



Statistical Snapshot of Paralegals in Ontario

from the Paralegal Annual Report (PAR) 2016

RESPONSE RATES

The Law Society of Ontario has been collecting self-identification data in the Paralegal Annual Report since 2009. The structure of the survey at the time permitted the paralegal to opt to pass over the question and provide no response. This option has been modified so that, while a paralegal can still decline to self-identify, the person must now so indicate by expressly entering this response.

EQUITY SURVEY: PARALEGAL RESPONSE RATE BY QUESTION, 2016*

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

Indigenous	92.9%
Racialization	83.4%
Sexual orientation	83.5%
Identify as Francophone	90.7%
Able to Practice in French	87.7%
Have a Disability	88.0%
Total Number	7,211

*There is no missing data for gender, which is obtained from administrative records

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TABLE I: REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS AND RACIALIZED PERSONS

among Ontario Paralegals, 2016, compared to the Ontario Population

Group	Lawyers		Ontario Population		
			Everyone, 2016	Persons in the Labour Force, Age 25 or more, 2011	University Graduates in the Labour Force, Age 25 or more, 2011
	Number	Percent, excluding missing	Percent		
Indigenous					
First Nations	73	1.1	1.8	1.2	0.5
Inuk	1	0.0	0.03	0.02	0.01
Métis	61	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.3
Multiple Indigenous			0.04	0.02	0.01
Total Indigenous	135	2.1	2.8	1.9	0.8
Racialized					
Arab	93	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.5
Black	465	7.2	4.7	3.8	2.7
Chinese	357	5.5	5.7	5.1	8.5
East Asian (includes Japanese, Korean)	74	1.1			
Filipino + Japanese + Korean			3.3	3.2	4.7
Latino	234	3.6	1.5	1.5	1.2
South Asian	609	9.4	8.7	7.2	10.8
Southeast Asian	184	2.8	1.0	1.1	0.9
West Asian	171	2.6	1.2	0.8	1.3
Other Visible Minority			0.7	0.6	0.4
Other Indigenous			0.1	0.1	0.1
More than one Racialized Group	50	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.7
Racialized and White	72	1.1			
Total Racialized	2,309	35.6	29.4	24.8	32.7
White	4,045	62.3	67.8	73.4	66.4
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	509				
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	685				
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	7,683	6,489	13,242,160	5,812,410	1,778,891

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report, 2016 Statistics Canada Census Profiles, 2011 National Household Survey public use microdata file; analysis by Michael Ornstein

- 2.1% of paralegals are Indigenous, compared to 2.8% of the 2016 Ontario population, 1.9% of 2011 labour force participants age 25 or more and 0.8% of 2011 university graduates in the labour force age 25 or more.
- 35.6% of Ontario paralegals are racialized, compared to 29.4% of the 2016 Ontario population, 24.8% of 2011 labour force participants age 25 or more and 32.7% of 2011 university graduates in the labour force age 25 or more.
- The Black, Latino, Southeast Asian and West Asians communities include considerably more paralegals than their representation in the population.
- Some groups have small numbers of paralegals. Just 135 paralegals are Indigenous, 93 are Arab and 74 are East Asian.

TABLE 2: DETAILED RACIALIZATION BY AGE

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
	Number					Percent, excluding missing				
Indigenous										
First Nations and Inuk	20	20	15	15	4	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.4	0.6
Métis	18	10	20	9	4	1.0	0.6	1.6	0.8	0.6
Total Indigenous	38	30	35	24	8	2.0	1.8	2.8	2.2	1.3
Racialized										
Arab	35	27	20	9	2	1.9	1.7	1.6	0.8	0.3
Black	105	145	107	81	27	5.6	8.9	8.5	7.3	4.4
Chinese	74	100	104	52	27	4.0	6.1	8.2	4.7	4.4
East Asian	15	31	14	11	3	0.8	1.9	1.1	1.0	0.5
Latino	58	70	59	36	11	3.1	4.3	4.7	3.3	1.8
South Asian	199	144	114	98	54	10.6	8.8	9.0	8.9	8.7
Southeast Asian	52	63	33	30	6	2.8	3.9	2.6	2.7	1.0
West Asian	38	64	39	22	8	2.0	3.9	3.1	2.0	1.3
More than one Racialized Group	24	12	9	5	0	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.0
Racialized and White	36	23	7	5	1	1.9	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.2
Total Racialized	636	679	506	349	139	34.0	41.5	40.1	31.6	22.5
White	1,198	926	720	730	471	64.0	56.6	57.1	66.2	76.2
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	154	132	99	84	40					
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	142	194	144	122	83					
Total	2,168	1,961	1,504	1,309	741	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

1. While 76.2% of paralegals age 60 or more are White, the figure is 66.2% for paralegals age 50- 59 and about 57% for ages 30-49, before shifting back to 64.0% White for the youngest, 20-29 age group.
2. Indigenous paralegals are small in number and their age distribution suggests no trend in their share of the profession over the last 40 years.
3. There is continuing growth in the proportion of paralegals who identify as Arabs and, not quite so consistently, as West Asian. There is a substantially lower proportion of Black paralegals under 30, than between 30 and 39, down from 8.9% to 5.6%, and for Chinese paralegals the parallel decrease is from 6.1% to 4.0%.

