

Community Dispatch

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RECREATION AND SPORTS GROUP LABOUR FORCE PROFILE AND ISSUES

Introduction

As part of the Halton Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Labour Force Study, a profile of the human services sector labour force has been developed (*Community Dispatch #3 and Working Paper #2*). The labour force profile helps us to understand better the workers in this important but invisible sector.

This issue of *Community Dispatch* looks at the labour force profile of a different group of workers in the recreation and sports area. Although the study does not include this group in the human services sector, the contribution of recreation and sports to personal well-being and social support is undeniable. This paper highlights four socio-demographic characteristics (gender, education, full/part time work and employment income) of the workers in this occupation group. The labour force profile on the recreation and sports group is compared with the profile of those working in the nonprofit human services sector in Halton.

In addition, this paper also summarizes some of the issues of concern facing the nonprofit recreation community identified and discussed in focus group meetings.

A full profile of the labour force and discussion of the issues of concern are provided in *Working Paper #3* of the study, available on the Community Development Halton (CDH) website (www.cdhalton.ca).

Data Source

The data used to develop the labour force profile is from the 2001 Census of the Population. The 2001 Census is not only the most detailed and reliable source of data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the population, it also enables a comparison to be made across time periods. CDH purchased custom tabulations of labour force statistics from Statistics Canada. The data file contains data on labour force by detailed industry classifications cross-tabulated by selected labour force, demographic, cultural, education and income characteristics and by gender.

It is important to note that labour force statistics from the Census are related to place of residence (workers) and not place of work (employment). Therefore, this labour force profile portrays Halton region residents who work in the recreation and sports occupations, whether or not they actually work in Halton Region.

Discussions at the focus group meetings with municipal recreation officials and community nonprofit recreation leaders identified issues of concern about capacity and resources, availability/accessibility of recreational space and facilities, ability to respond to growing demand, racial-cultural diversity programming, volunteerism in nonprofit recreation activity, etc.

Defining the Recreation and Sports Group

The National Occupational Classification for Statistics 2001 (NOC S-2001) identifies two occupation groups that are involved in recreation and sports activities. The first group is the recreation and sports program directors. Their main responsibilities are: plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the operations of recreational and sports programs and services. The second group is the program leaders and instructors in recreation and sports. As a group, they lead and instruct groups and individuals in recreational, sports, fitness

and athletic programs. They hold positions such as: arts and craft instructors, camp leader, lifeguard, playground worker, recreation program leader, vacation camp counsellor etc.

After an assessment of the two groups based on their job responsibilities, job positions and place of employment, it is apparent that the work of the program leaders and instructors is more likely to be found in the nonprofit and voluntary sector than that of the program directors.

The exclusion of the program directors will leave out program directors of the YMCA or municipal managers of recreation, but at the same time avoid the inclusion of positions such as horse racing directors or managers of a professional sport team.

The labour force profile is on the program leaders and instructors.

Industry

The 2001 Census identifies about 1,200 residents in Halton in the category of recreation and sports program leaders and instructors. However, about 300 of them were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed). Individuals in the “not in labour force” category include students, homemakers, retired workers, seasonal workers in an “off” season who are not looking for work, and persons who could not work because of a long-term illness or disability.

As shown in Figure 1, eight in ten of the workers were employed in three industry groups. Over one-third (36%) are in the amusement, gambling and recreation industry group working in establishments such as golf courses, recreation, sports and fitness centres, casinos and skiing facilities. One-quarter of the program leaders and instructors worked in schools, colleges, universities and training centres. Another 23% worked in local, municipal and regional government.

