

Statistical Snapshot of Paralegals in Ontario

from the Paralegal Annual Report (PAR) 2018

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 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, 2018*

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

Indigenous	92.9%	Identify as Francophone	88.0%
Racialization	77.2%	Able to Practise in French	88.2%
Sexual Orientation	84.3%	Have a Disability	88.0%
Total Number	8,435		

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

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Table 1: **Indigenous and Racialized Ontario Paralegals**, 2018, compared to the 2016 Ontario Population

Group	Paralegals			Ontario Population		
				Everyone	Persons in the Labour Force, Ages 25-69	University Graduates in the Labour Force, Ages 25-69
	Number	Percent, excluding missing	Percent women	Percent		
Indigenous						
First Nations	64	0.83	76.6	1.84	1.40	0.54
Inuk	2	0.03	*	0.03	0.02	0.01
Métis	56	0.73	71.4	0.94	0.89	0.49
Other and Multiple Indigenous				0.10	0.07	0.04
Total Indigenous	122	1.58	74.6	2.91	2.38	1.08
Racialized						
Arab	120	1.7	65.8	1.56	1.12	1.89
Black	532	7.5	68.4	4.20	4.00	2.91
Chinese	438	6.2	65.3	5.41	5.44	9.05
Filipino	121	1.7	65.3	2.24	2.75	3.43
Japanese	8	0.1	*	0.14	0.15	0.25
Korean	65	0.9	64.6	0.60	0.60	1.04
Latino	263	3.7	66.9	1.42	1.59	1.29
South Asian	718	10.1	54.0	8.50	8.35	13.21
Southeast Asian	93	1.3	69.9	0.90	0.89	0.66
West Asian	203	2.9	61.1	1.10	1.03	1.61
Other Visible Minority	87	1.2	72.4	0.71	0.70	0.45
More than one Racialized Group				0.74	0.54	0.66
Racialized and White	113	1.6	72.6	1.76	0.79	1.16
Total Racialized	2,761	38.9	63.6	29.28	27.95	37.61
White	4,226	59.5	68.3	67.82	69.65	61.32
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	598		60.9			
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	728		52.2			
Total		100.0	64.9	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number	8,435	7,109		12,998,640	5,810,371	1,962,679

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report

Table 1: **Representation of Indigenous and Racialized Persons** among Ontario Paralegals, 2018, compared to the Ontario Population

1. 1.7% of paralegals are Indigenous, compared to 2.9% of the 2016 Ontario population, 2.4% of labour force participants age 25-69 and 1.1% of university graduates in the labour force age 25 or more. Including paralegals who answered the question about indigeneity but not racialization gives a more accurate, reduced estimate of 1.41% Indigenous paralegals.
2. 38.8% of Ontario paralegals are racialized, compared to 29.3% of the 2016 Ontario population, 28.0% of labour force participants age 25-69 and 37.6% of university graduates in the labour force age 25-69.
3. The Black, Latino and West Asian communities have considerably more paralegals than their representation in the population. South Asians are the largest non-White group, counting 10.1% of all paralegals, followed by Black paralegals, 7.5%, and Chinese paralegals, 6.2%.
4. Some groups have small numbers of paralegals. In all of Ontario, there are just 8 Japanese paralegals, 65 Korean, 93 Southeast Asian and 65 First Nations.
5. The feminization of paralegal practice is plain: 64.9% of paralegals are women, including 74.8% of Indigenous paralegals, 63.6% of racialized paralegals and 68.3% of White paralegals.