TABLE 3: GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, FRANCOPHONE IDENTITY, ABILITY TO PRACTICE IN FRENCH AND DISABILITY BY AGE

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	Total	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more	Total	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
	Number						Percent, excluding missing					
Gender												
Women	4,851	1,684	1,391	882	688	206	63.1	77.7	70.9	58.6	52.6	27.8
Men	2,832	484	570	622	621	535	36.9	22.3	29.1	41.4	47.4	72.2
Sexual Orientation												
LGBTQ	180	75	51	20	27	7	2.8	4.0	3.1	1.6	2.4	1.1
Not LGBTQ	6,315	1,787	1,579	1,254	1,079	616	97.2	96.0	96.9	98.4	97.6	98.9
Declined to Answer	1,188	306	331	230	203	118						
Identify as Francophone												
Yes	201	54	46	41	44	16	2.9	2.7	2.6	3.0	3.7	2.4
No	6,811	1,958	1,743	1,320	1,132	658	97.1	97.3	97.4	97.0	96.3	97.6
Declined to Answer	671	156	172	143	133	67						
Able to Practise in French												
Can Counsel and Represent	206	50	47	46	47	16	3.0	2.7	2.7	3.3	3.9	2.4
Can Counsel But Not Represent	91	24	22	11	16	18	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.3	2.7
Cannot	6,500	1,754	1,651	1,319	1,140	636	95.6	96.0	96.0	95.9	94.8	94.9
Declined to Answer	886	340	241	128	106	71						
Have a Disability												
Yes	392	69	81	88	93	61	5.8	3.5	4.7	6.6	8.3	9.8
No	6,425	1,931	1,659	1,245	1,027	563	94.2	96.6	95.3	93.4	91.7	90.2
Declined to Answer	866	168	221	171	189	117						
All Paralegals	7,683	2,168	1,961	1,504	1,309	741	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

1. In 2016, 63.1% of paralegals were women, a figure that will definitely increase in coming years. The striking feminization is apparent from a comparison of the age groups. From just 27.8% of paralegals age 60 or more, women account for 52.6% of paralegals age 50 to 59, 58.6% for ages 40-49, 70.9% for ages 30-39 and 77.7% for paralegals under 30.
2. 2.8% of paralegals identify as LGBTQ, with higher percentages among younger paralegals.
3. 2.9% of Ontario paralegals identify as Francophone and 3.0% indicate that they can provide counsel and represent clients in French; another 1.3% can counsel but not represent their clients in French. Both indicators are highest for older paralegals. The drop is fairly substantial, from 3.9% for paralegals age 50-59 able to counsel and represent in French down to 2.7% for paralegals under 40.
4. The incidence of disability, 5.8% overall, climbs steadily from 3.5% for paralegals under 30 to 6.6% of paralegals age 40-49 to 9.8% of paralegals 60 or more.

TABLE 4a: TYPE OF LICENCE BY RACIALIZATION*

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	Sole Practitioner	Partner	Associate	Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other Employment	Retired or Not Working	Total	Number
	<i>Percent</i>											
Indigenous												
First Nations and Inuk	21	4	3	5	7	1	8	0	25	26	100	73
Métis	39	0	4	4	4	5	12	0	23	11	100	57
Indigenous Total	28	2	3	5	5	3	10	0	24	19	100	130
Racialized												
Arab	24	1	5	6	1	1	6	0	34	22	100	87
Black	22	1	1	6	1	5	8	1	28	27	100	447
Chinese	25	1	1	13	1	2	4	1	29	23	100	341
East Asian	21	6	6	8	0	2	5	2	30	21	100	66
Latino	20	2	2	13	4	5	7	1	26	20	100	220
South Asian	24	2	2	7	1	2	4	1	32	27	100	580
Southeast Asian	16	1	2	9	0	5	4	0	35	28	100	174
West Asian	28	1	2	10	1	0	4	0	24	31	100	156
More than One Group	13	2	0	2	9	2	13	4	32	23	100	47
Racialized and White	20	5	3	11	0	6	11	0	27	17	100	64
Racialized Total	23	2	2	8	1	3	6	1	29	25	100	2,312
White	20	2	3	12	2	7	9	1	29	16	100	3,842
Total	22	2	2	11	2	5	7	1	28	20	100	7,291