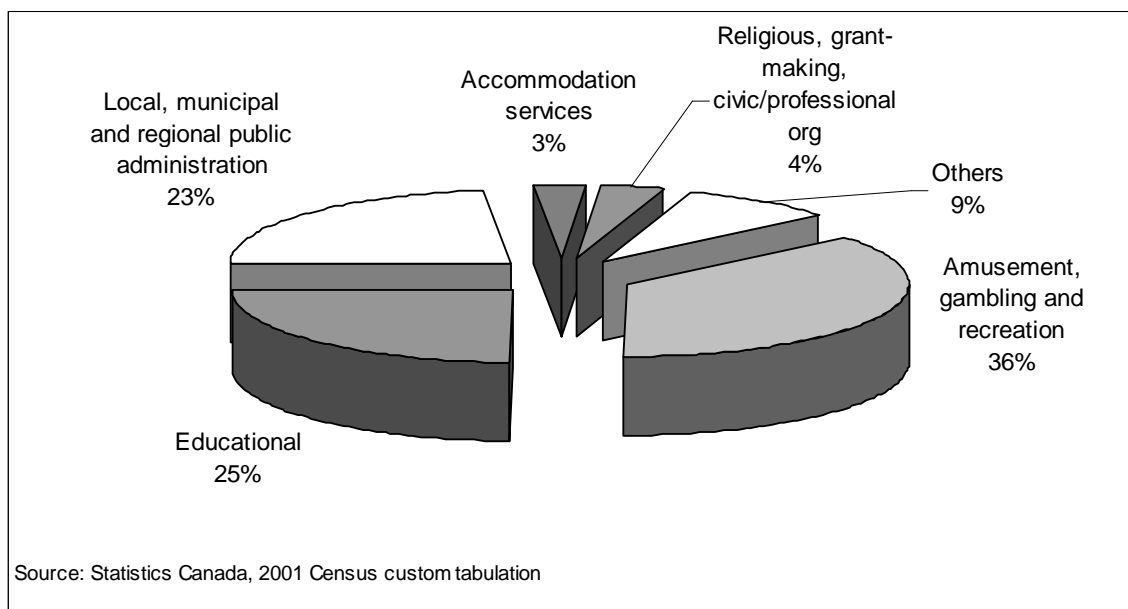


Figure 1 Recreation and Sports Program Leaders and Instructors by Industry Groups, Halton, 2001

Gender

Although the recreation and sports program leader and instructor group has a lower proportion of female workers than the human services sector, its average is still higher than that for all workers in Ontario (51.5%).

Figure 2 lists the top 10 occupations by number of workers in Halton and they are ranked by the proportion of female workers. The top occupation (by number of workers) was retail salespersons and female workers represented about 60% of the work force. On the other hand, registered nurses were the ninth occupation but had the highest proportion of female workers (98.2%).

With less than 1,000 workers, the recreation and sports program leader and instructor group was not one of the top ten occupations; its female workers accounted for 62% of the work force, slightly higher than that of retail salespersons.

The proportion of female R/S program leaders and instructors also differed among the three main industry groups. Three in every four leaders and instructors working with local, municipal and regional government were females. Female leaders and instructors also accounted for about 2/3 of workers in the accommodation services industry (sample establishments include: resorts, recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps).

