



Girls on the Job: Realities in Canada

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Girl  Guides

Girls on the Job: Realities in Canada

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Introduction

Summer jobs can bring with them a lot of firsts for teenage girls: First paycheque. First boss. And it turns out in some cases, their first experience with the gender pay gap and workplace harassment.

Whether it's lifeguarding, babysitting, working retail or working in an office, summer jobs offer girls more than just a paycheque. Working in the summer offers girls real-world experience and a great head start on building resume-worthy skills. But there are also some downsides. Girls are often paid less than boys. They're exposed to harassment and assault. And some might be boxed in by the job sectors they're encouraged to work in.

Girl Guides of Canada (GGC) partnered with Ipsos to ask teens, ages 12 to 18, about their summer work in 2018. What they told us reveals that girls face many gender inequities on the job.



What did we learn?

1 Lots of girls are working and volunteering in the summer, in a variety of sectors and roles.

One in three had a summer job (35%), one in three worked in an informal setting for family, friends, or neighbours (31%), and one in ten volunteered (14%).

2 Girls have positive and rewarding experiences in their summer work.

More than half (52%) of girls who worked said they gained skills to help in a future career, and two in ten (17%) said they met a mentor at work.

3 Girls are exposed to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour in their summer work.

More than one in ten girls (13%) experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault at work. This rose to two in ten among older girls (19%) and girls with lower family incomes (23%).

4 Girls experience workplace inequalities and gender pay gaps in their summer work.

We discovered a nearly \$3.00 per hour gender wage gap in full-time summer jobs between girls and boys. Girls were also overrepresented in “caring” work (such as babysitting) and underrepresented in maintenance, gardening, or groundskeeping, relative to boys.



Why research girls' summer work?

At GGC, our research into the issues impacting girls' everyday lives helps us be the support and advocate girls need to be everything they want to be. We know that as early as their teen years, girls are worried about the inequality they'll face when they enter the workforce as adults. In response to our unique [nationwide survey of teen girls in 2017](#), two in ten (19%) girls said they're not motivated to pursue their dream career because they're concerned they'll be treated worse, *simply because of their gender*. And one in four (24%) said it's because they're concerned they'll be compensated less than their male counterparts.

The fact that girls are worried about what they might encounter in their future work life shows how important it is to address gender inequity in the workplace. We suspected that inequity at work wasn't just a future concern for girls as many are already participating in the workforce today. Summer work is often that first springboard into what girls might experience in the world of work – both the good and the bad.

For these reasons, we asked teens, ages 12-18, about their summer work in 2018. While debates about gender in the workplace dominate the media, girls' issues and voices are noticeably absent. Girls aren't simply "children" – they're also employees, and taxpayers, with rights that should be respected. In fact, a third of girls are in the workforce over their summer holidays. Girls are also our *future* workforce, and their early work experiences can set them on a path that impacts their future education and career choices. Economic power for girls is important – now and in the future.



What's considered 'work' or a formal 'job' is sometimes influenced by gender. Because of this fact, we asked girls *and* boys about how they spent their time, and where and how they worked for pay. This helped capture not only experiences in formal work settings, but also in jobs like babysitting or yard work. What we discovered was that girls and boys have different experiences on the job and how they're paid.

