



# PROFESSIONAL STATUS SURVEY 2020: CANADA



# Executive Summary

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The Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC) administers a Professional Status Survey (PSS) to its members. The first formal survey was done in 1991 and then every five years thereafter. The first surveys were short, addressing mostly demographic information, while subsequent surveys expanded to cover other areas (training and certification, satisfaction). The PSS is intended to capture the current working environment and professional activities of genetic counsellors in Canada. Archived versions of PSS are on the CAGC website.

In 2018, the CAGC partnered and collaborated with the NSGC for the development and administration of the PSS. The first Sub-Report, focused only on Canadian genetic counsellors, was completed in 2018 and is administered every two years. Among the survey respondents were genetic counsellors who work in Canada—635 were invited to take the survey and 245 Canadian residents provided information, for a 39% response rate. Canadian genetic counsellors represent a growing share of respondents to the PSS: 5% in 2016, 7% in 2018 and 9% in 2020.

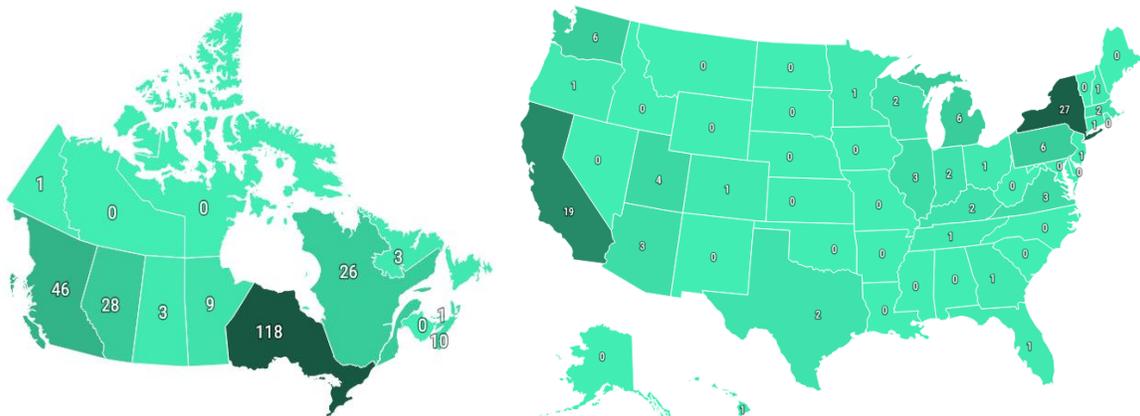
## Scope of the PSS

This year's PSS addresses more than 200 questions in the following areas:

- Genetic Counsellor Preparation and Education
- Professional Status/Work Environment
- Service Delivery
- Salary and Benefits
- Board Certification/Licensure/Credentialing
- Career Advancement
- Professional Activities
- Satisfaction and Inclusivity

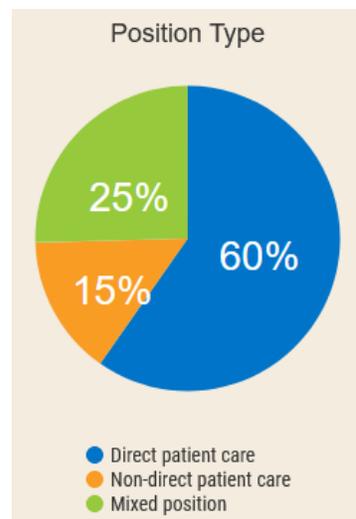
## Where Canadian Citizens Reside

Among the 352 respondents to the PSS 2020 who indicated they hold Canadian citizenship, 30% reside in the U.S. and 70% reside in Canada. This is the first year that the PSS has included questions and analysis specific to respondents who live and work outside of Canada who hold Canadian citizenship. Information regarding these participants are detailed in the full report. However, the executive summary detains information about Canadians who live in Canada.



## Position Type

Over half of Canadian genetic counsellors (60%) provide direct patient care which is consistent with 2018. Significantly fewer report providing non-direct patient care (15% compared to 23% in 2018) and more provide mixed care (25% compared to 17% in 2018).



## Practice Areas

Cancer Genetics- Adult, Adult Genetics, and Prenatal were the top three practice areas cited by Canadian genetic counsellors. The next two most common areas reported were Pediatrics and Preconception/Reproductive Screening.

## Average Salary

Of the 245 Canadian genetic counsellors who live and/or work in Canada, 92 (38%) provided salary information. Of these 77 worked full-time, and their average salary was \$95,104 CAD. This compares to \$87,526 CAD in 2018.