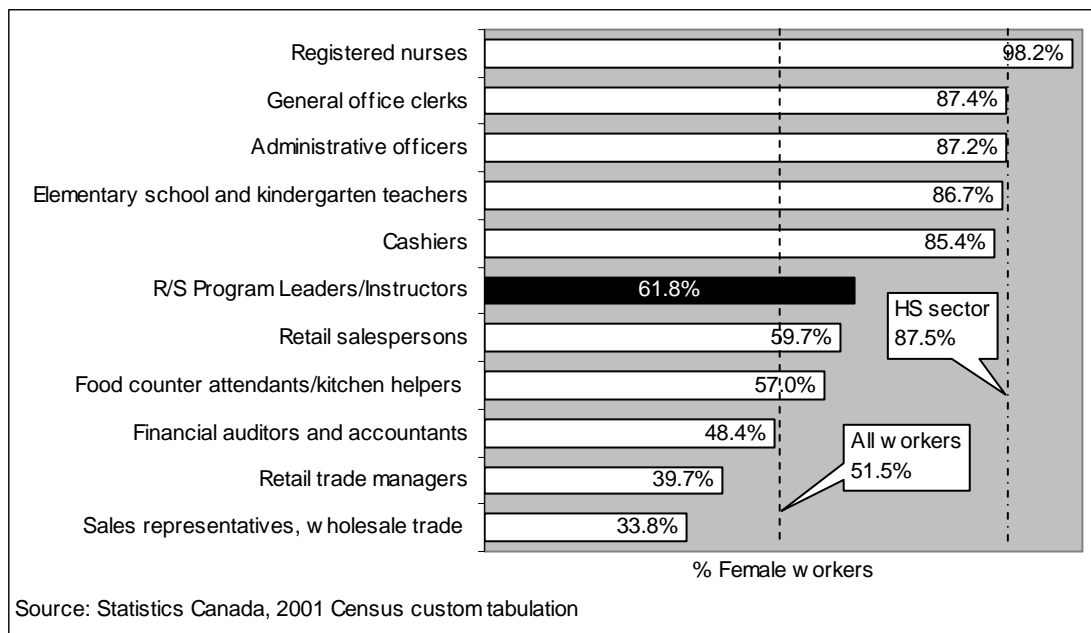


Figure 2 Female Workers (top 10 occupations), Halton, 2001

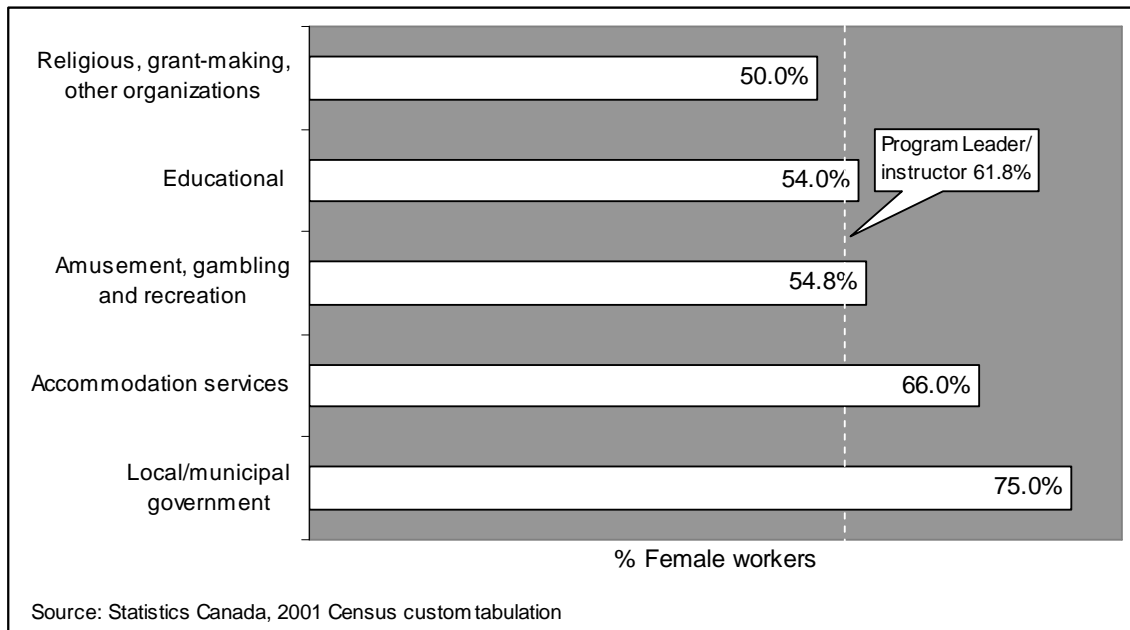


Figure 3 Female Recreation and Sports Program Leaders and Instructors by Industry Groups, Halton, 2001

Post-secondary Education

Post-secondary education was used as a measure of the level of schooling of the labour force in the recreation and sports program leader and instructor occupation. For all workers in Ontario, about 65% of them had post-secondary education. Halton Region had a higher average of 71%.