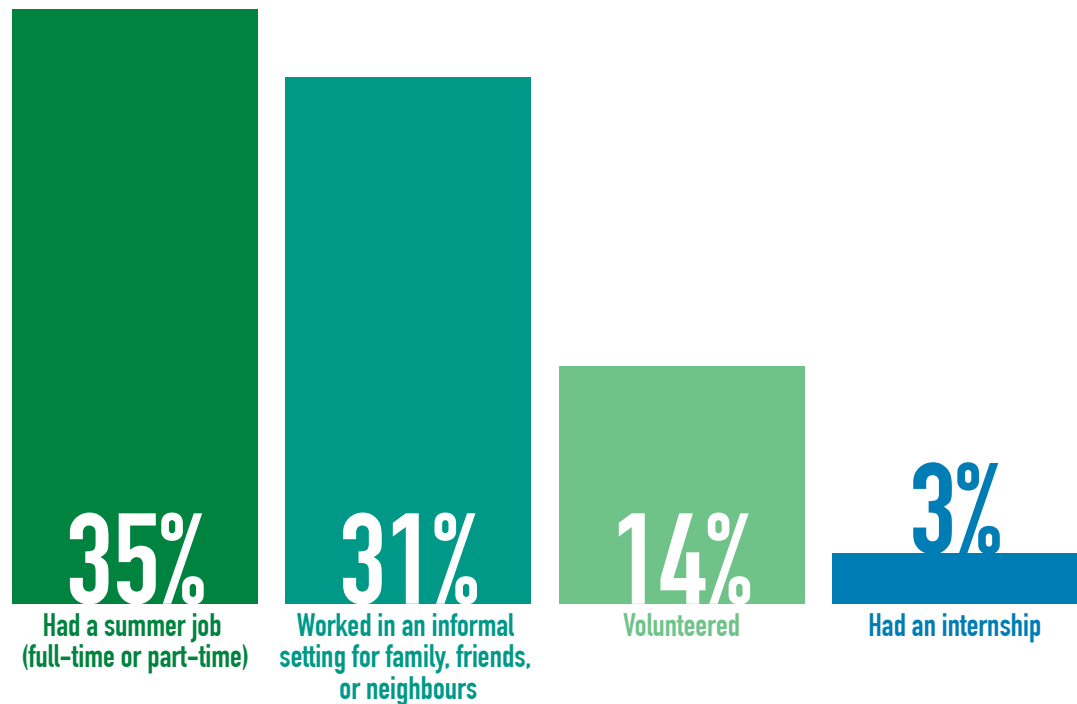
While most girls say they have positive experiences in summer work, they also tell us that they face gender inequalities. We know that sexism starts early and that many young people notice inequality before they're even a teenager.¹ As a result, there's a lot we need to improve. We can be intentional about developing girls' skills and capacity for future employment and addressing the barriers they face at early ages. To do this, all of us – including parents and employers – have a critical role to play in ensuring that girls are empowered in the workplace.

“Summer job”
refers to more formal employment, such as holding a full- or part-time job at a store.

“Working in an informal setting for family, friends, or neighbours”
refers to more informal work, such as caring for children or helping with housework. This includes both paid and unpaid work.

What it's like for girls at work

Summer 2018 was a busy one for teenage girls: one in three had a job (35%), one in three worked in an informal setting for family, friends, or neighbours (31%), and one in ten volunteered (14%). Girls were just as likely to spend their time in these ways as boys.