The average salary for full-time genetic counsellors who provide direct patient care was \$85,231 CAD, and the average salary for genetic counsellors who do not provide direct patient care was \$110,011 CAD.



<b>Table 21. Full-Time Salaries (CAD)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Direct patient care	33	\$85,231	\$85,000	\$66,771	\$101,018
Non-direct patient care	23	\$110,011	\$98,000	\$55,000	\$216,918
Mixed position	21	\$94,292	\$91,840	\$68,800	\$145,466
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>\$95,104</b>	<b>\$88,300</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$216,918</b>

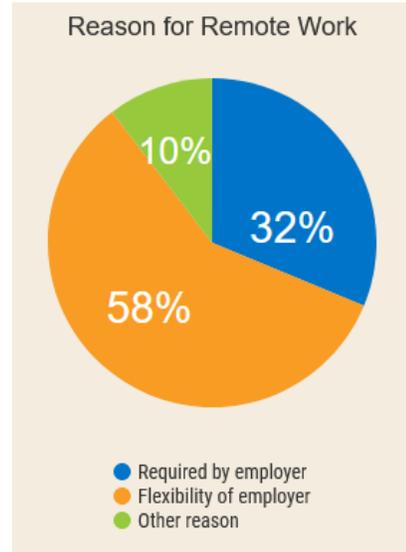
## Professional Activities

Two of three Canadian genetic counsellors (66%) reported that they engaged in professional activities in 2018 or 2019. The most mentioned professional activities undertaken by genetic counsellors were serving on committees for professional organizations, developing genetics curriculum for students/teachers, and developing/organizing conferences, workshops and symposia for health professionals.

## Remote Workers

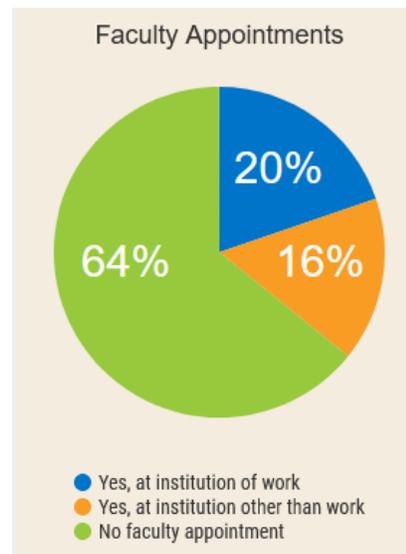
Twenty percent of Canadian respondents who live and/or work in Canada report they work remotely for some portion of the time<sup>1</sup>. Of these, 46% work remotely most or all of the time, 35% work remotely less than 25% of the time, and 19% work remotely 25% to 75% of the time. Ten respondents (21%) work for companies based in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>, and 79% work for companies based in Canada<sup>3</sup>.

The majority of remote workers were in mixed positions (46%), followed by non-direct care positions (29%) and direct care positions (25%). Direct patient care providers were significantly more likely to work remotely less than 25% of the time, while non-direct care and mixed providers spent a greater amount of their work time working remotely. ( $p < .01$ ).



## Faculty Appointments

Thirty-six percent of Canadian genetic counsellors who responded to the 2020 PSS had faculty appointments. The most common faculty titles were Lecturer and Clinical Instructor.



<sup>1</sup> This is consistent with 2018.

