



## ABORIGINALS IN CONSTRUCTION

*According to Statistics Canada's 2006 census, there are 108,425 people in Québec with an Aboriginal identity, including 76,995 in eleven recognized nations. The Innu (20%), Crees (18), Mohawks (15%), and Inuit (13%) are the four largest Aboriginal nations, accounting for 66% of the total Aboriginal population of the province.*

*Since 2004, the CCQ has been in the process of identifying the Aboriginals among the workers in the construction industry. New workers are asked to specify their Aboriginal status in the form applying for a competency certificate. In the case of workers already in the industry, specific steps have been taken in Aboriginal communities or directly with the workers. Because the Cree, Innu, and Inuit were the first nations among which the identification process was undertaken, they currently comprise 77% of the Aboriginals identified.*

*The information gathered to date has enabled the CCQ to build an interesting database on Aboriginal workers active in construction,<sup>1</sup> even though it is currently not possible to know with certainty the scope of the Aboriginal presence in construction. The identification process is still underway, and identification is done on a voluntary basis.*

*The present document provides statistical data for Aboriginals identified since 2004. The data involve different aspects of the Aboriginals' situation in construction, and a parallel is made with non-Aboriginal workers. Given that identification is more advanced in the Cree nation, the data are coloured by the situation of these workers, who have a major presence in the James Bay sites.*

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<sup>1</sup> A worker is considered active when he or she has worked at least one hour during the year in a construction trade or occupation.

## A constant proportion of entries

In the period from 2004 to 2007, 501 Aboriginals joined the construction industry, representing 0.9% of total admissions.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of Aboriginals has been relatively constant over the period, except for 2004, when they represented 1.2% of admissions, when the Eastmain-1 site was at its peak and the Péribonka site was starting up. Otherwise, admissions of Aboriginals paralleled those of non-Aboriginals.

### Worker admissions, 2004–07

Year	Number of Aboriginals	Total	Share of Aboriginals
<b>2004</b>	182	15,731	1.2%
<b>2005</b>	117	14,081	0.8%
<b>2006</b>	87	12,172	0.7%
<b>2007</b>	115	13,579	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>55,563</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

Source: CCQ.

A majority of Aboriginals join the industry as apprentices (55% of entries). Only 6% are admitted as journeymen, as compared to 8% for total workers. However, the proportion of admissions of workers with an occupation is higher among Aboriginals: 39%, compared to 23% for workers as a whole.

### Worker admissions by vocational status and diploma status, Cumulative, 2004–07

	Aboriginals		Total		Share of Aboriginals
	Number	Share	Number	Share	
<b><u>Vocational status</u></b>					
Journeyman	31	6%	4 422	8%	0,7%
Apprentice	275	55%	38 613	69%	0,7%
Occupation	195	39%	12 528	23%	1,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55 563</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0,9%</b>
<b><u>Diploma status for apprentices</u></b>					
With diploma	64	23%	15,002	39%	0.4%
Without diploma	211	77%	23.611	61%	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38.613</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

Source: CCQ.

<sup>2</sup> Individual who has worked at least one hour in the year and who had never done so before, which excludes returns.

Of new Aboriginal apprentices during this period, 23% had a diploma, a lower proportion than total worker admissions (39%). However, this four-year average masks the fact that the share of Aboriginal graduates more than doubled over the period, rising from 175 in 2004 to 385 in 2007.

### **A small proportion of the labour force**

There were a total of 609 Aboriginals active in construction in 2007, out of a total population of 137,455 workers. Aboriginals therefore represent 0.4% of the total labour force. Women represent 2.3% of the Aboriginal labour force, while they represent only 1.2% of the non-Aboriginal labour force.

**Workers active in construction, 2004–07**

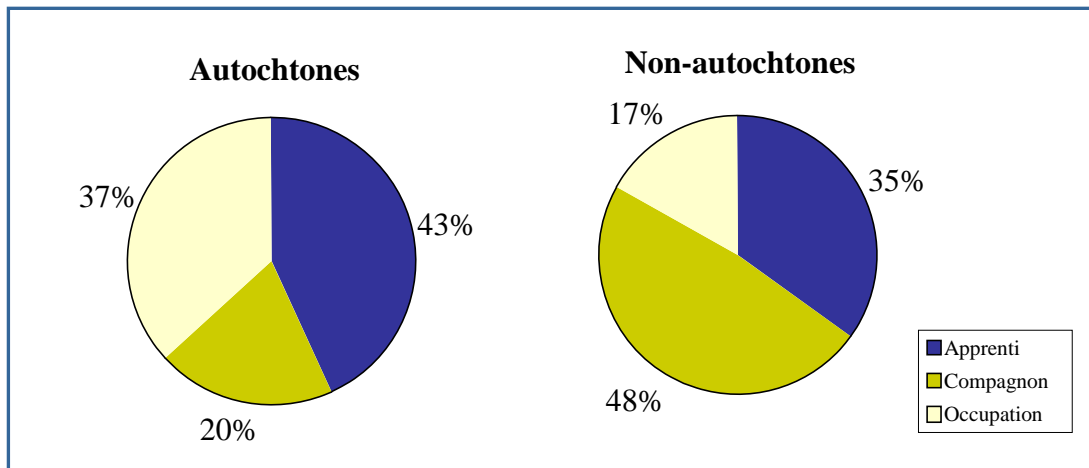
<b>Year</b>	<b>Aboriginals</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Share of Aboriginals</b>
<b>2004</b>	615	128,411	0.48%
<b>2005</b>	601	133,395	0.45%
<b>2006</b>	536	134,080	0.40%
<b>2007</b>	609	137,455	0.44%