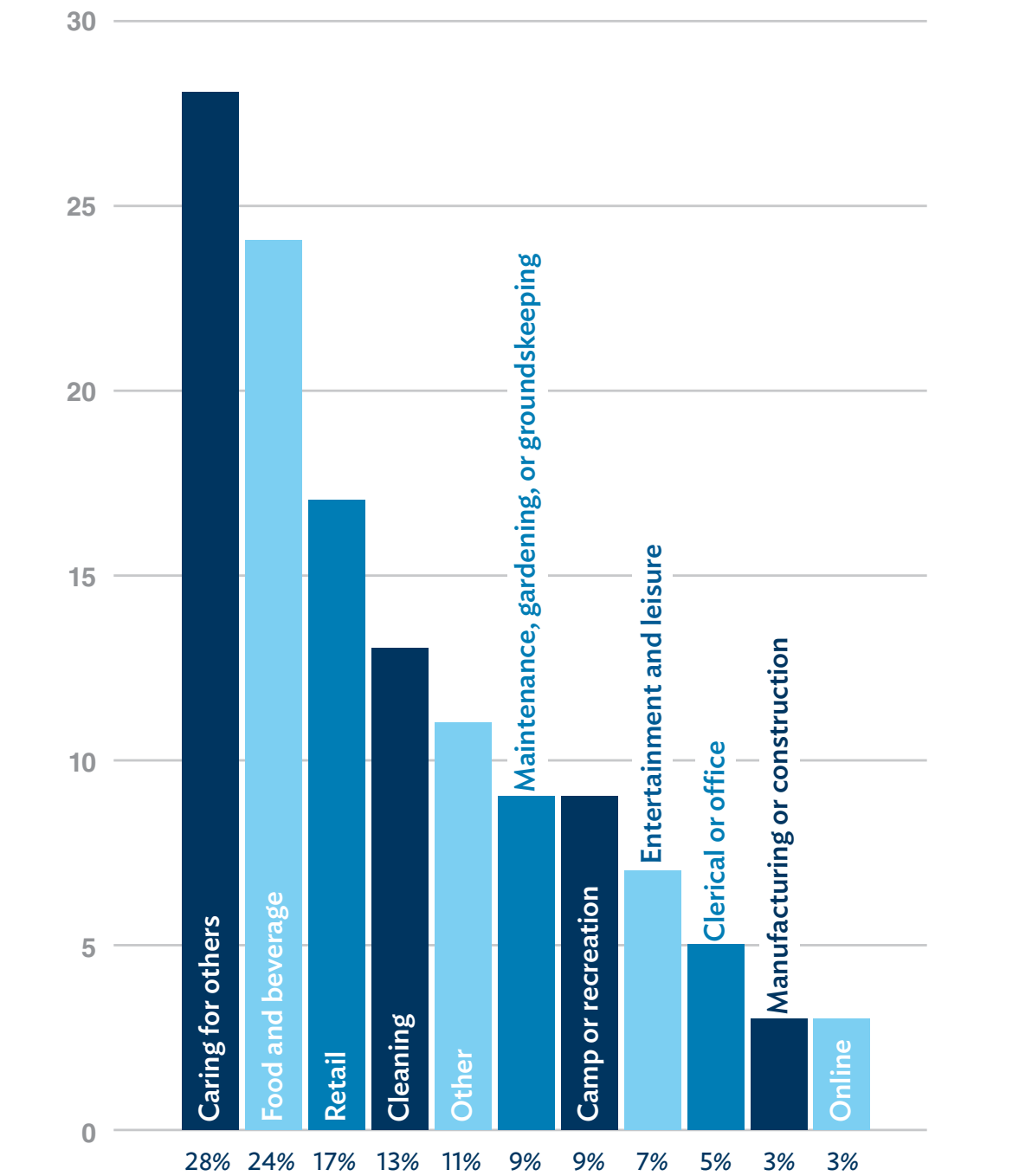


Older girls (age 16-18) were much more likely than younger girls to work in part-time or full-time jobs, while younger girls (age 12-13) were significantly more likely to informally work for family, friends, or neighbours. Girls who identify as Black, Indigenous, or Asian

were also significantly more likely to work informally for family, friends, or neighbours on a full-time basis. Because of this, many girls' first experiences of earning money are in informal roles with people they know. As such, family members, neighbours and friends can have a big impact on girls' first employment experiences.

More girls had part-time jobs (23%) than full-time jobs (13%). Girls who worked were often employed caring for others, such as babysitting or providing elder care (28%), as well as in the food and beverage (24%) and retail (17%) sectors.

Sectors girls were employed in





The rewards of summer work

Girls said that their experiences on the job were mainly positive. We asked them about some of the benefits from working: making friends, receiving positive feedback, gaining skills, and meeting mentors. More than half of girls reported that they made friends (56%) or gained skills to help in a future career (52%). Unfortunately, only 17% of girls who worked reported meeting a mentor. It's important for more girls to have mentors at work – even at summer jobs – because they can help girls grow and develop leadership skills. It's especially important for girls to have women mentors at work, who can act as living examples of what's possible for girls in the future.

