brokerage managers
 - Banking, credit and other investment managers
 - Advertising, marketing and public relations managers
 - Other business services managers
 - Managers in communication (except broadcasting)
 - Telecommunication carriers managers
 - Postal and courier services managers
 - Managers in engineering, architecture, science and information systems
 - Engineering managers

- Architecture and science managers
- Computer and information systems managers
- Managers in health care
- Managers in public administration
 - Government managers in health and social policy development and program administration
 - Government managers in Economic analysis, policy analysis, policy development and program administration
 - Government managers in Education policy development and program administration
 - Other managers in public administration
- Managers in education and social and community services
 - Administrators – post secondary education and vocational training
 - School principals, and administrators of elementary and secondary education
 - Managers in social, community and correctional services
- Managers in public protection services
 - Commissioned police officers
 - Fire chiefs and senior firefighting officers
 - Commissioned officers of the Canadian Armed Forces
- Managers in art, culture, recreation and sport
 - Library, archive, museum and art gallery managers
 - Managers – publishing, motion pictures, broadcasting and performing arts
 - Recreation, sports, and fitness program and service directors
- **Business, finance and administration occupations**
 - Professional occupations in business and finance
 - Auditors, accountants, and investment professionals
 - Human resources and business service professionals
- **Natural and applied sciences and related occupations**
 - Professional occupations in natural and applied sciences
 - Physical science professionals
 - Life science professionals

- Civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers
 - Other engineers
 - Architects, urban planners and land surveyors
 - Mathematicians, statisticians, and actuaries
 - Computer and information systems professionals
- **Health occupations**
 - Professional occupations in nursing
 - Nursing coordinators and supervisors
 - Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses
 - Professional occupations in health (except nursing)
 - Physicians, dentists and veterinarians
 - Optometrists, chiropractors and other health diagnostic and treating professionals
 - Pharmacists, dieticians and nutritionists
 - Therapy and assessment professionals
- **Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services**
 - Professional occupations in education services
 - University professors and post secondary assistants
 - College and other vocational instructors
 - Secondary and elementary school teachers and educational counselors
 - Professional occupations in law and social, community and government services
 - Judges, lawyers and Quebec notaries
 - Social and community service professionals
 - Policy and program researchers, consultants and officers
- **Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport**
 - Professional occupations in art and culture
 - Librarians, archivists, conservators, and curators
 - Writing, translating and related communications professionals
 - Creative and performing arts

NOTE: In the survey, we can leave room for 'other' to see if people self-identify as professionals in categories that aren't listed above.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

EnviroNics Research

January 5, 2018

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Professionals' attitudes towards precarious work

Final Questionnaire

PN9546

Online survey of 800 Canadians with professional careers

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our online survey. Please be assured that all information you provide here will be kept entirely confidential. If you qualify for this survey it will take approximately 12 minutes to complete and your opinions on the matter are highly appreciated!

Please click on >> to continue.

A. In what year were you born?

Open-ended numeric: ____ RANGE: 1915–1999

If 18yrs+ continue, otherwise thank and terminate

S1 Are you a?

Select one response	Yes	No
Canadian citizen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
US Citizen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canadian resident (Past 6 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
US Resident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If 18yrs+ and cc or CR ('yes' to cdn citizen or CDN resident AT Q.s1) continue, otherwise thank and terminate

B. What is your province or territory of residence? Select one response

- 01 – Newfoundland and Labrador
- 02 – Prince Edward Island
- 03 – Nova Scotia
- 04 – New Brunswick [ALLOW FRENCH AND ENGLISH]
- 05 – Quebec [ALLOW FRENCH AND ENGLISH]
- 06 – Ontario
- 07 – Manitoba
- 08 – Saskatchewan
- 09 – Alberta
- 10 – British Columbia
- 11 – Northwest territories
- 12 – Yukon
- 13 – Nunavut

