

Statistical Snapshot of Paralegals in Ontario

from the Paralegal Annual Report (PAR) 2013

RESPONSE RATES

The Law Society of Upper Canada 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.

RESPONSE RATES FOR EACH QUESTION

- Aboriginal 90%
- Racialized 82%
- Sexual orientation 86%
- Francophone 92%
- Able to practice in French 87%
- Disability 90%
- Gender 100%

RACE AND ABORIGINAL

General Data — * means less than 0.1 percent

Categories from LAR	Number of Paralegal Respondents	% of all Paralegals Respondents	Total Ontario Population %	Persons in the Labour Force Age 25 or more %	University Graduates in the Labour Force, Age 25 or more %
First Nations	51	1.1	1.6	1.2	0.5
Inuk	0	0	*	*	*
Métis	25	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.3
Other Aboriginal			0.1	0.1	0.1
Multiple Aboriginal			*	*	*
All Aboriginal communities	76	1.7	2.3	1.9	0.8
Arab	57	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.5
Black (e.g. African-Canadian, African, Caribbean)	303	6.8	4.3	3.8	2.7
Chinese	213	4.8	5.0	5.1	8.5
East-Asian (e.g. Japanese, Korean)	46	1.0	3.0	3.2	4.7
Latin American, Hispanic	160	3.6	1.4	1.5	1.2
South Asian (e.g. Indo-Canadian, Indian Subcontinent)	414	9.3	7.7	7.2	10.8
Southeast Asian	108	2.4	1.1	1.1	0.9
West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan)	108	2.4	1.0	0.8	1.3
Other racialized			0.6	0.6	0.4
More than one racialized group	35	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.7
Racialized and White	37	0.8			
Total racialized	1,481	33.2	25.9	24.8	32.7
White	2,899	65.1	71.8	73.4	66.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total respondents to question about being Aboriginal	5,009				
Total respondents to question about race	4,456				

The National Household Survey uses the term “Black” only.

The National Household Survey uses the categories of “Korean” and “Japanese” separately

The National Household Survey uses the category “Latin American” only.

The National Household Survey uses the following examples for South Asian: “East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.”

Just over one-third, 34.9 percent, of Ontario paralegals are Aboriginal or Racialized, compared to 28.2 percent of the Ontario population, 26.7 percent of labour force participants 25 or older and 33.5 percent of university graduates in the labour force and 25 or older. Thus, one cannot argue that paralegals are disproportionately White.

Aboriginal paralegals account for 1.7 percent of the total, compared to 2.3 percent of the Ontario population, 1.9 percent of labour force participants who are 25 or older and 0.8 percent of university graduates of the labour force who are 25 or older. For members of racialized groups the figures are 33.2 percent of paralegals, 25.9 percent of the population, 24.8 percent of labour force participants who are 25 or older and 32.7 percent of university graduates in the labour force who are 25 or older.

Exact comparisons are difficult, but there are quite large differences between racialized groups. The Black, Latino, Southeast Asian and West Asians communities include more paralegals than their representation in the population.

Some of the groups are small numerically: The data indicates that there are just 76 Aboriginal paralegals in Ontario, 57 Arab paralegals, 46 East Asian paralegals, 108 Southeast Asian and 108 West Asian paralegals.

Age, Race and Aboriginal — in Percentages

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
Aboriginal					
First Nations and Inuk	1.1	0.7	1.5	1.1	1.4
Métis	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8
Aboriginal Total	1.8	1.0	1.9	1.8	2.2
Racialized					
Arab	2.2	1.9	0.8	0.3	0.4
Black	5.3	8.4	7.9	6.0	5.9
Chinese	2.8	6.0	6.4	4.4	3.9
East Asian	0.9	1.5	1.1	0.8	0.4
Latino	4.2	3.9	4.2	3.2	1.2
South Asian	11.0	9.1	8.9	8.9	7.5
Southeast Asian	3.0	2.6	3.1	1.7	0.8
West Asian	3.0	4.2	1.6	1.6	0.6
More than one Racialized Group	1.7	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.2
Racialized and White	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.8
Racialized Total	35.5	39.1	35.0	28.0	21.7
White	62.7	60.0	62.9	70.1	76.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers	1,075	1,035	977	877	492

Seventy-six percent of paralegals age 60 and older are White, compared to 70.1 percent of paralegals age 50-59 and about 61 percent of paralegals under 50. There is no consistent trend among the three youngest ten-year groups, suggesting that the shift towards an increased proportion of non-White paralegals was a phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s.

Aboriginal paralegals are small in number and their age distribution suggests no trend in their share of the profession over the years.

There is continuing growth in the proportion of paralegals who identify as Arab and, not quite so consistently, as West Asian.

There are substantially fewer Black paralegals under 30 than between 30 and 39, down from 8.4 percent to 5.3 percent, and Chinese paralegals, down from 6.0 percent to 2.8 percent.