The rewards of summer work for girls

56%

Making friends

52%

**Receiving positive
feedback from a
superior**

52%

**Gaining skills to
help in a future
career**

17%

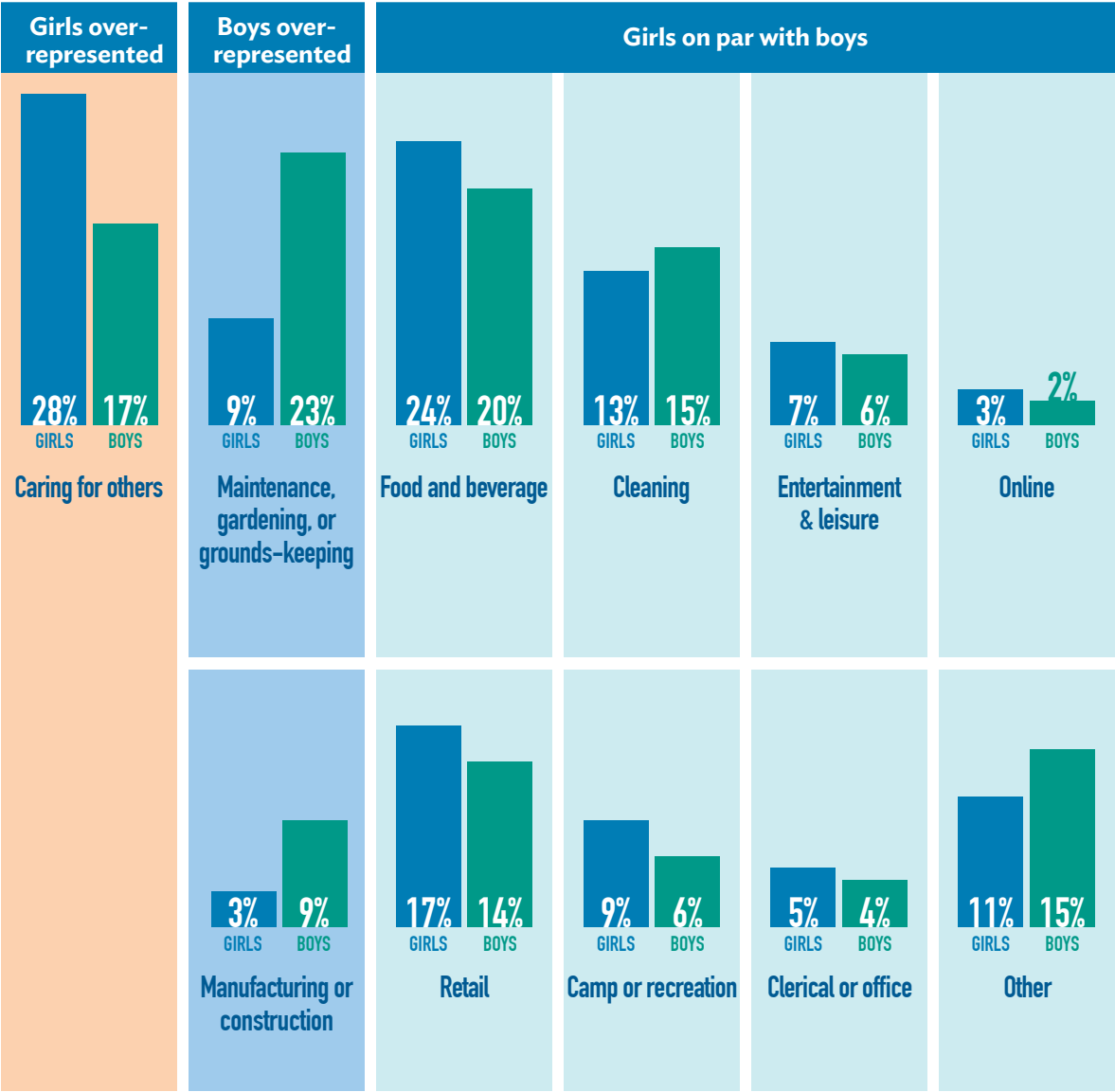
Meeting a mentor

Gender matters at work

While girls and boys were just as likely to have summer jobs (35% versus 34%), there were some key gender differences in their summer work experiences – from the types of work opportunities to facing harassment and a significant gender wage gap.

