



NEWS RELEASE

Public-sector workers in Atlantic Canada were paid 11.9 per cent higher wages than comparable private-sector workers in 2018

January 28, 2020
For Immediate Release

HALIFAX—Government employees in Atlantic Canada received 11.9 per cent higher wages on average than comparable workers in the private sector in 2018, and enjoyed much more generous non-wage benefits, too, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Bringing government-sector compensation in line with the private sector would not only help governments in Atlantic Canada control spending without reducing services, it would also maintain fairness for taxpayers,” said Alex Whalen, a policy analyst with the Fraser Institute’s Atlantic Canada Initiative.

The study, *Comparing Government and Private Sector Compensation in Atlantic Canada*, finds that government employees in the region—including federal, provincial and municipal workers—received 40.7 per cent higher wages, on average, than workers in the private sector in 2018.

Once the wage gap is adjusted to account for differences between workers in the two sectors—such as age, gender, education, tenure, occupation, sector, and type of work, among other characteristics—government employees were still paid 11.9 per cent higher wages than comparable private-sector workers.

And wages are only part of overall compensation. Government workers in Atlantic Canada also enjoyed more generous benefits, such as earlier retirement, more personal leave and higher rates of pension coverage.

“Of course, governments in Atlantic Canada should provide competitive compensation to attract qualified employees, but clearly wages and benefits in the government sector are out of step with the private sector,” said Ben Eisen, a senior fellow with the Fraser Institute.

Non-wage benefits for comparable workers in the public and private sectors in Atlantic Canadian provinces in 2018

Province	Average age of retirement		Days off for personal leave		% of workers covered by pension plans	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
New Brunswick	61.3	63.6	14.6	9.4	91.9	22.8
Nova Scotia	61.1	64.0	15.0	9.3	91.7	22.4
P.E.I.	62.4	65.7	12.7	8.2	80.4	16.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	59.7	63.9	15.6	9.0	93.8	28.3

MEDIA CONTACT:
Ben Eisen, Senior Fellow
Fraser Institute

Alex Whalen, Policy Analyst
Fraser Institute

To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:
Bryn Weese, Fraser Institute
604-688-0221 ext. 589
bryn.weese@fraserinstitute.org

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