C. Which of the following best describes your own present employment status?

- 01 – Working full-time **CONTINUE**
- 02 – Working part-time **CONTINUE**
- 03 – Unemployed or looking for a job **TERMINATE**
- 04 – Stay at home full-time **TERMINATE**
- 05 – Student **TERMINATE**
- 06 – Retired **TERMINATE**
- 07 – Disability pension **TERMINATE**

D. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 01 – Part of high school **TERMINATE**
- 02 – Completed high school **TERMINATE**
- 03 – Some college or university **TERMINATE**
- 04 – College or technical school certificate
- 05 – University bachelor’s degree
- 06 – Postgraduate university degree

E. Would you describe yourself as having a “professional” job or career? By “professional” we mean people who have a “knowledge-based job or trade” that requires advanced or specialized credentials, such as a professional certification or advanced degree.

(NB: Examples of professionals would include: doctors, nurses, lawyers, dentists, accountants, architects, engineers, journalists, Computer and IT professionals, social workers, economists, dieticians, systems analysts, electricians, plumbers, employment and vocational rehabilitation counsellors, teachers or instructors, school or hospital administrators, librarians, management, analysts, airplane pilots and navigators, surveyors and mapping scientists and many other professions).

- 01 – Yes, I am a professional
- 02 – No, I am not a professional **TERMINATE**

ASK ALL

F. Which of the following best describes what sector you work in?

- 01 – Public sector (government or government-owned)
- 02 – Private sector (companies or corporations that are privately-owned)
- 03 – Not-for-profit sector
- 04 – Self-employed

G. Which of the following categories of professional work best describes your profession? [Click one – pull down menu]

- 01 – Business, finance and administration
 - Auditor, accountant or investment professional
 - Human resources
 - Insurance, real estate or financial brokerage

- Banking, credit or other investment manager
 - Advertising, marketing or public relations manager
- 02 – Natural and applied science
- Physical science professional
 - Life science professional
 - Engineer
 - Architect, urban planner or land surveyor
 - Mathematician, statistician or actuary
 - Computer or information systems (IT) professional
- 03 – Health
- Nurse
 - Physician
 - Dentist
 - Veterinarian
 - Other health professional
 - Pharmacist
 - Dietician or nutritionist
 - Health care/hospital management
- 04 – Education
- University professor
 - College professor
 - Secondary or elementary school teacher,
 - School principal or administrator
- 05 – Law, social, community or government services
- Lawyer, notary or paralegal
 - Social worker
 - Researcher or policy analyst
 - Economist
 - Manager of social, community or correctional services
 - Manager in public administration (federal, provincial or municipal)
- 06 – Art and culture
- Librarian or archivist
 - Writer or communication professional

- Creative or performing arts
- Manager in art, culture, recreation or sport

07 – Building trades

- Plumber
- Electrician
- Other trades

08 – Other profession (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

1. How many years have you been working in your area of professional expertise?

- 01 – Less than a year
- 02 – One to two years
- 03 – Two to five years
- 04 – Five to ten years
- 05 – Over ten years

2. Thinking about your own professional job, which of the following applies to you? ROWS AND COLUMNS

- a. I am part of a regulated, designated profession
 - 01 – Applies to me
 - 02 – Does not apply to me
- b. I have an advanced degree (Master’s, PhD, LLB, etc)
- c. I have specialized training to do my job
- d. I have a high degree of responsibility in my job
- e. I exercise my own professional judgement in my job

3. Does the following describe your current job? “I have one employer, who I expect to be working for a year from now, who provides at least 30 hours of work a week, and who pays benefits”

- 01 – Yes, this describes my job
- 02 – No, this does not describe my job

4. Which of the following best describes your current working arrangement? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- 01 – My job is a full-time, permanent position
- 02 – My job is from contract-to-contract
- 03 – I work part-time
- 04 – I work freelance

5. Does your employer provide you with a private retirement income plan, such as a pension plan or a contribution to an RRSP (apart from CPP)?