Where girls are working

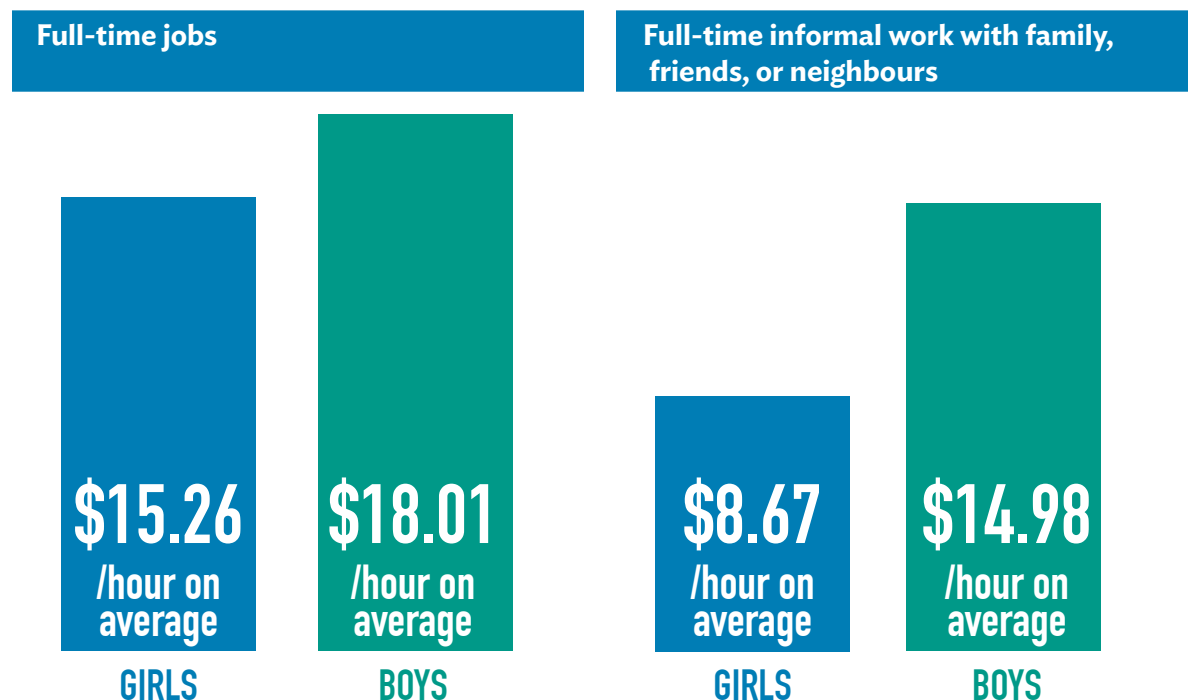
In sectors with many young workers, gender differences were very clear. The top sector where girls were employed saw boys significantly underrepresented – and vice versa. Girls were most likely to work in roles that involved caring for others (28% versus 17% of boys). On the other hand, boys were most likely to be in maintenance, gardening or grounds-keeping (23% versus 9% of girls).



These numbers mirror the same pattern we see in the adult workforce. Adult women in Canada are much more likely than men to work in industries often described as ‘caring’ like education, childcare or healthcare. Meanwhile, men are much more likely than women to work in industries like manufacturing, construction, and natural resources.² This leads us to ask: are girls actively *choosing* summer work in these sectors – or are they defaulting in because of stereotypes and social norms? And how is this gender sector gap in summer work linked to women being under-represented in fields like science and technology in their adult life?

The gender wage gap starts young

We know there is a gender wage gap in Canada: for every dollar a man earns, women in Canada earn \$0.87.³ This gap is even wider for women of colour: 2016 Census data shows that racialized women earned \$0.59 for every dollar that white men earned.⁴ It turns out that the gender wage gap is also impacting girls when they first enter the workforce. In full-time summer jobs, girls earned about \$3.00 per hour less than boys. The gap widened to \$6.31 per hour for girls who worked in an informal setting for family, friends, or neighbours on a full-time basis – an area where girls are more likely to be employed relative to boys.



This wage gap is consistent with Statistics Canada data which shows that girls as young as 15 are already making as much as \$3.00 per hour less than boys across most industries and jobs.⁵ It looks like the gender wage gap doesn't just affect adult women – it affects girls as young as age 12.

#MeToo: Sexual harassment and assault in summer work

Unwanted touching. Cat-calls. Sexual assault. Workplace sexual violence and harassment is happening to girls and women in Canada. Our research shows that more than one in ten (13%) girls age 12-18 reported some form of sexual harassment or assault while working in summer 2018.

Girls from all backgrounds reported sexual harassment and assault, but older girls and girls from lower-income families reported experiencing it more. Nearly 1 in 5 girls aged 16-18 (19%) and more than 1 in 5 girls with an annual family income of less than \$40,000 (23%) reported experiencing sexual harassment or assault at work. This fact shows how important it is to consider that girls from marginalized communities are often more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Girls from lower-income families may have less power to leave unsafe jobs because of financial pressure. For older girls, while they may be seen as near-adults, they're still young and many are navigating the workforce and new social dynamics for the first time. They need trusted adults in their lives to reaffirm that sexual harassment and assault are never okay and to model respectful behaviour.