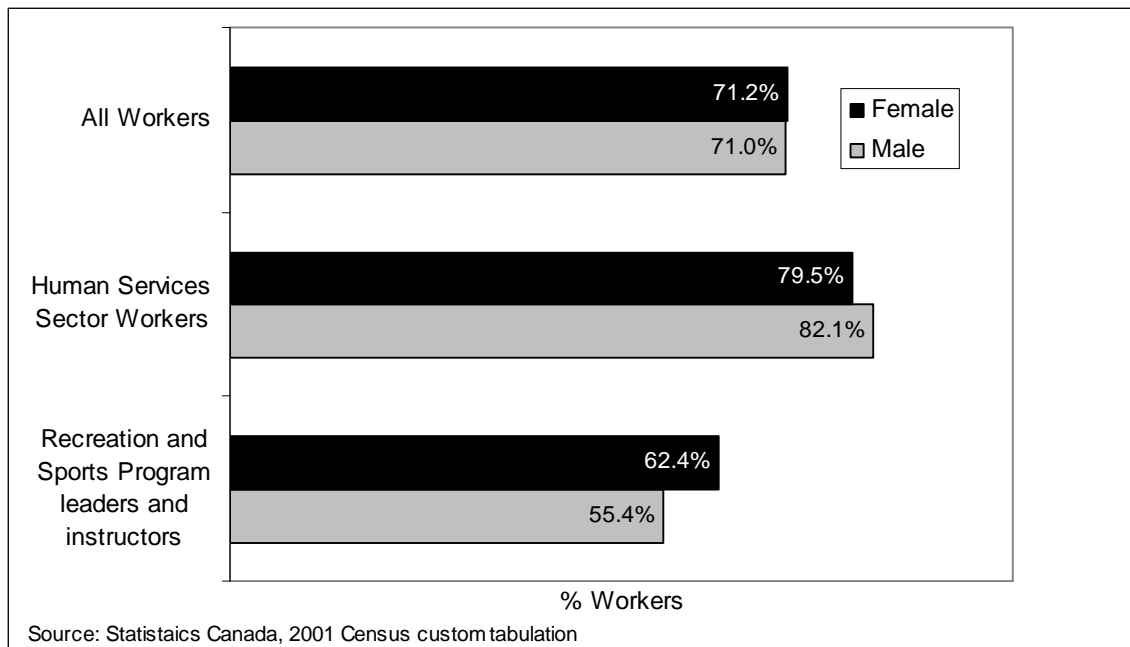


Figure 4 Workers with Post-secondary Education, Halton, 2001

About 60% of the recreation and sports program leaders and instructors have post-secondary education; the percentage is lower than that of all workers as well as that of those workers in the human services sector in Halton.

As shown in Figure 4, there is no gender difference for post-secondary education for all workers. In the human services sector, there is a slightly higher proportion of male workers with post-secondary education than female workers. It is the reverse for recreation and sports program leaders and instructors. The proportion of female workers with post-secondary education is higher than their male counterparts by seven percentage points.

Full/Part Time Work

According to Statistics Canada, workers working 30 hours or more per week are categorized as full time workers and part time workers work less than 30 hours.

About 1 in 5 (22%) of the employed labour force in Halton were part time workers. There were more part time workers in the human services sector; about 1 in 3 (30%) worked part time. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of the recreation and sports program leaders and instructors were part time workers. The full/part time ratio is the opposite for all workers. Only one fifth (22%) of them worked full time.

