

Understanding Unifor's Membership

A profile of equity representation

In 2013, Unifor was established on the premise of being a new union, a union for everyone. Our commitment was to do things differently and with intent to build an equitable and inclusive environment in the workplace, in our communities and around the world.

The union's struggle for justice, respect, and dignity cannot however be limited to fighting the bad boss or pushing the government for legislative changes. It must also include taking a look internally, within our union to consider how members are included, represented and most importantly how we can create opportunities for equity-diverse representation of our membership.

Across the country, the population is growing increasingly diverse. The challenge in the broader labour movement is to create more inclusive and equitable spaces that reflect the diversity of our membership today and for the future. Without doing this, the union will have little relevance for much of the population and our ability to engage, and build a strong, progressive, fighting union will be lost. This is why the union is strengthening its equity agenda to build Unifor.

This factsheet is a first step to better understanding the Unifor membership. If Unifor is going to continue to play a pivotal role in the labour movement this is not only the right thing to do, it is fundamental to Unifor's strength.

Why This Factsheet?

This is a snapshot of how designated equity-seeking groups, Aboriginal and workers of colour, immigrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ), workers with a disability and women, are reflected in our membership.

The numbers help provide an equity perspective on who our members are. This helps us understand how diversity and representation translates in the workplace, locals and in our national union.

This factsheet offers info on how diverse representation is reflected in Unifor, in different sectors and regions.

All of this is important because if we can better understand who Unifor is and how or where our diversity is represented, then together, as members and elected officers, we can also look directly into what barriers exist for members of equity-seeking groups. A diversity of voices and representation matters and it is vital the union is proactive to ensuring we are including rather than allowing exclusion to happen. This is why Unifor needs a plan to ensure that the union not only reflects equity and representation, but that we act to ensure – at all levels – the workers Unifor represents and the communities it serves are included.

How to use this information

This is a tool for locals, for members, and for elected leaders to better understand how and where equity groups are represented in the membership. If we can better understand who Unifor is and how or where diversity is represented, then together, we can begin to identify what barriers exist.

Strengthening our union is a collective task, it takes time but it is worth it for our future! One thing you can do with this info is to start your own conversation about equity and representation. Share this resource in your workplace or local. Start a conversation about how and where diversity is reflected in the workplace, your local and the union!

A few facts



310,000
members



Diversity and representation in our membership depends on a number of factors including, where members are geographically located, in which industries they work, and the population in the region.

The stats listed here are only estimates.

Workers of Colour

1 in 6



50,800 workers of colour are members of Unifor. This represents 17% of Unifor's total membership or 1 in 6 members.

31% of British Columbia's members are workers of colour. 21% of Ontario's members are workers of colour, while Alberta has 18%. Quebec has 7%. The Atlantic region numbers are smaller given the make-up of the population. PEI has just over 1% of workers of colour, while the Newfoundland and Labrador membership has less than 1%.

Workers of colour are represented to different degrees in sectors and industries. The largest grouping is in transportation at 21%.

Immigrants to Canada

1 in 5



Immigrants make up about 66,100 of our members, that is 21% or 1 in 5 members.

Immigrants are defined as a person having been born outside of Canada without Canadian citizenship.

Approximately 21% of Unifor's members - that's 66,100 people - are immigrants. A full two-thirds, or 67% of our immigrant members, are located in Ontario with an additional 10% located in BC. At 5% and 7% respectively, Alberta and Quebec both host a significant share. Newfoundland and Labrador show the smallest share of members.

LGBTQ

1 in 25



LGBTQ members are estimated at 10,900, 4% of the union or 1 in 25 members. There is no data currently available for regional or sector representation.

NOTE: Given the incredible stigma and homophobia/transphobia many members face when they come "out" at work, it is believed many are closeted / hiding their sexual orientation. This means gathering info is difficult. In fact, the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion estimates that 30% of LGBTQ workers have experienced discrimination in the workplace compared to only 3% of the non-LGBTQ population.