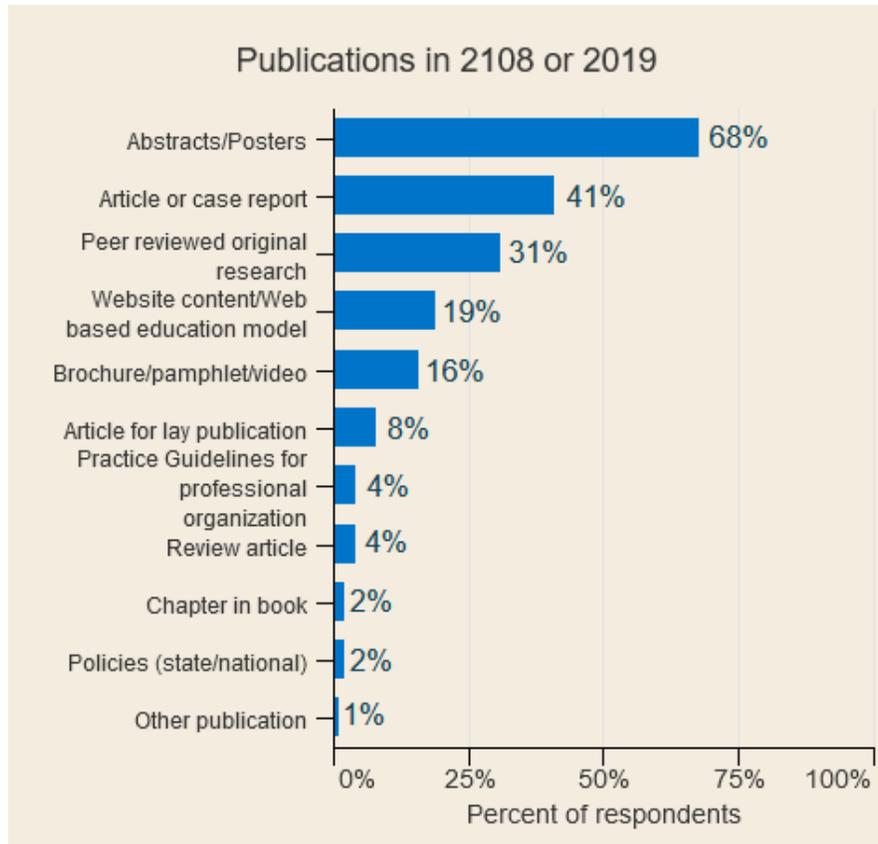
<sup>2</sup> Compares to 56% in 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Compares to 41% in 2018.

## Research and Publications

More than one third of Canadian genetic counsellors who responded to the PSS (37%) reported being involved in research activities. The most common were writing or developing IRB-approved research protocols, serving on thesis or capstone committees, and writing or contributing to grant proposals that were funded.

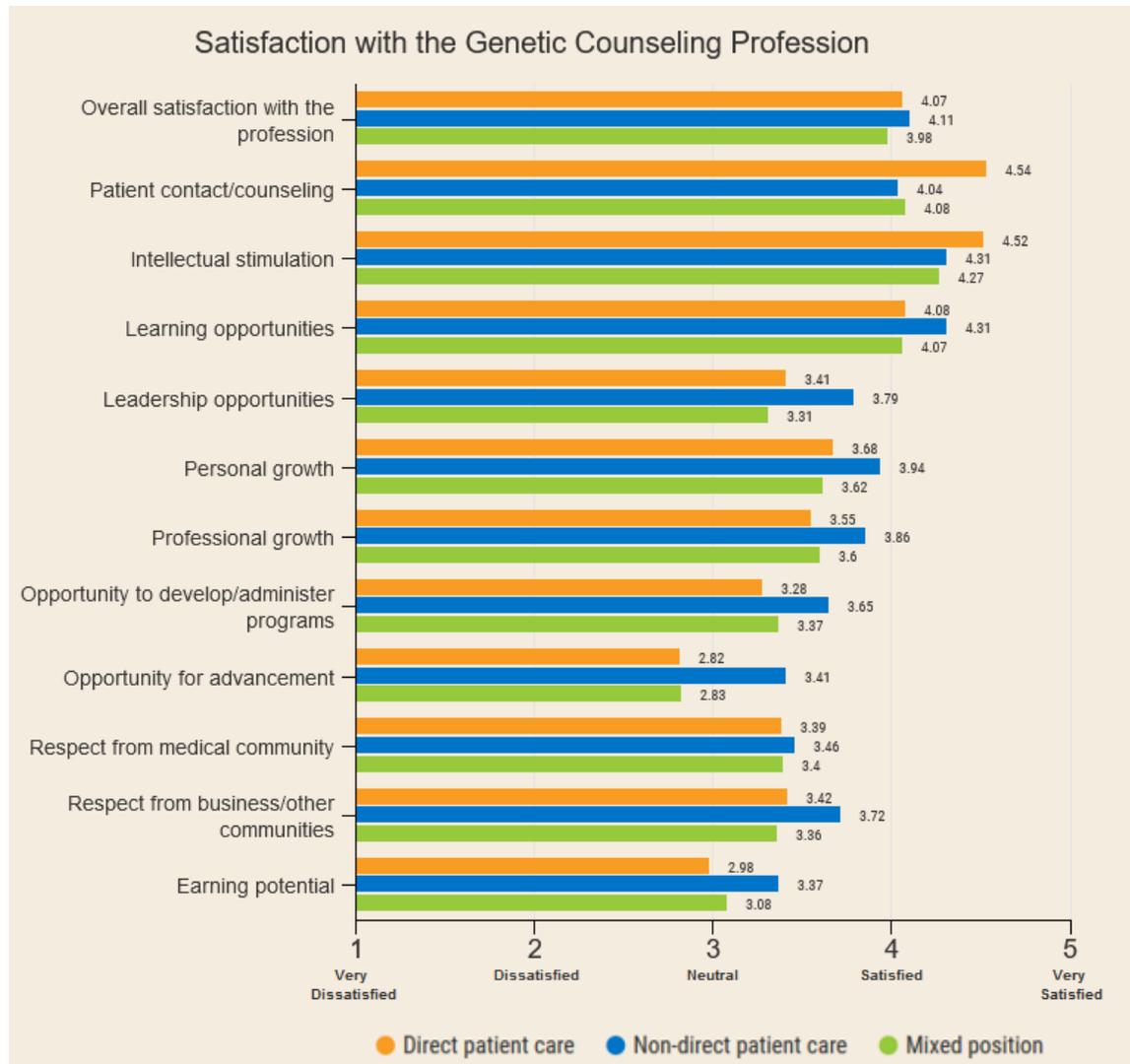
Seventy-two percent of Canadian genetic counsellors reported that they authored or co-authored publications in 2018 or 2019. The most common publications were abstracts and/or posters, followed by articles or case reports.