Region, Race and Aboriginal — in Percentages

	South-west	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Total numbers
Aboriginal										
First Nations and Inuk	16	4	25	22	14	6	6	8	100	51
Métis	8	4	16	16	16	28	4	8	100	25
Aboriginal Total	13	4	22	20	14	13	5	8	100	76
Racialized										
Arab	11	0	41	34	2	0	13	0	100	56
Black	2	2	51	38	1	0	5	0	100	302
Chinese	1	0	67	29	1	0	2	0	100	213
East Asian	0	2	71	27	0	0	0	0	100	45
Latino	4	3	63	26	1	0	3	0	100	160
South Asian	1	2	40	56	1	0	0	0	100	412
Southeast Asian	3	4	59	31	0	0	2	1	100	108
West Asian	3	2	53	38	0	0	5	0	100	108
More than one Racialized Group	0	6	54	40	0	0	0	0	100	35
Racialized and White	5	3	46	27	3	3	14	0	100	37
Racialized Total	2	2	52	39	1	0	3	0	100	1,476
White	9	10	32	29	9	3	5	4	100	2,896
Total	7	7	39	32	6	2	4	3	100	4,448

There is a significant geographical aspect to the distribution of paralegals. By a wide margin, the largest numbers are in Toronto and in the combination of the Durham, Halton, Peel and York areas surrounding Toronto; respectively, they account for 39 and 32 percent of all paralegals. Seven percent of paralegals are in Ontario's Southwest, 7 percent in the Central South and 6 percent in the Central North. Just 2 percent of paralegals are in the North, 4 percent in Ottawa and 3 percent in the East.

Just over half of racialized paralegals, 52 percent, are in Toronto and 39 percent are in Durham, Halton, Peel and York. This leaves just 9 percent in the entire rest of the province. In contrast, only 44 percent of Aboriginal paralegals are in these two largest areas and they are over-represented everywhere else. The North accounts for 13 percent of Aboriginal paralegals, compared to 3 percent of White paralegals and almost no racialized paralegals.

Type of Employment, Race and Aboriginal — in Percentages

	Sole Practice	Law Firm Partner	Law Firm Associate	Law Firm Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other	Total	Total numbers
First Nations and Inuk	43	2	2	7	5	2	7	0	32	100	44
Métis	37	0	5	16	5	16	5	0	16	100	19
Aboriginal Total	41	2	3	10	5	6	6	0	27	100	63
Arab	40	0	2	8	4	8	8	0	29	100	48
Black	36	1	1	8	0	8	8	1	37	100	226
Chinese	45	5	1	16	1	3	4	1	25	100	166
East Asian	31	11	11	14	0	3	6	0	25	100	36
Latino	30	5	5	15	4	5	8	0	27	100	130
South Asian	42	4	3	10	1	2	4	1	33	100	306
Southeast Asian	37	2	2	14	0	6	2	0	36	100	84
West Asian	39	1	4	18	0	5	3	1	28	100	76
More than One Group	36	0	0	18	4	0	18	4	21	100	28
Racialized and White	31	0	3	7	3	10	17	0	28	100	29
Racialized Total	38	3	3	12	1	5	6	1	31	100	1,129
White	30	3	4	16	2	10	9	1	24	100	2,482
Total	33	3	4	15	2	9	8	1	26	100	3,674

Paralegals are most likely to work as sole practitioners, including 41 percent of Aboriginal paralegals, 38 percent of racialized paralegals and 30 percent of White paralegals.

The moderate difference in the employment profiles of Aboriginal, racialized and White paralegals could in part result from the White paralegals being older.

Disregarding the “others”, the second largest category of paralegal employment is working for a law firm, which accounts for 10, 12 and 16 percent of Aboriginal, racialized and White paralegals, respectively.

Other paralegals are employed “in house” and by government, and a small number are classified as law firm partners and law firm associates.

Because of the small numbers in the various racialized groups and uncertainty due to the large “other” category, we cannot with confidence describe differences in type of employment between the specific racialized groups.

