

Survey of Staffing - Data Release: Supporting Documentation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the Survey of Staffing

The Survey of Staffing (SOS) is an important tool that the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) uses to monitor employees' perceptions of staffing activity within the federal public service and to gauge awareness of their legal rights and responsibilities regarding political activities. The SOS was first launched in 2008 and, since then, six annual cycles have been completed. The next cycle, with revised content and a new structure, is scheduled for launch in early 2018.

The SOS data provides the basis for:

- monitoring the core staffing values of merit and non-partisanship
- informing Canadians of the improvements made to the federal staffing system and
- using both Official Languages for government-wide staffing

The SOS targets employees in federal organizations (with at least 350 employees) that fall under the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA). The members of the RCMP and Canadian Forces with civilian staff reporting to them, who are employed under the PSEA, also fall within the SOS in-scope population, while certain groups such as non-civilians, governor-in-council appointments, minister's exempt staff and employees in a student employment program are excluded.

The SOS allows hiring managers, candidates and human resources personnel to share their views and opinions on staffing activities in their organizations. The survey collects information on area of selection, assessment tools used and the outcomes of staffing processes to help classify types of processes and positions being staffed. The respondents also provide information regarding their awareness of their legal rights and responsibilities regarding political activities.

Data collection is administered in partnership with [Statistics Canada](#).

This data release

This data release is comprised of the findings from the most recent cycle of the SOS, along with those from the previous two cycles, for comparison purposes.

The most recent cycle of the SOS, that covered the reference period from October 2012 to December 2013, was sent to 187,603 employees in 42 organizations within the federal public service and to non-civilian managers from the Department of National Defence and the RCMP

(3,972 and 1,456 employees, respectively). A total of 87,700 responses were received, with an overall response rate of 45.4%.¹

This data release, based on 2014 organization reports, includes the SOS results for **37 selected questions**. Four additional questions on political activities for managers and employees are also included.

Organizations are grouped into two categories: Medium (350 to 1,999 employees) and large (over 2,000 employees). Organizations with fewer than 350 employees were excluded from the survey.

The data being reported covers three types of staffing actions: Advertised processes, non-advertised processes and priority appointments.

The employee population used for sampling (sampling frame) was made up of all in-scope employees taken from Public Works and Procurement Services Canada's Incumbent file.

Quality assurance

This data release has been subject to a comprehensive quality review, as per the [guidelines](#) published by Statistics Canada.

All elements of data are subjected to the following two quality criteria:

1. A minimum of 30 valid responses and
2. A coefficient of variation below 16.6%

Empty cells denote that data is either not available or did not meet either or both quality criteria.

Since the SOS includes a number of branching and skip patterns targeting different groups of respondents, the number of questions each respondent is answering varies with the type of staffing process being reported. An example would be a hiring manager reporting on an advertised process, who would not answer questions concerning a non-advertised process.

Consequently, the number of valid responses per question may vary within the same organization, with the exception of those responding to questions on the awareness of the legal rights and responsibilities regarding political activities.

Sampling and collection

This survey is a census with a repeated cross-sectional design. Responding to it was voluntary and the data was collected directly from the survey respondents. Each federal employee receiving a survey invitation (that is, a sampling unit) was contacted by email and invited to complete an electronic questionnaire.

¹ For information on previous SOS cycles, please refer to the dataset named Survey of Staffing: Organizational Data.

Interpretation of survey results

Apart from the questions regarding “time to staff” (Q.28 to Q.31), all responses are presented as percentages in a binary format, such as Yes/No, Agree/Disagree, Satisfied/Dissatisfied, and so on.

In cases where the questions are based on a four-point scale, the two most positive responses (to a moderate extent or to a great extent) are aggregated and compared with the two least positive responses (to a small extent and not at all).

Data on “time to staff” questions are presented in both mean and median number of weeks required for staffing positions. The median is the midpoint of a frequency distribution of observed values or quantities, such that the value above and below which 50% of results would be found. In general, the median is less sensitive to extreme values than the mean.

DATASET DOCUMENTATION

Survey of Staffing: Organizational Data Profiles (CFPPSC_SOS_A)

- **Source:** Survey of Staffing, Public Service Commission of Canada
- **Note:** No data for Shared Services Canada is available for 2011, since the organization was established after 2011.

Survey of Staffing: Summary of Results by Organization (CFPPSC_SOS_B)

- **Source:** Survey of Staffing, Public Service Commission of Canada
- **Notes:**
 - empty cells denote that data is either not available or did not meet either or both quality criteria
 - for questions Q.3, Q.32, Q.36 and Q.37, multi-year comparison of results are not possible due to structural changes to the survey
 - Question POL-04 is new to the 2013 cycle of the SOS

GLOSSARY

Attribute Name	Defined Attribute Name
answer_choice_e	Answer choice (English)
answer_choice_f	Answer choice (French)
data_cycle	Data cycle
n	Percentage/Median/Mean
n_type_e	Type of n value (English)
n_type_f	Type of n value (French)
number_of_employees	Number of employees
organization_e	Federal government organizations (English)
organization_f	Federal government organizations (French)
organization_size_e	Federal government organization size (English)
organization_size_f	Federal government organizations size (French)
question_e	Question (English)

question_f	Question (French)
total_in_scope_candidates	Total in-scope candidates
total_in_scope_managers	Total in-scope managers
total_responses_received	Total responses received