Source: CCQ.

The average age of the Aboriginal workers is 37 years, which is similar to that of non-Aboriginal workers (39 years). Among Aboriginal journeymen and occupation workers, the average age is lower by 3 years and 2 years, respectively. However, the average age of Aboriginal apprentices is higher – 36 years, compared to 31 years among non-Aboriginal apprentices. Among Aboriginal apprentices, 21% are 45 years and over, while this proportion is only 12% among non-Aboriginals.

The experience profile of Aboriginals active in 2007 is different from that of the non-Aboriginal labour force. Aboriginals have accumulated an average of five years of activity, compared to 12 years for non-Aboriginals. Regarding status, 43% of Aboriginals are apprentices, compared to 35% among non-Aboriginals. Only 20% of Aboriginals are journeymen, while this proportion is 48% for non-Aboriginals. Finally, the occupation status is held by 37% of Aboriginals, compared to 17% of non-Aboriginals. It is possible that the small proportion of journeymen among Aboriginals is partially explained by better identification of workers who join the industry than of those who are already working in it.

## Distribution of the labour force by status in 2007



Source: CCQ.

Aboriginals  
Non-Aboriginals  
Apprentice  
Journeyman  
Occupation

### Several favoured trades

Among apprentices, the presence of Aboriginals is proportionally higher in the trades of heavy equipment mechanic and heavy equipment operator. Similarly, the occupations of storeman/clerk and truck driver are relatively common among Aboriginals.

### Number of active Aboriginals by trade and occupation in 2007

Trade/occupation	Aboriginals			Share of Aboriginals		
	Apprentice	Journeyman	Total	Apprentice	Journeyman	Total
Bricklayer-mason	1		1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Insulator	2		2	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%
Tile setter	2		2	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Carpenter-joiner	146	37	183	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%
Boiler maker		1	1	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Cement finisher	1		1	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Roofer	3		3	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Electrician	23	7	30	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%
Tinsmith	2	1	3	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Reinforcing steel erector		1	1	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Crane operator	1	1	2	0.7%	0.1%	0.2%
Elevator mechanic		1	1	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Millwright	1	1	2	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%
Heavy equipment mechanic	7	1	8	10.4%	0.3%	2.2%
Structural steel erector	3	5	8	0.9%	0.3%	0.5%
Erector mechanic – glazier	1		1	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Shovel operator	10	25	35	1.1%	0.7%	0.8%
Heavy equipment operator	33	29	62	3.2%	0.6%	1.1%
Painter	11	4	15	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
Plasterer	1	2	3	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Resilient flooring layer	1	1	2	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Interior systems installer	1		1	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Ornamental iron worker	1	1	2	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
Pipe fitter	10	4	14	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
<b>Trades, total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Truck driver			64			8.4%
Storeman/clerk			4			13.8%
Labourer			140			0.8%
Surveyor			8			0.9%
Welder			5			0.6%
Other occupations			5			0.2%
<b>Occupations, total</b>			<b>226</b>			<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>609</b>			<b>0.4%</b>

Source: CCQ.

Aboriginals do not work in the same sectors as non-Aboriginals. They work mainly in the civil engineering and roadwork sector, where 64% of their hours are worked, compared to 19% for non-Aboriginals. It should be noted that Aboriginals are concentrated in regions where this sector is predominant. They work only 14% of their hours in the institutional and commercial sector, while this sector is responsible for 50% of the hours of non-Aboriginals. On the other hand, the proportion of hours worked in the residential sector is equivalent for both groups.

### Proportions of hours worked by sector in 2007

Sector	Aboriginals			Non-Aboriginals		
	Trades	Occupations	Total	Trades	Occupations	Total
Civil engineering and roadwork	47%	91%	64%	12%	54%	19%
Industrial	4%	2%	3%	10%	7%	10%
Institutional/commercial	21%	3%	14%	54%	29%	50%
Residential	27%	4%	18%	24%	10%	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: CCQ.