Sexual harassment or assault includes being subjected to sexual jokes, comments, or innuendo; cat-calls, whistles, or being referred to in a derogatory way; unwanted physical touching; unwanted pressure for dates or sex; and the presence of pornography in the workplace.



Like the gender wage gap, for many girls, workplace sexual harassment and assault happens as early as their very first job. We also note that girls weren't alone in these experiences: 11% of boys also reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment or assault during their 2018 summer work. Even one young person experiencing sexual violence is one too many.





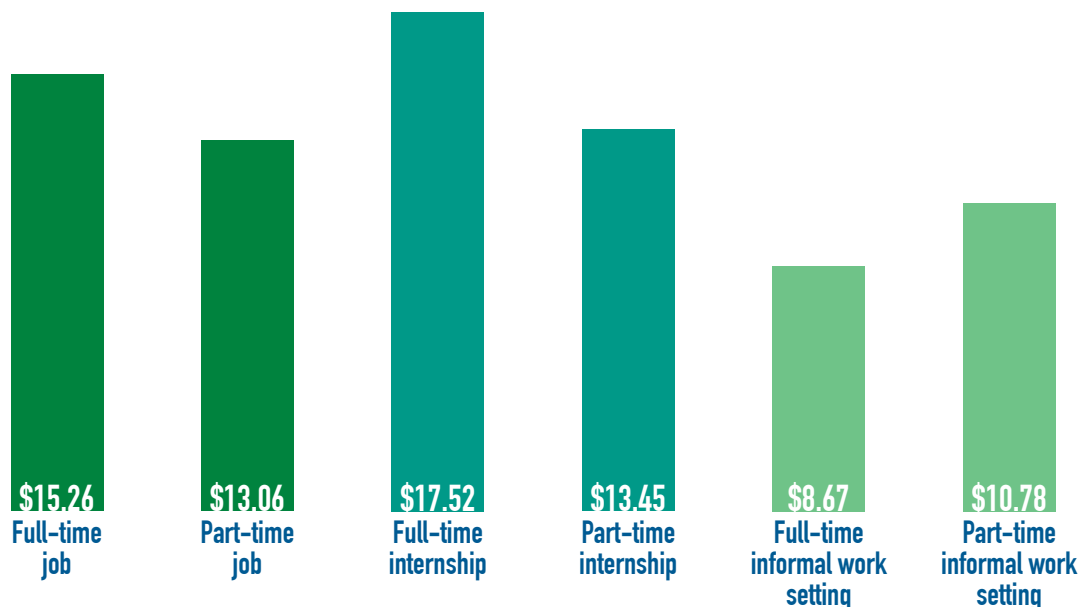
Getting paid

Earnings

As we know, girls were more likely to have part-time jobs or to work informally for family, friends, or neighbours (than have full-time jobs) – yet these forms of employment were less financially rewarding. On average, full-time internships paid girls the most at \$17.52 per hour, followed by full-time jobs at \$15.26 per hour. At the other end of the spectrum, girls who worked informally for family, friends, or neighbours were paid much less per hour.

We know that adult women are more likely than men to work part-time, and that well-paid part-time work can be hard to find. This leads us to ask: are girls choosing part-time work deliberately? Or, do they end up in part-time work because of the nature of the sectors they choose?

Average hourly rate of compensation for girls

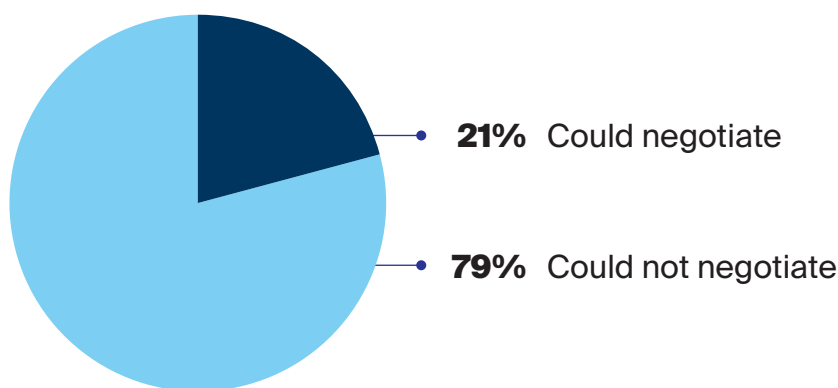


Negotiation

There's extensive research on women and negotiation. We know that women are less likely to negotiate their compensation, for a variety of reasons.⁶ When they do negotiate, women often face negative consequences, such as having an offer withdrawn,⁷ or get less out of the negotiation than a man would.⁸