- 01 – Yes
- 02 – No

6. Do you usually get paid if you miss a day's work due to illness?

- 01 – Yes
- 02 – No

7. In the last 12 months, how much did your income vary from month to month?

- 01 – A lot
- 02 – Some
- 03 – A little
- 04 – Not at all

8. In the last 3 months, how often did you work on an on-call basis (that is, you have no set schedule)?

- 01 – All the time
- 02 – Most of the time
- 03 – Half of the time
- 04 – Some of the time
- 05 – Never

9. Do you know your work schedule at least one week in advance?

- 01 – Always
- 02 – Most of the time
- 03 – Half of the time
- 04 – Some of the time
- 05 – Never

10. How likely is it that your current employment would be negatively affected if you raised a health and safety concern or raised an employment rights concern with your employer(s)?

- 01 – Very likely
- 02 – Likely
- 03 – Somewhat likely
- 04 – Not likely
- 05 – Not likely at all

ASK Q. 11–16 ONLY OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED 02, 03, 04 IN QUESTION 4

11. Thinking about your current employment situation: if you are working on contract, part-time, or freelance, is something you personally prefer and chose, or would you rather have a permanent full-time position?

- 01 – I prefer my current employment situation (i.e. contract, part-time or freelance) and it's something I chose
- 02 – I would rather have a permanent full-time position in my profession if I could get one

12. Thinking about the last 12 months, which of the following best describes how well your household has kept up with your bills and other financial commitments?

- 01 – I am keeping up without any problems
- 02 – I am only keeping up because my spouse/partner/parents have stable income
- 03 – I am keeping up, but it is sometimes a struggle
- 04 – I am having real financial problems and am falling behind

13. Thinking about the next 12 months, does your employment situation make you concerned about your ability to meet your debt obligations (i.e. mortgages, credit cards and bank loans)?

01 – Yes

02 – No

14. Have you delayed having children or forming a relationship with someone as a result of uncertainty regarding your employment situation?

01 – Yes

02 – No

15. Which of the following are the three things you find the most difficult to deal with as a result of your current terms of employment (i.e. having to work on contract, freelance or part-time),? ROTATE ORDER... DRAG AND DROP “Most difficult to deal with”, 2nd most difficult to deal with”, 3rd most difficult to deal with”

- a. Having unpredictable hours
- b. Not making enough money
- c. Not knowing if my contract will be renewed
- d. Having to be on call too much of the time
- e. Not getting paid if I get sick
- f. Not having any benefits (e.g. dental, prescriptions...)
- g. Feeling like I’m not in a secure line of work
- h. Having no clear path for advancement in my job
- i. Having to delay significant purchases, such as a vehicle
- j. Inability to buy a home due to lack of a permanent job
- k. Problems renting an apartment due to lack of a permanent job
- l. Inability to save for retirement
- m. The stress of not being able to predict my income

16. As someone who works on contract or part-time or freelance, to what extent do you agree that lack of employment stability keeps you up at night?

- 01 – Strongly agree
- 02 – Somewhat agree
- 03 – Somewhat disagree
- 04 – Strongly disagree

ASK ALL

17. How familiar are you with the term “precarious work”?

- 01 – Very familiar
- 02 – Somewhat familiar
- 03 – Not very familiar
- 04 – Not at all familiar/never heard of it

18. “Precarious work” is a job that has the following characteristics:

- Your employment is insecure, short-term, or temporary
- Your job lacks permanence
- There is a lot of uncertainty about your job. e.g. inconsistent wages, scheduling
- Precarious work also often has no health benefits or company pension.

To what extent would you say that you have a “precarious job”?

- 01 – My job is totally precarious
- 02 – My job is somewhat precarious
- 03 – My job is not precarious

19. Thinking about your profession these days, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements? CAROUSEL

- 01 – Strongly agree
- 02 – Somewhat agree
- 03 – Somewhat disagree
- 04 – Strongly disagree
- 05 – Does not apply

- a. A full-time permanent job in my field is almost non-existent for anyone entering the profession
- b. I would prefer better job stability but it's hard to find these days
- c. I have more security because my job is unionized
- d. I would welcome union representation in my line of work
- e. Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because of government funding cuts
- f. Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because government contracted out jobs that used to be permanent public sector jobs
- g. Jobs in my profession are increasingly unstable because of privatization
- h. Jobs in professions like mine used to be more secure

Demographics

To finish up, we have just a few questions about you for statistical purposes only. Please be assured that your answers will remain completely confidential.