In 2007, 1.2% of employers had at least one Aboriginal on their payroll, and most of these were large companies. Among employers with 5 employees or less, which account for 83% of all employers, only 0.4% hired Aboriginals. In contrast, 23% of employers with more than 50 employees hired Aboriginals. That Aboriginals are found in large companies is not surprising, given that most of them work in the civil engineering and roadwork sector, where the employers are larger companies.

### Proportion of employers that hired Aboriginals in 2007

Average number of employees	Employers that hire Aboriginals	All employers	Share that hire Aboriginals
5 employees or less	86	<b>19,195</b>	0.4%
6 to 10 employees	47	<b>2,161</b>	2.2%
11 to 25 employees	66	<b>1,271</b>	5.2%
26 to 50 employees	31	<b>345</b>	9.0%
50+ employees	40	<b>173</b>	23.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>23,145</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

Source: CCQ.

### Competency certificates

The particular situation of the Aboriginal labour force means that 22% of Aboriginal workers hold exemptions from competency certificates, compared to 4% among non-Aboriginals. The temporary administrative measures allow for rapid issuance of exemptions, and Aboriginals represent 2% of all exemption holders. However, 17% of Aboriginals hold neither a competency certificate nor an exemption. This is explained by the measures in force from 1987 to 2007 providing for the issuance simply of hiring numbers to Inuit.

### Proportion of the labour force by type of certificate in 2007

Type of certificate	Aboriginals	Non-Aboriginals	Share of Aboriginals
Competency certificate	61%	95%	0.3%
Exemption	22%	4%	2.2%
No certificate	17%	1%	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Source: CCQ.

### Salaries

In the construction industry, total remuneration depends on the number of hours worked, which, in turn, varies greatly by trade, status, and sector. The overall averages of hours worked and wages thus reflect the fact that a high proportion of Aboriginals work in the civil engineering and roadwork sector and that most do not have apprentice or occupation status. Therefore, to have a fairer picture of the situation of Aboriginals compared to that of non-Aboriginals, the average annual salary data are presented according to main sector and status.

The result is fairly similar average salaries between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals working mainly in the civil engineering and roadwork sector. The largest gap affects those who work mainly in the institutional and commercial sector: Aboriginals earn barely half of the salary of non-Aboriginals, although the situation for apprentices is a bit better (71% of the salary of a non-Aboriginal).

In the residential sector, apprentices and journeymen do better than those working in occupations: their average salary is more than 80% of that observed among non-Aboriginals. Finally, the industrial sector, in which there are the fewest Aboriginals working as their main sector, apprentices and journeymen also do better. In fact, in all sectors, those in an occupation earn the lowest proportion of the salary of non-Aboriginals.

**Comparison of remuneration between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals  
by main sector in 2007**

Priority sector	Apprentice	Journeyman	Occupation	Total
<b>Aboriginals</b>				
Civil engineering and roadwork	\$27,355	\$44,490	\$32,166	<b>\$33,715</b>
Industrial	\$18,574	\$52,790	\$11,837	<b>\$24,571</b>
Institutional/commercial	\$15,318	\$19,317	\$7,615	<b>\$14,968</b>
Residential	\$13,365	\$22,902	\$10,284	<b>\$14,503</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,140</b>	<b>\$36,263</b>	<b>\$27,786</b>	<b>\$25,350</b>
<b>Non-Aboriginals</b>				
Civil engineering and roadwork	\$25,370	\$41,684	\$31,737	<b>\$35,293</b>
Industrial	\$23,303	\$43,404	\$25,065	<b>\$36,873</b>
Institutional/commercial	\$21,536	\$38,740	\$20,367	<b>\$30,119</b>
Residential	\$16,190	\$25,913	\$15,067	<b>\$19,929</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,704</b>	<b>\$36,831</b>	<b>\$25,165</b>	<b>\$28,818</b>
<b>Ratio Aboriginals/non-Aboriginals</b>				
Civil engineering and roadwork	108%	107%	101%	<b>96%</b>
Industrial	80%	122%	47%	<b>67%</b>
Institutional/commercial	71%	50%	37%	<b>50%</b>
Residential	83%	88%	68%	<b>73%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>110%</b>	<b>88%</b>

Source: CCQ.

## Conclusion

The present document presents a snapshot of the Aboriginal presence in the construction industry. Although the exact number of Aboriginals is not yet known, the data available to date still enable us to uncover some particularities in comparison to non-Aboriginals. The identification process is continuing and should ultimately enable us to describe the different nations that make up the Aboriginal population.