



A SkillsPlus Socio-Economic Report:

How Much Do Male and Female Employees Earn in Victoria's Small Businesses?



This is the third in a series of four socio-economic reports prepared by SkillsPlus. The purpose of these reports is to provide relevant labour market information for small businesses in the **Retail/Wholesale/Grocery** and **Tourism/Hospitality** industries in the Victoria region.

The information in this report is based on 2006 Census data for the Victoria CMA (Census Metropolitan Area). Because the Census data is presented in slightly different categories, this report uses the terms *Retail*, *Wholesale*, and *Accommodation and Food*.

Using the census data, we looked at the annual income patterns within these industries, examining both the gender realities of income and income patterns of part-time and full-time employees, in order to identify similarities and differences between these industries and the rest of the workforce.

Note: Most numbers in this report have been rounded for ease of reading. If you would like more detailed information, please contact the Community Council.

Gender differences in employment

In 2005, women and men were employed in almost equal proportions (49.4% women and 50.6% men) in the workforce as a whole (all industries combined). However, women represent 55% of the workforce in the Retail industry and the Accommodation and Food industry, and only 32% of the workforce in the Wholesale industry.

Industry	Gender				Total
	Males		Females		
	Number	%	Number	%	
Retail	9,290	44.9	11,395	55.1	20,685
Wholesale	3,075	68.1	1,440	31.9	4,515
Accommodation and Food	6,870	44.1	8,695	55.9	15,565
All industries	92,500	50.6	90,390	49.4	182,890

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Average income versus median income

Income can be compared using **average** income or **median** income. The average income is calculated by adding all of the figures together and dividing the total by the number of figures. The median income is the amount halfway between the lowest income earned and the highest income earned.

The median income is usually less than the average income, because the average is often pushed upwards by the very high income of a small number of individuals at the upper end of the income spectrum. The median income is therefore considered a better representation of income levels than the average income.

Income differences among industries

Employees who work in the Retail, Wholesale, and Accommodation and Food industries all make less than similar employees in the workforce as a whole (all industries combined). The differences are greatest in the Retail industry and the Accommodation and Food industry.

The median income of full-time employees who work for the full year in the Wholesale industry is 2% less than similar employees in the whole workforce, while the median income of part-time employees in the Wholesale industry is 11% higher than their counterparts in the whole workforce.

Full-time employees who work for the full year in the Retail industry earn 28% less than similar employees in the workforce as a whole, while part-time employees earn 33% less than their counterparts in the workforce as a whole.

In Accommodation and Food, full-time employees who work for the full year earn almost 45% less than similar employees in the workforce as a whole, while part-time employees earn 42% less than their counterparts in the workforce as a whole.

Industry	Median Income			
	Full-time, full-year		Part-time, part-year	
	\$	% difference (all industries)	\$	% difference (all industries)
Retail	30,789	-28	9,415	-33
Wholesale	41,891	-2	15,545	+11
Accommodation and Food	23,476	-45	8,168	-42
All industries	42,817	-	13,987	-

Gender differences in income

Differences between full-time and part-time employment

In the workplace as a whole (all industries combined), women who work full-time for the full year earn 23% less than men who work full-time for the full year. The difference is most pronounced in the Retail industry, where women earn 37% less than men.

In the workplace as a whole (all industries combined), women who work part-time or part of the year earn 17% less than men who work part time or part of the year. The difference is by far the greatest in the Wholesale industry, where women earn 61% less than men.

Differences among industries

There is significant income inequality in the workforce as a whole in the Victoria region, as well as in the Retail, Wholesale, and Accommodation and Food industries.

Among full-time employees who work the full year in the overall workforce (all industries combined), women earn 23% less than men. For part-time or part-year employees, women earn 17% less.

Of the three industries we looked at, the inequalities are greatest in Retail and Wholesale:

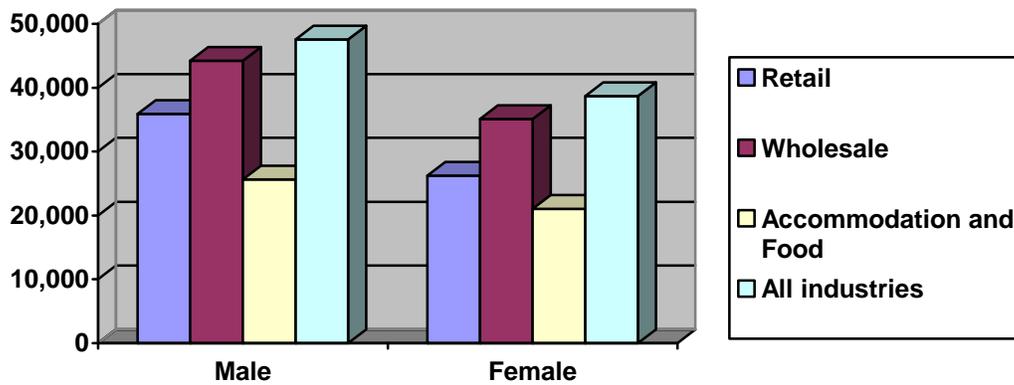
- In Retail, for full-time employees who work the full year, the income difference between men and women increases to 37%, and for part-time or part-year employees it increases to 22%.
- In Wholesale, for full-time employees who work the full year, the income difference increases to 26%, while for part-time or part-year employees, the difference between men's and women's income increases to 61%.