Summer work could be valuable opportunities for girls to try their hand at negotiation and to start feeling empowered to ask for more. And yet, most girls said that they couldn't negotiate their pay and other compensation – only two in ten (21%) said that they could. This may not be surprising, since many student jobs are minimum wage positions where the terms of compensation are fixed. Admittedly, negotiation is often uncommon or not expected for young people in these types of roles. What we don't know: whether girls shied away from opportunities to negotiate without even knowing it.

Girls and their pay and compensation



Girls may be missing out on the chance to get comfortable discussing money with prospective employers and thinking about what their time and work is worth. This is even more important because less than half of girls (45%) said they were very satisfied with their pay. Racialized girls and girls from lower-income families were even less likely to say they were very satisfied (24% and 30%, respectively).

Percent of girls very satisfied with their pay





What can you do?

We believe that girls must be empowered to take on challenges and grab hold of every opportunity that comes their way, and that includes their early work experiences. Employers and parents have a significant opportunity to equip girls to thrive at work today and in the future workforce. **Let's all pledge to make 2019 a safer, fairer, and more meaningful year for girls at work.**

Employers

If you're hiring youth for summer work, commit to pay fairly, do your part to level the playing field, be a mentor, and provide a safe and meaningful work experience.

1 Pay fairly

Make sure that girls are being paid fairly and assigned work of equal value, and that girls from marginalized communities are not treated differently when it comes to pay. Make it a point to discuss pay and provide clear job descriptions for youth employees; even if there isn't room for negotiation, this can be a valuable learning opportunity for them.

2 Make work safe

Don't tolerate sexual harassment and assault against *any* employees. Consider how things like jokes or nicknames might feel particularly harmful or uncomfortable for someone who's young and in their first job. Be aware that girls from marginalized

communities are often more susceptible to violence in the workplace and take steps to support them. For example, make sure you have policies in place so that your workplace is free from sexually harassing behaviours for all employees, including the most vulnerable. Monitor the environment regularly for toxic behaviour.⁹

3 Do your part to level the playing field

First jobs can provide an amazing foundation for girls to access skills and economic opportunity. Consider how your hiring practices (where or if you advertise, how you find employees) might unintentionally shut girls out – especially those who come from marginalized communities. Can you broaden your recruitment network? Or, if you don't already have girls or other groups in your workforce, can you provide things like mentorships or 'buddies' to help them feel welcomed? Are there some jobs that have 'always' been filled by boys that you could also hire girls for?

4 Be a mentor

It's important for more girls to have mentors at work – and summer jobs are no different. Mentors can help girls grow and develop leadership skills. Look for opportunities to support, sponsor or mentor girls at work, especially if you're a woman employer or supervisor. Show girls that women *belong* and can *excel* in all sorts of jobs.¹⁰ Providing mentorship for girls is especially impactful in sectors that are traditionally dominated by men.

5 Provide a meaningful work experience

Take the opportunity to be intentional about providing a work experience for girls that is meaningful and offers opportunities for learning. Make an effort to be inclusive and integrate girls into the workplace culture. For example, include them in all-staff meetings, so that they feel that they're part of the team.

Parents

If your daughter is working this summer, make a plan to talk to her about money and pay, encourage her to advocate for herself, support her right to feel safe at work, and empower her to explore her interests.

1 Talk to your daughter about money and pay

Summer jobs are an opportunity for your daughter to learn about the value of money and what her time and skills are worth. For example, before she starts a job, take time to discuss how pay rates are set, so she can understand rules around things like minimum wage, vacation pay and taxes.¹¹ Help her figure out what the going rate is for



the kind of work she's doing – if you're not sure yourself, help her make connections with people who will know. Give your daughter a hand at practicing talking to a prospective employer about pay, so that she can be comfortable. If she's in Girl Guides, look for the Money Sense activities in our Girls First program for ideas on talking about money.