Workers with Disabilities

1 in 13



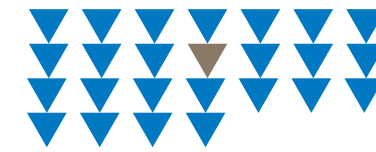
Workers with disabilities, where members have identified as having a visible or invisible disability, represent 25,400 of the membership or 8%; this is 1 in 13. This number, 8%, is on par with the total workforce in Canada. Manitoba and Quebec show lower estimates at 5% and 4% respectively. Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest share of members with a disability at 13%.

11% of workers in the transportation sector are workers with a disability, while 5% of members work in the resources sector. In the services sector, the estimate is 9% while only 6% of communications workers are likely to identify as having a disability. In the manufacturing sector, Unifor's membership is at the national average of 8%.

Disability is defined as having a long-term condition or health related problem that limits ability to complete general activities of daily living.

Aboriginal Workers

1 in 25



Aboriginal and Indigenous members total 10,800 people, which is 4% or 1 in 25 of the membership.

35% work in Ontario, but keep in mind this is only 3% of the total Ontario membership (159,400). 14% of Aboriginal workers are in Manitoba and 12% in British Columbia. Quebec has 8%. Aboriginal workers in Nunavut make up about 2.5% of the total Unifor Aboriginal membership. While New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have under 2%, Newfoundland is 6%.

Health, social services and auto parts industries have the largest number of Aboriginal workers. 5% of members work in the resources sector, the largest share, while the two industries with the smallest Aboriginal representation are communications and in manufacturing, 3% and 2% respectively.

Women

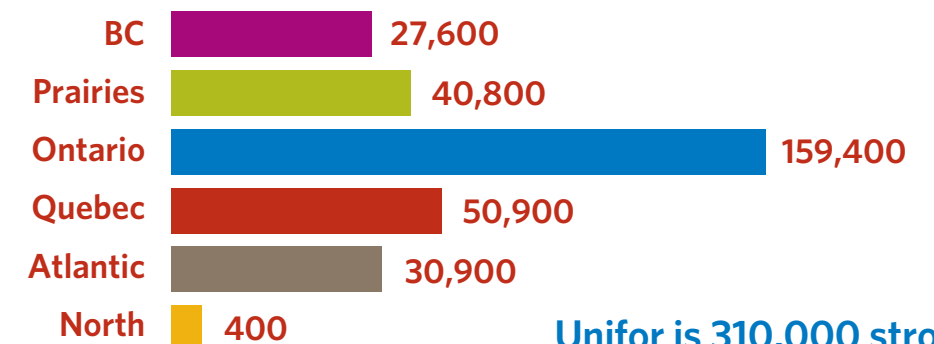
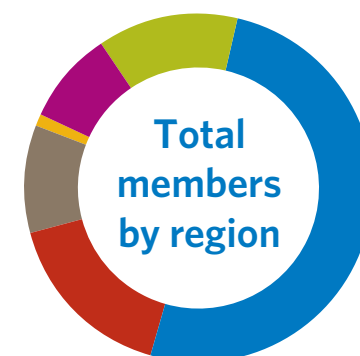
1 in 3



33% of Unifor's members are women. Although, this grouping is the largest representation of an equity group in our union, it is still only 1 in 3 members, 102,300.

While some sectors are dominated by men, women occupy positions in every industry and in every region. Nova Scotia has the highest share of provincial members who are women, 45%, though this province has only 5% of all women members across the country. Quebec has the lowest concentration at 18%. Ontario is at 39% and Manitoba is at 35%, while New Brunswick and Alberta are far lower at 26% and 21%.

