

Precarious Employment in Halton

According to a recent Organization for Economic-Cooperation and Development (OECD) report¹, since the mid-1990s, more than half of all job creation was in the form of non-standard work. Temporary, part-time, and self-employment accounts for approximately one third of total employment in OECD countries.

Within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)², almost half of the workers between 25 to 65 years of age are precariously employed in temporary, contract or part-time jobs³. This employment situation differs from the traditional model of a stable, full-time job where a worker has one employer, works full year, full-time usually on the employer's premises, enjoys statutory benefits and expects to be employed indefinitely⁴.

This growing trend of non-standard employment is fuelled by factors such as technological change, globalization, shifts from manufacturing to services and changes in business strategy and organization.

Workers in non-standard employment face a higher degree of uncertainty, unpredictability, and insecurity in the workplace than their counterparts in traditional stable employment. Their jobs are precarious.

Precarious employment has negative impacts on individuals, families and the community. Workers in unstable employment have to work longer hours, at more jobs, and have less access to job training and opportunities to move ahead. They have fewer or no benefits. They most likely live in low income and often have financial difficulties. They are less likely to participate in community activities.

The Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) research project is a joint university-community initiative led by United Way Toronto & York Region and McMaster University in order to generate much needed data on trends in precarious employment. PEPSO's purpose is to support evidence-based policy development.

It has conducted two surveys on precarious employment in the GTHA. The 2011 survey included 4,165 workers and 83 interviews and the second survey in 2014 included 4,193 workers and 28 interviews. To guarantee the reliability of data, the sample size is increased for Hamilton, Halton, Peel and York by combining the data for 2011 and 2014. The data for Halton Region covers the two southern municipalities of Burlington and Oakville.



1 OECD, 2015, *In It Together, Why Less Inequality Benefits All*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264235120-en>

2 Includes Durham, York, Toronto, Peel, Halton and Hamilton

3 PEPSO. 2013. *It's More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being*. <http://www.PEPSO.ca>.

4 Vosko, Leah, Nancy Zukewich, and Cynthia Cranford. 2003. *Precarious Jobs: A New Typology of Employment*. Perspectives on Labour and Income, 4 (10)

The PEPSO survey asks ten different questions on the characteristics of employment relationships. The questions include variability of earnings and hours of employment, how people are paid, whether they are paid if they miss work, if they feel they can voice concerns at work without risking loss of employment, and if they view their jobs as temporary or permanent.

% working in	GTHA	Toronto	Hamilton	Halton	Peel	York
	2014	2014	2011/14	2011/14	2011/14	2011/14
Standard employment relationship	48.1	45.7	43.9	57.8	51.8	48.9
Permanent part-time	8.2	8.0	12.5	7.3	7.4	7.9
Temporary and contract	20.3	22.7	17.5	16.9	18.4	19.4
Other employment forms	23.3	23.6	26.1	18.0	22.5	23.9

Source: PEPSO, *The Precarity Penalty, Executive Summary: York Region*, March 2016

Almost 58% of workers in Halton (25 to 65 years of age) are working in a traditional/standard employment relationship which is defined as permanent, full-time employment with benefits. Halton's percentage is the highest among GTHA regions.

In Halton, another 7.3% workers are in permanent part-time employment, the lowest percentage in the GTHA.

About one in six (16.9%) works in temporary and contract employment that is precarious forms of employment. They also include those self-employed without employees.

Another 18% work in other employment forms that share at least some of the characteristics of precarious employment:

- they do not expect to be with their current employer a year from now,
- they have multiple employers,
- they do not receive benefits beyond their basic wage,
- their work hours vary and are sometimes less than 30 hours a week

While employment precarity has always been most prevalent among immigrants, racialized groups and women, the PEPSO study has shown that precarity is becoming even more widespread. It is now found at all income levels and in all demographic groups.



Community Development Halton would like to acknowledge the ongoing financial support of the Regional Municipality of Halton.



Community Development Halton
3350 South Service Road
Burlington, ON L7N 3M6
905-632-1975

www.cdhalton.ca