Table 2: **Racialization by Age** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

	Age					Age				
	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	13	17	13	19	4	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.6	0.6
Métis	14	16	10	12	4	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6
Total Indigenous	27	33	23	31	8	1.4	1.7	1.7	2.6	1.2
Racialized										
Arab	44	27	32	15	2	2.2	1.4	2.4	1.3	0.3
Black	130	148	121	100	33	6.5	7.7	9.1	8.4	4.9
Chinese	97	116	131	68	26	4.9	6.0	9.8	5.7	3.9
Filipino	31	39	26	20	5	1.6	2.0	1.9	1.7	0.7
Japanese	0	3	2	3	0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0
Korean	23	24	8	9	1	1.2	1.2	0.6	0.8	0.1
Latino	52	94	57	47	13	2.6	4.9	4.3	4.0	1.9
South Asian	217	198	130	108	65	10.9	10.3	9.7	9.1	9.7
Southeast Asian	29	33	18	12	1	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.0	0.1
West Asian	49	63	47	32	12	2.5	3.3	3.5	2.7	1.8
More than one Racialized Group	42	26	11	8	0	2.1	1.4	0.8	0.7	0.0
Racialized and White	51	27	15	12	8	2.6	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.2
Total Racialized	765	798	598	434	166	38.5	41.5	44.8	36.5	24.7
White	1,194	1,094	715	724	499	60.1	56.8	53.5	60.9	74.1
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	152	178	111	94	63					
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	143	218	140	126	101					
Total	2,281	2,321	1,587	1,409	837	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

Table 2 **Detailed Racialization by Age** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

1. 74.1% of paralegals age 60 or more are White, compared to 60.9% for paralegals age 50-59 and about 55% for ages 30-49; and 60.1% 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 a very small decline in the percentage of paralegals who are racialized with age, about 42% for ages 30-49, compared to 38.5% for ages 20-29. There is a noticeable decline in the proportion of paralegals who identify as Black, Chinese and Latino.

Table 3: **Gender, Sexual Orientation, Francophone Identity, Ability to Practise in French, and Disability by Age**
for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

	Age						Age					
	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	5,477	1,791	1,689	975	767	255	64.9	78.5	72.8	61.4	54.4	30.5
Men	2,958	490	632	612	642	582	35.1	21.5	27.2	38.6	45.6	69.5
Sexual Orientation												
LGBT2Q	269	108	81	40	26	14	3.8	5.5	4.2	3.0	2.2	2.0
Not LGBT2Q	6,840	1,866	1,857	1,284	1,160	673	96.2	94.5	95.8	97.0	97.8	98.0
Declined to Answer	1,326	307	383	263	223	150						
Identify as Francophone												
Yes	222	57	53	42	56	14	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.9	4.3	1.8
No	7,617	2,112	2,097	1,414	1,249	745	97.2	97.4	97.5	97.1	95.7	98.2
Declined to Answer	596	112	171	131	104	78						
Able to Practise in French												
Can Counsel and Represent	229	55	55	41	56	22	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.9	4.3	2.9
Can Counsel but not Represent	104	28	18	27	12	19	1.4	1.4	0.9	1.9	0.9	2.5
Cannot	7,110	1,856	1,939	1,370	1,220	725	95.5	95.7	96.4	95.3	94.7	94.6
Declined to Answer	992	342	309	149	121	71						
Have a Disability												
Yes	485	88	115	105	105	72	6.5	4.2	5.6	7.6	8.6	10.2
No	6,942	1,998	1,926	1,272	1,109	637	93.5	95.8	94.4	92.4	91.4	89.8
Declined to Answer	1,008	195	280	210	195	128						
All Paralegals	8,435	2,281	2,321	1,587	1,409	837	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

Table 3 **Gender, Sexual Orientation, Francophone Identity, Ability to Practise in French and Disability by Age**
for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

- 64.9% of all paralegals are women, and this will definitely increase in coming years. The striking feminization is apparent from a comparison of age groups. From just 30.5% women among paralegals age 60 or more, women account for 54.4% of paralegals age 50 to 59, 61.4% for ages 40-49, 72.8% for ages 30-39 and 78.5% for paralegals under 30.
- 3.8% of paralegals identify as LBGT2Q, with higher percentages among younger paralegals – 5.5% of paralegals age 20-29, 3.0% for ages 40-49, and 2.0% for age 60 or more.
- 2.8% of Ontario paralegals identify as Francophone, 3.1% indicate that they can counsel and represent clients in French; and another 1.4% can counsel but not represent clients in French. Both indicators are highest for older paralegals. There is some decline, from 4.3% for paralegals age 50-59 able to counsel and represent in French down to about 2.5% for paralegals under 40.
- The incidence of disability is 6.5% overall, climbing steadily from 4.2% for paralegals under 30 to 7.6% of paralegals age 40-49 to 10.2% of paralegals 60 or more.