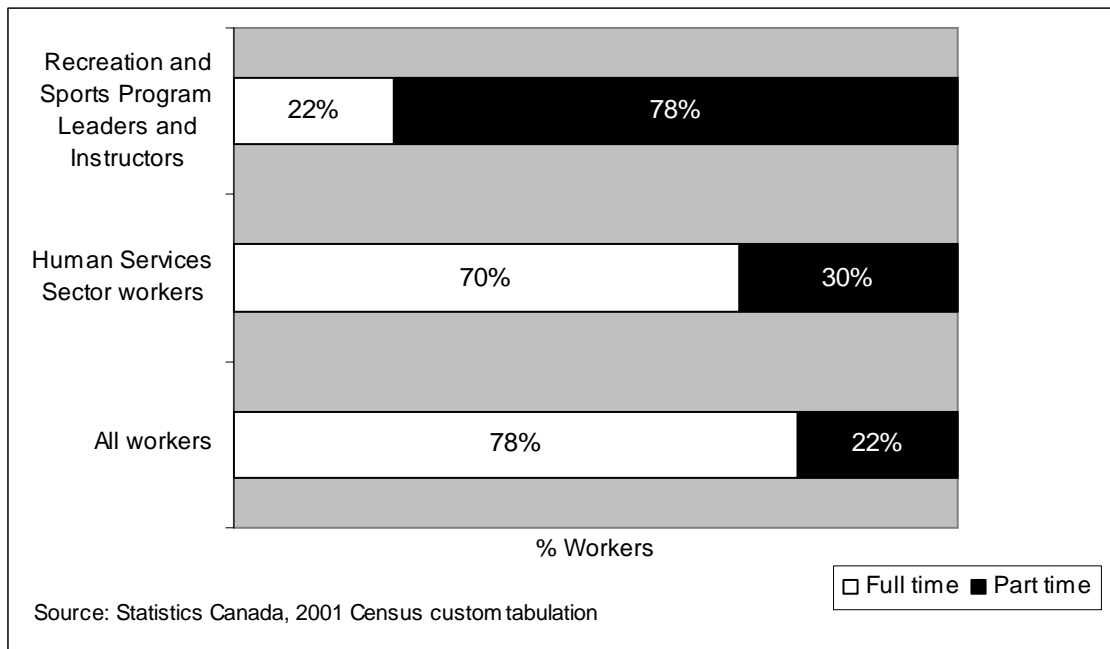


Figure 5 Full/Part Time Workers, Halton, 2001

As shown in Figure 6, there were also gender differences among part time workers within the recreation and sports program leader and instructor group. Over 85% of the female leaders and instructors were part time workers as compared to 65% for the male workers. The proportion of female part time leaders and instructors was more than double that of all workers. It is significant that the proportion of male part time leaders and instructors was more than three times the average for all workers.

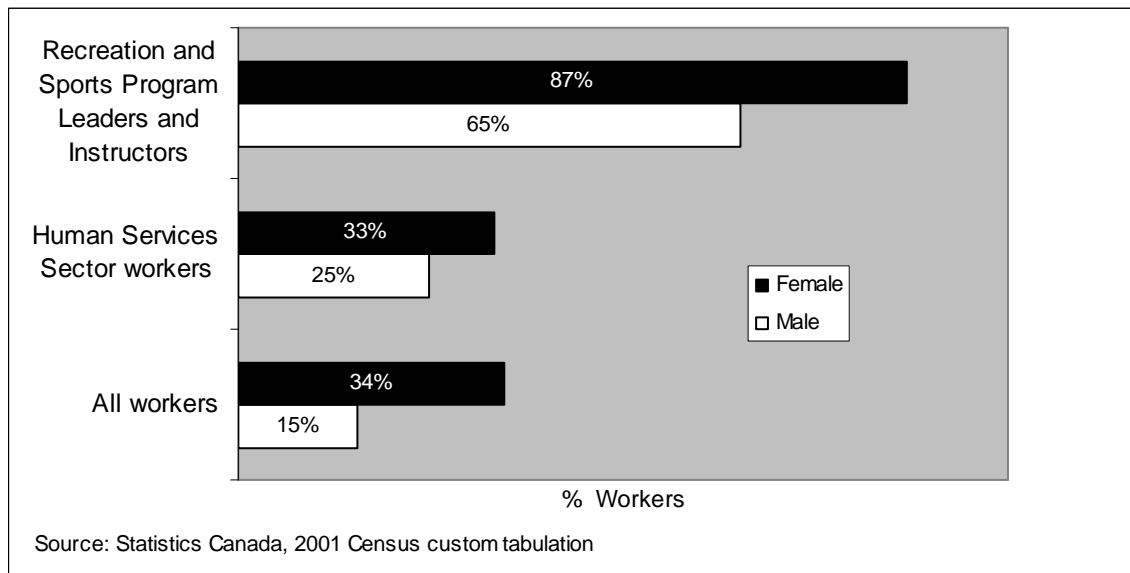


Figure 6 Part Time Workers by Gender, Halton, 2001

Employment Income

For the 2001 Census, which was taken on May 15, 2001, respondents were asked to provide information on income for the year ending December 31, 2000. As a result, the employment income data reported was for the year 2000 instead of 2001. In Ontario, the average employment income for all workers in 2000 was \$35,200. Halton's average was about 30% above the provincial total at \$46,200.

As shown in Figure 7, the 2000 average employment income for workers in the human services sector in Halton was about \$26,000 which represented slightly over half (57%) of the average for all workers. The average human service sector workers made less than those in the sales and services occupation.

Due to the high proportion of part time workers in the recreation and sports group, the average employment income for the group was significantly below the average of all major occupation groups. Their average employment income for 2000 was about \$10,500.