2 Encourage her to speak up and advocate for herself with employers

If her job does allow for negotiation (e.g. providing child care to a neighbour), you can help her role play the conversation with a potential employer, asking what she would do in different situations.¹² Regardless of the position, encourage her to ask for a clear job description or outline of expectations, so she can see what her duties are and understand what exactly she's being compensated for – and whether she's consistently being asked to do extra work without extra pay.¹³

3 Support her right to feel safe at work

Help her understand that there's the possibility of harassment at work, presenting it as something that *might* happen, rather than something that *will* happen.¹⁴ Let her know that she doesn't need to be "nice" or "polite" when faced with unacceptable behaviour, and that she can always talk to you, human resources, a supervisor or manager, or another trusted adult. Emphasize that she doesn't have to pretend nothing is wrong or ignore a situation – experiencing harassment, unwanted touching, or sexism is never her fault and not something to be embarrassed about.¹⁵ Be ready to listen, believe, and stand with her if she does come to you for support.

4 Empower her to jump in

You know your daughter well – so you'll know if she could be encouraged to push herself to try something new with her summer job. Perhaps she's curious about landscaping rather than babysitting? About being a soccer referee rather than a summer camp counsellor? If she's interested in a summer job in a sector that's traditionally dominated by boys, encourage her to jump in anyway. Be there for support if she needs it.

Girls

If you're planning to work this summer, pledge to value your time, think long-term, get comfortable talking about pay and expectations, grab hold of opportunities for mentorship, and know your right to feel safe at work.

1 Value your time

Your time is a valuable resource that's worth a lot! Whether you'll be using it for work, for volunteering, or for leisure over the summer, think about what matters to you. Is it your family, friends, or your community impact? Building new skills? Your financial future? Think about the benefits (besides money) that you want to get from work, like new experiences, fun, and new friendships.

2 Think long-term

Sure, it might be a job that only lasts for the summer. But you can still think about how it can help you reach your long-term goals. Do you aspire to build your leadership skills? Maybe you can gain these skills by helping train newer staff members. Do you want to be a changemaker? Maybe you can intern at a non-profit in your community. Look for opportunities to make your summer job more than just a job – make it a learning experience and a springboard for something *more*.

3 Get comfortable talking about pay and expectations

Even if the wages for a job are set, take the opportunity to ask about pay rates and how they are set in your workplace. Learn about the employment conditions such as breaks and rules for getting time off. If there isn't a formal job description, get a clear sense of what you're expected to do on the job. It's helpful so you know what your employer expects of you and what you're specifically being paid to do.

4 Grab hold of opportunities for mentorship

Your summer job might be a great place to meet role models and mentors. If there's a leader at your job you aspire to be like, ask for opportunities to learn from them.

5 Know your right to feel safe at work

You should never be made to feel unsafe at work. If you experience harassment, unwanted touching, or sexist behaviour at work, you can inform someone about it and ask for help. Harassment can include anything from sexist jokes and innuendo, to unwanted comments on your appearance, to being repeatedly asked out for dates – and none of these are ever okay. Depending on what feels safe, talk to your boss, human resources, a parent, or another trusted adult. If you need help and aren't sure where to turn, you can reach a Kids Help Phone counsellor 24/7 at 1-800-668-6868.



About the survey

The survey was commissioned by Girl Guides of Canada through Ipsos as an online poll of 1,203 girls and boys in Canada aged 12-18 between September 5 and 17, 2018. Findings are solely based on participants' experiences of work in summer 2018 – they weren't asked to reflect on all past work experiences. Participants were able to self-identify as girls or boys. Weighting was employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the population of girls and boys aged 12-18 according to the most recent Census data. A sample of this size yields a margin of error of ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger for data that is based on sub-groups of the total sample.

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Girl Guides of Canada– Guides du Canada

Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada (GGC) empowers every girl in Guiding to discover herself and be *everything she wants to be*. In Guiding, girls from 5-17 meet with girls their own age in a safe, supportive and inclusive space to explore what matters to them. Guiding is where girls take the lead, put their ideas into action and jump into a range of empowering activities – all with the support of women mentors committed to positively impacting girls' lives. With programming options ranging from exploring career options to financial literacy and discussions on feminism and gender inequality, girls in Guiding can equip themselves to thrive – now and in the future.

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