Table 4a: **Status by Racialization*** for Ontario Paralegals, 2017

	Sole Practitioner	Law Firm Partner	Law Firm Associate	Law Firm Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other Employment	Retired or Not Working	Total	Number
Percent												
Indigenous												
First Nations and Inuk	24	3	0	2	8	3	7	2	27	24	100	59
Métis	36	0	2	0	2	9	11	0	23	17	100	53
Indigenous Total	29	2	1	1	5	6	9	1	25	21	100	112
Racialized												
Arab	23	0	2	3	1	2	8	2	29	31	100	115
Black	22	0	2	4	1	5	9	2	33	23	100	493
Chinese	25	2	2	11	1	2	5	1	29	21	100	420
Filipino	18	3	2	8	1	4	6	1	35	24	100	119
Japanese	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	14	57	14	100	7
Korean	15	3	3	10	0	2	3	0	44	20	100	61
Latino	19	2	1	12	4	5	9	1	27	20	100	259
South Asian	20	2	3	7	1	2	5	1	31	28	100	667
Southeast Asian	12	0	3	8	1	3	1	0	44	27	100	89
West Asian	27	1	2	12	0	2	4	1	24	29	100	191
More than one Racialized Group	10	1	1	9	1	6	7	5	42	17	100	81
Racialized and White	13	3	4	10	2	6	8	0	34	21	100	107
Racialized Total	21	1	2	8	1	3	6	1	32	24	100	2,609
White	19	2	3	12	2	6	9	1	29	16	100	4,035
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	23	2	3	9	1	5	7	2	28	21	100	573
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	23	4	2	10	1	6	8	1	24	21	100	704
Total	20	2	3	10	1	5	8	1	29	19	100	8,033

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

*excludes new licensees

Table 4b: **Region by Racialization**** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

	South West	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Number
	Percent									
Indigenous										
First Nations and Inuk	18	14	23	15	14	8	3	6	100	66
Métis	11	15	16	22	15	13	5	4	100	55
Indigenous Total	15	14	20	18	14	10	4	5	100	121
Racialized										
Arab	14	6	30	35	3	0	12	0	100	119
Black	3	5	53	33	2	0	5	0	100	529
Chinese	2	0	57	38	0	0	2	0	100	435
Filipino	2	2	63	31	1	0	2	0	100	121
Japanese	0	0	63	25	13	0	0	0	100	8
Korean	2	3	65	29	0	0	2	0	100	65
Latino	5	8	52	29	2	0	3	0	100	263
South Asian	1	3	38	55	1	0	2	0	100	714
Southeast Asian	4	10	44	39	1	0	2	0	100	93
West Asian	1	5	51	40	1	0	3	1	100	200
More than one Racialized Group	5	2	57	31	0	0	5	0	100	86
Racialized and White	4	3	54	31	2	2	4	1	100	113
Racialized Total	3	4	49	40	1	0	3	0	100	2,752
White	10	12	31	26	9	2	6	4	100	4,204
Not Indigenous, Declined Racialization Question	6	6	42	37	3	1	3	2	100	593
Declined Indigenous and Racialization Questions	5	8	39	35	4	2	4	2	100	720
Total	7	8	38	32	6	2	5	2	100	8,383