Size of Firms for those in Firms — in Percentages

	Fewer than 5	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100-199	200 or more	Total	Total numbers
Aboriginal									
First Nations and Inuk	60	20	20	0	0	0	0	100	5
Métis	0	25	50	25	0	0	0	100	4
Aboriginal Total	33	22	33	11	0	0	0	100	9
Racialized									
Arab	60	0	20	0	0	0	20	100	5
Black	46	25	8	13	8	0	0	100	24
Chinese	59	19	8	11	0	0	3	100	37
East Asian	46	23	23	0	8	0	0	100	13
Latino	29	21	26	9	12	3	0	100	34
South Asian	67	16	12	6	0	0	0	100	51
Southeast Asian	63	19	13	0	6	0	0	100	16
West Asian	61	17	11	6	6	0	0	100	18
More than one Racialized Group	80	0	0	20	0	0	0	100	5
Racialized and White	67	0	0	33	0	0	0	100	3
Racialized Total	55	18	14	8	4	0	1	100	206
White	53	21	10	13	3	0	1	100	582
Total	53	20	11	11	3	0	1	100	797

GENDER

Age and Gender — in Percentages

	Total	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
Women	58.4	77.4	66.9	55.7	48.6	23.0
Men	41.6	22.6	33.1	44.3	51.4	77.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers	5,428	1,290	1,264	1,213	1,051	610

In 2013, 58.4 percent of paralegals were women, a figure that will definitely increase in coming years. There is a strong and consistent increase in the representation of women, from just 23.0 percent of paralegals age 60 and older, to 48.6 percent for paralegals age 50 to 59, 55.7 percent for ages 40-49, 66.9 percent for ages 30-39 and 77.4 percent for paralegals under 30.

Type of Employment and Gender — in Percentages

	Sole Practice	Law Firm Partner	Law Firm Associate	Law Firm Employee	Legal Clinic	In House	Government	Education	Other	Total	Total numbers
Women											
Total	21.5	2.0	3.2	17.1	2.7	7.5	9.9	1.2	35.0	100.0	2,502
under 35	7.7	0.9	2.9	17.0	0.8	4.6	8.0	1.0	57.2	100.0	766
35-44	18.2	2.0	4.5	18.2	1.3	7.2	11.9	0.9	35.7	100.0	638
45-54	31.9	1.8	2.5	20.1	3.2	7.9	10.4	1.1	21.2	100.0	567
55-64	34.7	3.8	2.4	12.0	5.9	9.7	11.3	2.1	18.2	100.0	424
65 or older	31.8	4.7	4.7	15.9	9.3	18.7	3.7	0.0	11.2	100.0	107
Men											
Total	48.7	5.0	3.4	12.8	0.8	10.2	4.5	0.5	14.2	100.0	1,939
under 35	28.3	4.4	6.3	16.6	0.5	2.9	2.9	0.5	37.6	100.0	205
35-44	40.2	3.6	3.9	16.8	0.0	8.8	7.2	0.6	19.0	100.0	363
45-54	48.4	7.1	5.1	12.6	0.6	9.6	4.5	0.4	11.6	100.0	467
55-64	52.0	4.8	2.1	10.5	1.1	11.4	5.9	0.8	11.4	100.0	475
65 or older	62.2	4.2	1.2	10.3	1.4	14.0	1.4	0.2	5.1	100.0	429

Men are much more likely to be sole practitioners, partners in a firm and to be employed “in house”, while women paralegals are more likely to be employed as law firm employees – though this different is largely attributable to lower ages of women paralegals, and in legal clinics (though the number is small).

Size of Firms for those in Firms — in Percentages

	Fewer than 5	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100-199	200 or more	Total	Total numbers
Women	49.8	25.3	10.9	9.0	3.4	0.7	0.9	100.0	558
Men	56.8	15.6	9.8	15.4	2.2	0.0	0.2	100.0	410
Total	52.8	21.2	10.4	11.7	2.9	0.4	0.6	100.0	968

Region and Gender — in Percentages

	South-west	Central South	Toronto	Durham, Halton, Peel, York	Central North	North	Ottawa	East	Total	Total numbers
Women	6.5	6.5	39.9	31.4	5.9	2.6	4.2	2.9	100.0	3,164
Men	6.9	6.8	38.3	35.0	5.1	1.8	3.8	2.2	100.0	2,254
Total	6.7	6.6	39.3	32.9	5.6	2.3	4.0	2.6	100.0	5,418

FRANCOPHONE

3.1 percent of the profession self-identifies as Francophone while 4.8 percent of the Ontario population identifies as Francophone.¹ Almost 4.5% of the profession indicate being able to provide legal services in French.

DISABILITY

Age and Disability — in Percentages

	Total	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
Disability	5.4	2.5	4.2	6.1	7.7	9.1
No Disability	94.6	97.5	95.8	93.9	92.3	90.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers	4,883	1,215	1,132	1,079	921	536

The incidence of disability, 5.4 percent overall, climbs steadily with age, from 2.5 percent for paralegals under 30 to 6.2 percent of paralegal 40-49 to 9.1 percent of paralegals over 60. Disability, this suggests, heavily involves the development or worsening of health conditions with age.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER (LGBTQ)

Age and LGBTQ — in Percentages

	Total	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or more
LGBTQ	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.2	2.0	1.0
Not LGBTQ	98.4	98.3	97.9	98.8	98.0	99.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers	4,675	1,148	1,089	1,035	887	516

¹ Based on 2011 Statistics Canada Census.