Respondents could select more than one item, so the total will not add up to 100%. Percentages reflect the total number of respondents indicating each item divided by the total number who responded to the question.

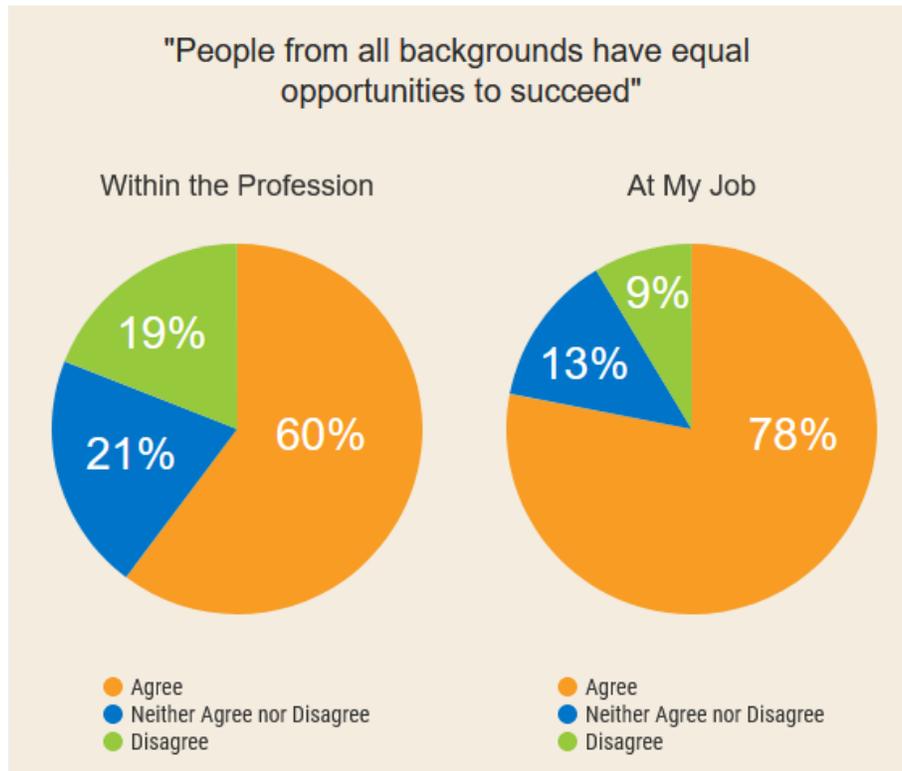
## Satisfaction with the Profession

Almost all genetic counsellors who responded to the 2020 PSS (90%) reported they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the genetic counseling profession overall. This high level of satisfaction exists regardless of position type (direct patient care, non-direct patient care, or mixed).



## Inclusivity

When asked about the genetic counseling profession, Canadian genetic counsellors were more likely to agree with the statements “I feel like I belong” and “I feel accepted, supported and authentic in our current role” and significantly less likely to agree that “people from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed” and that they “can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.” ( $p < .01$ ).



The mission of the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors is to promote high standards of practice, encourage professional growth and increase public awareness of the genetic counselling profession in Canada.

The full Canada 2020 PSS report is available to CAGC members and can be found on the CAGC website:  
<https://www.cagc-accg.ca/>

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