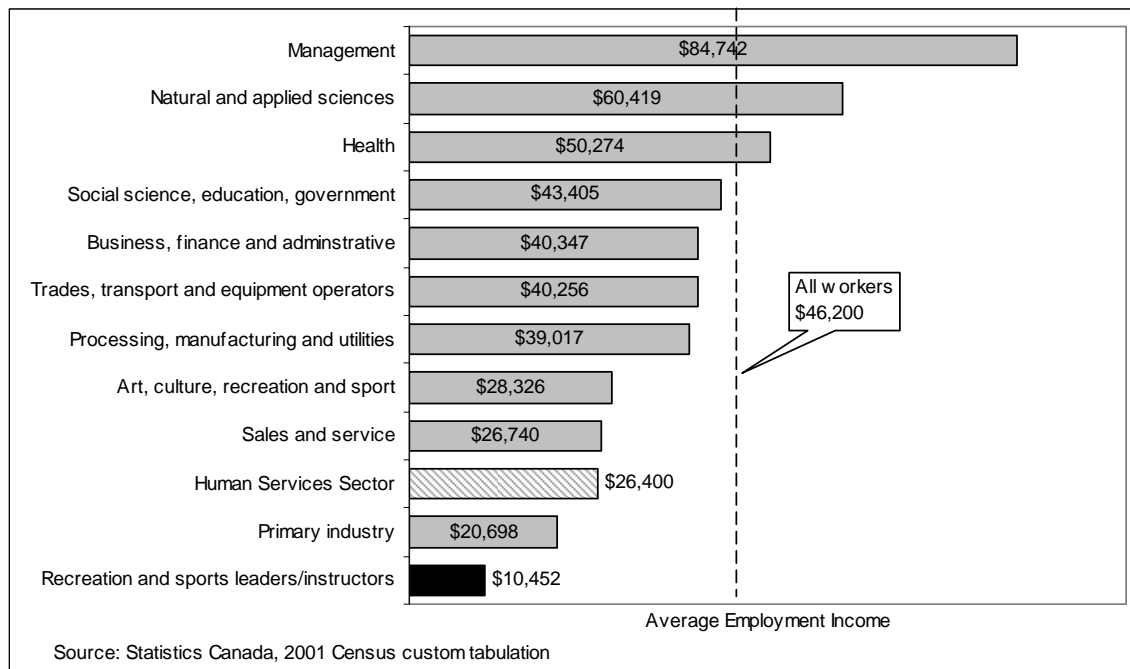


Figure 7 Average Employment Income by Occupation Groups, Halton, 2000

Income-Gender Differentials

Income-gender differential measures the difference in employment income by gender. Since the current income of female workers still falls behind male workers, the income-gender differential is expressed as a percentage of the male worker's income. A higher percentage means a narrow income gap.

In Ontario, the income-gender differential was 63% which means that on average, female workers earned only 63 cents for every dollar the male workers made. Halton's income-gender gap for all workers was wider at 54%.

Figure 8 shows the income-gender differentials for all major occupation groups. Female workers in the natural and applied sciences had the narrowest income gap (68.9%), At the other end of the range is the health occupation where the female income represents only 38.4% of the male income.

In terms of income differential, the recreation and sports program female leaders and instructors fared somewhat better. They earned about 67 cents for every dollar their male colleagues made. The income-gender differential was only 2 percentage points lower than the female workers in the natural and applied sciences. It was higher than the average for all female workers as well as those who worked in the human services sector. But it is important to note that this narrower differential exists within an occupational group that is paid very low in general.