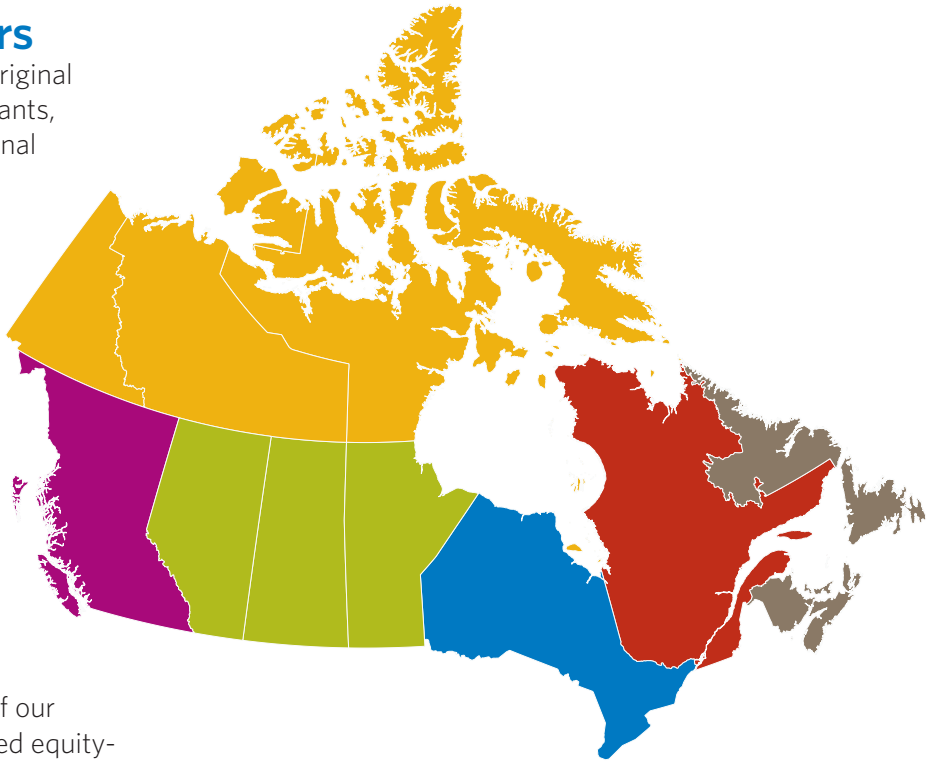
Women make up the majority of members in the services sector and two in five members are in the communications sector. At the other end, less than one in 10 members in the resources sector is a woman.



Unifor is 310,000 strong!

Understanding the Numbers

For some equity-seeking groups, namely Aboriginal workers, workers with disabilities and immigrants, Unifor's membership mirrors that of the national numbers. Although the diversity of our membership is on par we know that many equity groups are underrepresented in many Unifor activities, particularly for women. It is important to note that these estimates cannot fully reflect the barriers to employment opportunities faced by equity groups. The challenge for Unifor is to achieve greater employment equity and to organize. This means that Unifor needs to work harder to gain members in industries and workplaces where workers of these equity-seeking groups are employed.



It is also important to remember, that some of our members don't belong to any of the designated equity-seeking groups while some belong to more than one, for example a woman who is Aboriginal and identifies as having a disability. Given that many members identify with multiple equity groups, our approach to inclusion must contain an intersectional approach to remove barriers and support inclusion.

Inclusion and equity means different things in different areas, sectors and regions. There is no one size fits all approach that the union can take to be inclusive. Equity requires collaborative work, ongoing action, campaigns, transformative education, organizing and training opportunities that push us forward. It is also about listening and learning to put equity at the core of our work. That is, of course, if we are serious about building a more inclusive union for everyone.

Along with understanding who the membership is, it is equally important to consider representation within elected leadership positions, in local delegate representation and at the staff level. Unifor must also look to the future to ensure next steps reflect the changing demographic composition of the country as it grows and changes over time. Representation is important; it is

necessary and vital for our union. This is why, along with unpacking the numbers, there is a need to develop new strategies to ensure equity and inclusion happens in all national and regional activities.

What's Next?

This is the important question.

Real change requires each of us, every member, local, elected officer and staff representative to be involved. It will require a plan, and our commitment. But it can start with you. So, the question, what's next, is really one for you. What will you do to strengthen our union and include others?



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Data is only as good as we are.

The numbers here are based on the most up-to-date info provided by locals, and the database, but it is not perfect.

The good news is you can help! Fill out a short survey to improve Unifor's data.

unifor.org/demographics