In Accommodation and Food, the difference is smaller: among full-time employees who work the full year, the difference in income is 1%, and for part-time or part-year employees the difference is about 6%.

Industry	Median income of employees working full-time, full-year (\$/year)		
	Male	Female	% difference (male/female)
Retail	35,901	26,213	37
Wholesale	44,253	35,090	26
Accommodation and Food	25,619	21,025	22
All industries	47,599	38,711	23

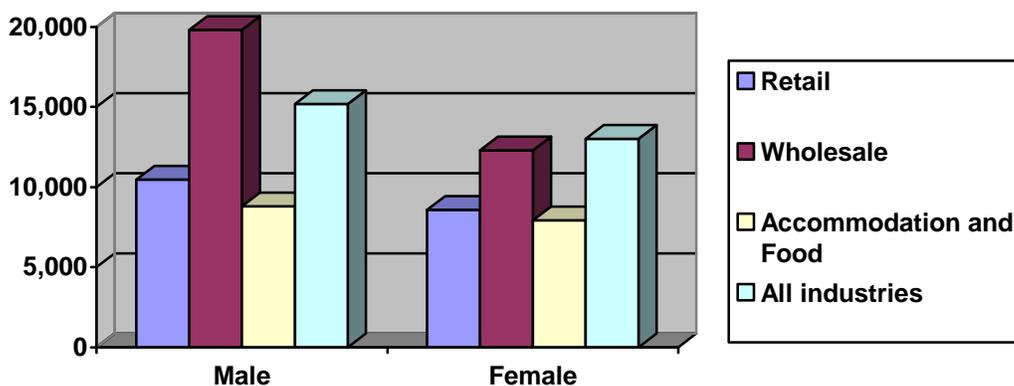
See graph next page

**Median income of employees working
full-time, full-year (\$/year)**



Industry	Median income of employees working <i>part-time or part-year</i> (\$/year)		
	Male	Female	% difference (male/female)
Retail	10,469	8,583	22
Wholesale	19,815	12,293	61
Accommodation and Food	8,788	7,919	11
All industries	15,187	13,019	17

**Median income of employees working
part-time or part-year (\$/year)**



Summary

- Women are employed in much higher numbers in the Retail and Accommodation and Food industries in comparison to the Wholesale industry and the workforce as a whole, and these industries pay employees significantly less.
- In other words, industries in which women represent a larger proportion of employees have lower annual income levels.
- In addition, there are significant differences in income between women and men within each of the industries we looked at.

What does all this mean?

Income inequality based on gender is a well-studied reality. Our study shows that in the Retail, Wholesale, and Accommodation and Food industries, there are two important aspects of income inequality. First, women account for a substantially greater proportion of the workforce in low-income jobs. Second, within industries that offer the lowest salaries, women's incomes are significantly lower than those of men. While fewer hours of work per year may be a factor, it accounts for only a portion of this income inequality.

Despite the complexity of the available information, it is clear that the differences between women's and men's income are significantly greater than the differences in the hours women and men work per week and per year, particularly in Retail and Wholesale.

In part, the greater income for men results from men working on average more hours per week and more weeks per year. Some women may prefer to work fewer hours per week and fewer weeks per year, and others may be required to work less because of family responsibilities. But in some cases, this situation may also reflect the hiring practices of employers.

These realities clearly have a direct effect on employees and their opportunities to improve their incomes. Socio-economic status is the most important factor determining health and wellness. However, the health and wellness of employees affects their performance at work, and these income inequalities are therefore of concern for employers.

Training opportunities in essential skills can help employees in low-income jobs, and women in particular, improve their productivity and therefore increase their opportunities for better pay. For the employers in these industries, reducing income inequalities between genders becomes an important factor in improving job satisfaction and providing a workplace where equality of opportunities is valued.

How training can help your business

Research shows that addressing Essential Skills (including reading, writing, using documents, numeracy, oral communication, and problem-solving) in the workforce benefits both employees and employers. Essential Skills training:

- helps retain and promote employees
- encourages employee loyalty
- improves safety
- increases productivity
- reduces errors and waste.

Canadian businesses that have addressed the need for workplace learning say employees are:

- confident
- willing to participate in ongoing training and adapt to change
- have better team-building and problem-solving skills
- believe they are valued by their workplaces.

For more information about the findings in this report,
or to find out more about what they mean for your business,
please contact Álvaro at info@communitycouncil.ca.

SkillsPlus provides essential skills training for businesses in the Retail/Wholesale/Grocery and the Tourism/Hospitality sectors in the Victoria region. **SkillsPlus** is offered by the **Victoria READ Society** and the **Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria**, with funding through the **Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement**.