H. What is your gender?

- 01 – Male
- 02 – Female
- 03 – Other

I. Do you, or does anyone in your household, belong to a trade union?

- 01 – I belong to a union
- 02 – Someone else in my household belongs to a union
- 03 – Both I and another household member belong to a union
- 04 – No one in my household belongs to a union

J. Do you have any children under 18 who live in the home with you?

- 01 – Yes
- 02 – No

K. Would you describe yourself as...? CHECK ONE

- 01 – White
- 02 – Aboriginal, First Nation, Inuit or Métis
- 03 – Chinese
- 04 – Black
- 05 – Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian etc.)
- 06 – South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, or Bangladeshi)
- 07 – Filipino
- 08 – Latin American
- 09 – Arab
- 10 – West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc...)
- 11 – Korean
- 12 – Japanese
- 98 – Other, please specify: _____

L. What was your gross annual income for the year 2017? That is, all of your income before taxes and other deductions?

- 01 – Less than \$20,000
- 02 – \$20,000 to \$40,000
- 03 – \$40,000 to \$60,000
- 04 – \$60,000 to \$80,000
- 05 – \$80,000 to \$100,000
- 06 – \$100,000 to \$150,000
- 07 – More than \$150,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey. These are all the questions we have for you today.

Notes

- 1** PEP SO. (2018). *Getting Left Behind: Who Gained and Who Didn't in an Improving Labour Market*. PEP SO, McMaster University and United Way Toronto.
- 2** Lewchuk, W., Laflèche, M., Dyson, D., Goldring, L., Meisner, A., Procyk, S., Rosen, D., Shields, J., Viducis, P., & Vrankulj, S. (2014). Is Precarious Employment Low Income Employment? The Changing Labour Market in Southern Ontario. *Just Labour*, 22, 51–73.
- 3** Lewchuk, W., & Laflèche, M. (2017). Precarious employment: what it means for workers and their families. In R. Burke and K. Page (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Work and Well-Being* (pp. 150–170). Edward Elgar.
- 4** Khosla, P. (2014). Working Women, Working Poor. Toronto: Women and Work Research Group; and at Premji, S., Shakya, Y., Spasevski, M., Merolli, J., & Athar, S. (2014). Precarious Work Experiences of Racialized Immigrant Woman in Toronto: A Community- Based Study. *Just Labour*, 22, 122–143. No such analysis has been found for women in precarious professional jobs.
- 5** Wayne Lewchuk et al. (2014). Is Precarious Employment Low Income Employment? The Changing Labour Market in Southern Ontario. *Just Labour*, 22, 51–73.
- 6** The finding that racialized respondents are not overrepresented among precarious professionals contradicts other research findings on the topic. See Goldring, L., & Joly, P. (2014). Immigration, Citizenship and Racialization at Work: Unpacking Employment Precarity in Southwestern Ontario. *Just Labour*, 22, 94–121. Our small sample size of foreigner-born workers prevents an analysis of how legal status and racialization intersect for this population.
- 7** Shaker, E. and Shaban, R. (2018). *No Temporary Solution: Ontario's shifting college and university workforce*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- 8** For this analysis, we eliminated the 1.3 per cent of participants aged 24 years or less. The age distribution of the remaining 98.7 closely mirrors the distribution of Canadian workers, 25 years of age and older, with a postsecondary certificate, university degree, bachelor's degree, or above bachelor's degree. Workers between 25 and 44 years of age were slightly under represented in the survey sample.
- 9** Block, Sheila, and Grace-Edward Galabuzi. 2011. *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Wellesly Institute; PEP SO. (2018). *Getting Left Behind: Who Gained and Who Didn't in an Improving Labour Market*. PEP SO, McMaster University and United Way Toronto.



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