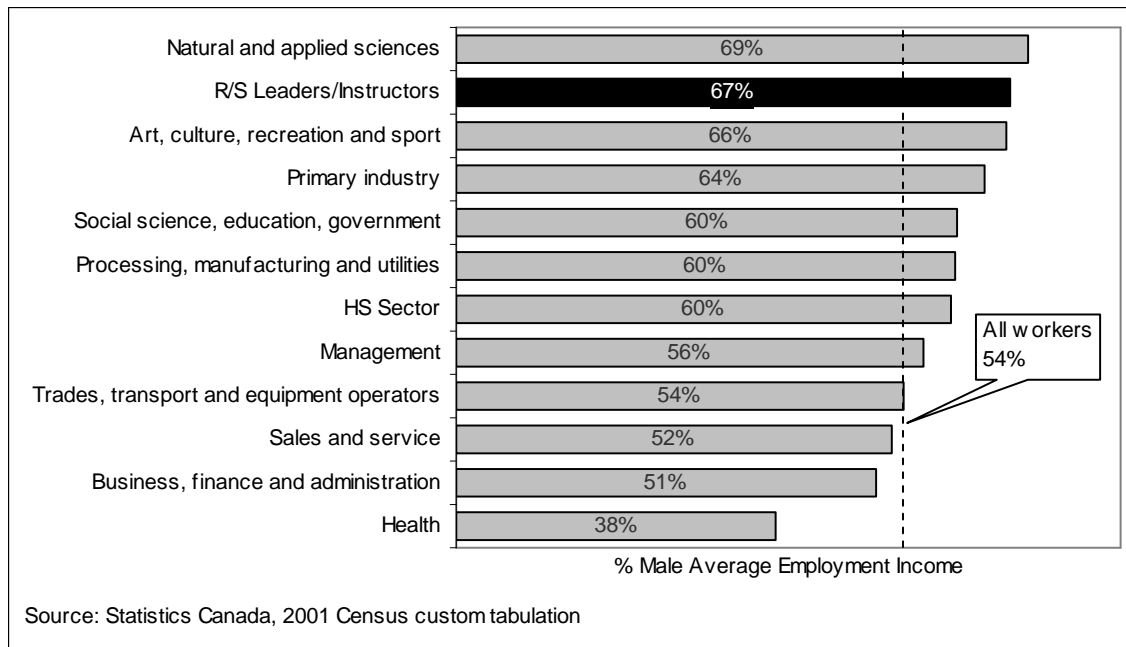


Figure 8. Income-gender Differentials by Major Occupation Groups, Halton, 2000

Summary of the Labour Force

The following summarizes the recreation and sports program leaders and instructors in Halton:

- Nearly half worked in the public sector – 25% in schools and training centres, 23% in local, municipal and regional government
- A high proportion of female workers (62%)
- Dominated by part time workers – 78% as compared to 22% for all workers
- Less educated – only 60% with post-secondary education as compared to 71% for all workers
- Low average employment income – mainly due to high proportion of part time workers
- A wage gap – income-gender differential; female workers earned 67 cents for every dollar male workers made as compared to 63% for all workers and 60% for workers in the human services sector.

Municipal and Community Nonprofit Recreation Sector

Municipal recreation departments

Municipal Parks and Recreation (P&R) Departments deliver recreation services directly and facilitate community group activity in the recreation area. Their involvement includes initiating, promotion/marketing, provision of facilities/space, and funding community recreation activities. They also work with special needs population and assist them in building capacity. With a noticeable increase of racial-cultural diversity in the use of recreation programs, the departments are assessing its potential implications.

The emerging recognition of the economic contribution of the nonprofit community recreation sector may encourage greater municipal investment in sports and recreation infrastructure.

Community recreation volunteers

Why do people volunteer in this sector? People become volunteers because of their love for the sport and their sense of personal fulfillment. Many volunteer in order to support the participation of their children. Their involvement includes fund raising, running recreation programs, governance, facility management and training.

Municipal P&R departments value volunteerism. They look on generating high levels of volunteer involvement and participation as a measure of their success. There is no debate about appropriateness of volunteers doing this work or that they are substituting for paid staff.

Issues in the nonprofit community recreation sector

As a group, most nonprofit community recreation leaders felt that risk management (liability, insurance protection, etc.) and regulatory compliance put stress on their capacity. The stress drains their resources and drives volunteers away. Fund raising has become a major activity of nonprofit community recreation groups which also drains volunteer participation.

The cost of space and facility rental for sports programs is another major issue faced by the group. Very often program instructors have covered costs out of their own pockets.

Access to school space in particular can be a problem. Principals have a lot of arbitrary control over school space. Community sports programs can get bounced out of scheduled space with little notice.

The entry of the private sector into the recreation and sports field creates a more competitive environment. It attracts middle and high income families and reduces the support to community nonprofit recreation. More affluent families sometimes prefer higher user/registration fees to the time and energy required to raise money. However, user fees become a barrier to access for low income families and people.

There is ongoing competition for volunteers between community organizations and events and city events. It becomes harder to recruit volunteers as people are living busier lives and hesitant to commit long hours.

Better support from community recreation program needed

There should be more recognition of the important contribution of the recreation sector to the quality of community life. Recreation programs need larger investment – a greater share of the tax base.

Some of the administrative load could be taken off community sports organizations if local government helped with shared administration, office space, etc. Local government can deliver training workshops to help volunteer leaders on issues like good governance practices. Coverage of costs for police checks would facilitate more volunteer involvement.



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