*excludes new licensees

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

TABLE 4b: REGION BY RACIALIZATION**

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	South West	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Number
	<i>Percent</i>									
Indigenous										
First Nations and Inuk	12	7	27	26	14	4	4	5	100	73
Métis	22	7	23	8	12	15	8	5	100	60
Indigenous Total	17	7	26	18	13	9	6	5	100	133
Racialized										
Arab	14	4	37	29	2	0	12	1	100	92
Black	1	3	54	35	2	0	5	0	100	463
Chinese	2	1	61	34	1	0	2	0	100	354
East Asian	1	0	62	34	1	0	1	0	100	74
Latino	4	7	51	34	1	0	2	0	100	233
South Asian	0	2	38	57	1	0	1	0	100	604
Southeast Asian	1	5	61	30	1	0	2	0	100	184
West Asian	1	3	54	38	0	0	3	1	100	171
More than One Group	0	6	60	32	0	0	2	0	100	50
Racialized and White	4	1	51	29	3	3	6	3	100	70
Racialized Total	3	3	49	39	2	1	3	1	100	2,428
White	10	10	33	27	9	3	5	4	100	4,023
Total	7	7	39	32	6	2	4	2	100	7,641

**excludes paralegals whose address is outside Ontario

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

1. Paralegals are most likely to work in what the LSO classifies as “other employment” – 28.0 percent are in this category, compared to 22% of all paralegals who are sole practitioners, 20.0% who are “retired or not working” and 11% who are law firm employees.
2. Sole practitioners account for 28% of Indigenous paralegals, 23% of racialized paralegals and 20% of White paralegals.
3. Because of their small numbers, we cannot compare the employment of the different racialized groups with confidence.
4. By a wide margin, the largest number of paralegals are in Toronto, 39% of the total, and in the combined category for the Durham, Halton, Peel and York areas surrounding Toronto another 32%. 7% of paralegals are in Ontario’s Southwest, 7% in the Central South and 6% in the Central North. Just 2% of paralegals are in the North, 4% in Ottawa and 2% in the East.
5. 49% of racialized paralegals are in Toronto and 39% are in Durham, Halton, Peel and York, leaving only 12% in the rest of the province. In contrast, only 44% of Indigenous paralegals are in these two largest areas and they are over-represented everywhere else. The North accounts for 9% of Indigenous paralegals, compared to 3% of White paralegals and 1% of racialized paralegals.

TABLE 5a: TYPE OF LICENCE BY GENDER BY AGE*

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	Sole Practitioner	Partner	Associate	Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other Employment	Retired or Not Working	Total	Number
	<i>Percent</i>											
Women												
Total	12.8	1.3	2.3	11.1	2.0	4.7	8.5	0.9	34.6	21.7	100.0	4,568
20-29	3.8	0.4	2.4	9.8	0.7	2.6	7.2	0.5	52.1	20.5	100.0	1,511
30-39	10.7	1.2	2.5	13.0	1.6	4.4	9.1	0.6	32.9	23.9	100.0	1,334
40-49	20.8	2.5	2.3	11.2	2.5	6.5	8.5	1.3	25.2	19.4	100.0	852
50-59	23.6	1.9	1.3	10.3	4.3	7.2	10.9	2.1	17.6	20.7	100.0	670
60 or more	25.4	2.5	2.5	10.0	5.0	7.0	7.0	1.0	10.0	29.9	100.0	201
Men												
Total	36.4	3.9	2.7	9.6	0.6	6.6	5.7	0.3	17.9	16.2	100.0	2,723
20-29	16.3	2.3	3.5	10.0	0.5	2.8	4.7	0.0	34.9	25.1	100.0	430
30-39	28.5	2.3	3.6	13.0	0.4	5.6	7.7	0.7	21.1	17.1	100.0	555
40-49	36.4	4.8	3.0	10.4	0.7	7.2	6.4	0.2	16.1	14.8	100.0	607
50-59	40.7	4.0	1.8	7.8	0.7	7.3	6.0	0.5	14.9	16.4	100.0	604
60 or more	56.4	5.5	1.9	7.0	0.9	9.5	3.0	0.2	6.3	9.3	100.0	527

*excludes new licensees

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

TABLE 5b: REGION BY GENDER**

for Ontario Paralegals, 2016

	South West	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Number
	<i>Percent</i>									
Women	7.0	7.4	39.4	30.6	6.6	2.0	4.3	2.6	100.0	4,826
Men	6.6	6.9	38.9	35.1	5.0	1.3	4.1	2.1	100.0	2,815
Total	6.9	7.2	39.2	32.3	6.0	1.7	4.2	2.4	100.0	7,641

**excludes paralegals whose address is outside Ontario

Source: 2016 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

1. Men are much more likely to be sole practitioners, by a margin of 36.4% to 12.8% for women. This difference is found in each age group, although it is greatest for the 20-29 age group, with 16.3% sole practitioners for men and just 3.8% for women. In contrast, the category for "other employment" includes 34.6% of all women paralegals, just 17.9% of men. Gender differences for the other categories are smaller, though 3.9% of men and 1.3% of women are in the category of law firm partners.
2. There is very little difference in the locations of male and female paralegals, especially compared to the very large differentials attributable to racialization seen in Table 4.

NOTE: The 2016 Snapshots include all paralegals except those whose licence is suspended, revoked, surrendered, in abeyance or those who have a status of "not in Ontario" (meaning their business address is listed outside of Ontario) or a status of "Retired" (meaning paralegals who are over 65 years of age and qualify for exemption under By-Law 5).