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

**excludes paralegals whose address is outside Ontario

Table 4 **Status and Region by Racialization** for Ontario Paralegals 2018

1. The most striking finding is that nearly half of all paralegals are not working as a paralegal, with 29% in other remunerative employment and 19% not employed at all. These high percentages hold for Indigenous, racialized and White paralegals; respectively 46, 56 and 45% are in other employment or not working.
2. One fifth of all paralegals are in sole practice and 10% are employees of a law firm, with sole practice accounting for 29% of Indigenous paralegals, 21% of racialized paralegals and 19% of White paralegals. Their numbers are too small to compare the different racialized groups with confidence.
3. By a wide margin, the largest number of paralegals is in Toronto, 38% of the total. Then the combination of Durham, Halton, Peel and York areas surrounding Toronto accounts for another 32% of all paralegals in the province. 7% of paralegals are in Ontario's Southwest, 8% in the Central South and 6% in the Central North. Just 2% of paralegals are in the North, 5% in Ottawa and 2% in the East.
4. 49% of racialized paralegals are in Toronto and 40% are in Durham, Halton, Peel and York, leaving only 11% in the rest of the province. In contrast, only 38% of Indigenous paralegals are in these two areas, with the North accounting for 10% of Indigenous paralegals, compared to 2% of White paralegals and less than 0.5 of racialized paralegals.

Table 5a: **Status by Gender by Age*** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

	Sole Practitioner	Law Firm Partner	Law Firm Associate	Law Firm Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other Employment	Retired or Not Working	Total	Number
	Percent											
Women												
Total	12.4	1.3	2.3	10.6	1.9	4.5	8.9	1.3	35.4	21.4	100.0	5,192
20-29	2.8	0.4	2.6	10.2	0.7	2.6	7.9	0.7	52.7	19.2	100.0	1,630
30-39	10.1	0.9	2.3	11.3	1.3	4.6	9.0	1.5	35.0	24.1	100.0	1,642
40-49	21.3	2.6	2.4	10.4	2.5	5.8	9.4	1.4	23.9	20.4	100.0	927
50-59	23.2	1.8	1.4	10.5	3.2	6.5	10.3	2.3	20.4	20.4	100.0	740
60 or more	24.5	2.8	1.6	10.3	7.1	5.9	9.9	1.6	11.5	24.9	100.0	253
Men												
Total	35.2	3.8	3.3	9.5	0.4	6.3	6.2	0.7	18.7	15.8	100.0	2,841
20-29	12.9	2.5	4.6	11.3	0.0	2.5	6.2	0.5	34.3	25.3	100.0	435
30-39	23.8	2.6	3.6	12.5	0.5	6.6	8.6	1.2	23.5	17.1	100.0	608
40-49	36.2	4.0	3.5	8.8	0.7	7.1	6.4	0.8	18.7	13.8	100.0	594
50-59	42.1	4.3	3.0	8.3	0.3	6.5	5.7	0.6	14.4	14.8	100.0	630
60 or more	55.7	5.1	2.1	7.1	0.5	7.8	3.8	0.5	6.6	10.6	100.0	574

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

*excludes new licensees

Table 5b: **Region by Gender**** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

	South West	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Number
	Percent									
Women	7.3	8.6	38.7	30.3	6.3	1.7	4.8	2.4	100.0	5,441
Men	6.7	8.1	38.0	34.8	4.9	1.4	4.1	2.1	100.0	2,942
Total	7.1	8.4	38.5	31.9	5.8	1.6	4.5	2.3	100.0	8,383

Source: 2018 Paralegal Annual Report; analysis by Michael Ornstein

**excludes paralegals whose address is outside Ontario

Table 5 **Status by Gender by Age and Region by Gender** for Ontario Paralegals, 2018

1. Men are much more likely to be sole practitioners, by a margin of 35.2% to 12.4% for women – with this gender difference almost entirely made up by “other employment” that accounts for an astonishing 35.4% of women paralegals, compared to just 18.7% of men. For women and men, sole practitioners increase with age, from just 2.8% of women paralegals under 30 to 21.3% for ages 40-49; the comparable figures for men are 12.9% and 36.2%.
2. “Other employment” decreases from 52.7% of women paralegals under the age of 30 to 35.0% for ages 30-39 and 23.9% for ages 40-49; with comparable figures for men of 34.3, 23.5 and 18.7%. That this percentage declines dramatically with age should not be taken as assurance that the youngest group will eventually find work in paralegal practice. Even if this was true in the past (which we also do not know), it may no longer be the case. Also, the observed pattern is equally compatible with the possibility that persons with paralegal training who cannot or choose not to practice when they are young drop out of the profession and disappear from the Law Society records.
3. There is very little difference in the geographical distribution of male and female paralegals.