

Economic Impacts of MLS® Home Sales and Purchases in Canada and the Provinces





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resale housing transactions across Canada generate significant economic activity. The purchase and sale of homes via Canadian Multiple Listing Service[®] (MLS[®]) Systems¹ generates fees to professionals such as lawyers, appraisers, real estate agents, surveyors, etc. as well as taxes and fees to government. In addition, when Canadians move house, they typically purchase new appliances or furnishings and undertake renovations that tailor the new home to specific household requirements.

During the period between 2012 and 2014, for example, it is estimated that a total of **\$50,950** in ancillary spending (i.e., spending by purchasers on items other than the actual house and land) was generated by the average housing transaction in Canada. Per transaction ancillary spending varied somewhat by region, ranging from **\$32,125** in Atlantic Canada to **\$62,725** in B.C.

Considering the average of **464,363** home sales processed annually through MLS[®] during that period, ancillary spending attributable to moving house totalled over **\$23.7 billion per year** across Canada – a significant contribution to the total Canadian economy.² Over 47% of these spin-off benefits were generated in Ontario alone where homebuyers contributed **\$11.1 billion** to the economy.

Direct and indirect employment resulting from housing sales is also significant. Some **171,650** jobs are estimated to have been generated by average annual MLS[®] resale housing activity in Canada over the 2012-2014 period. Canada-wide, the finance, insurance, real estate, trade and professional service sectors benefited the most from MLS[®] home sales. These sectors accounted for approximately 67% of total jobs generated by sales and purchases via Canadian MLS[®] Systems.

Total incremental spending was up from the 2010-2012 period. This pushed up the economic contribution from purchase and sale of homes through MLS[®] Systems, though at a slower pace compared to previous years. Households have also shifted their spending patterns away from some discretionary items such as furniture and appliances and towards services and renovations.

¹ Multiple Listing Service[®] and MLS[®] are registered certification marks owned by The Canadian Real Estate Association. ² The total is the sum of 10 provinces.

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ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF MLS® HOME SALES AND PURCHASES

INTRODUCTION

Resale housing transactions across Canada generate significant economic activity. The purchase and sale of homes generates fees to professionals such as lawyers, appraisers, real estate agents, surveyors, etc. as well as taxes and fees to government. In addition, homebuyers often purchase new appliances or furnishings and typically undertake renovations that tailor the new home to specific household requirements.

To quantify these effects, The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) commissioned Altus Group Economic Consulting to prepare estimates of the economic impacts resulting from MLS[®] home sales and purchases in Canada and the 10 provinces. At the Canada level, this report provides an update to similar efforts undertaken by Altus Group Economic Consulting on behalf of CREA examining the 1990-1992, 2000-2002, 2004-2006, 2006-2008, 2008-2010, and 2010-2012 periods. At the provincial level, this report provides an update to similar work undertaken by Altus Group Economic Consulting where we provided a comprehensive set of economic impact estimates for MLS[®] home sales and purchases based on an integrated interprovincial input-output model for the 2004-2006, 2006-2008, 2008-2010, and 2010-2012 periods.

Three measures of economic impact are assessed in this report:

- Average ancillary spending per housing transaction (by region);
- Annual average spin-off benefits based on all MLS[®] sales and purchases over the past three years; and
- Annual average direct and indirect employment by sector generated through all MLS[®] sales and purchases over the past three years.

This report presents a review of these national and provincial estimates. The methodology used in its preparation is presented in the Appendix.

CANADA'S MACROECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Over the 2012-2014 period, persistently low interest rates and steady economic and employment growth helped fuel existing home sales. Furthermore, access to historically cheap credit supported growth in renovation spending, which is more often financed with loans backed by residential equity. Spending on big-ticket discretionary items, such as furniture and appliances, however, declined when compared to the previous period.

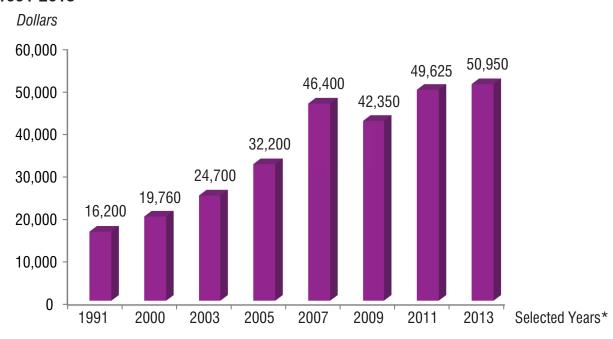
All told, the results in the present study show that the average ancillary expenditure generated by the purchase and sale of homes through the MLS[®] system in Canada has increased marginally.



HOUSING TRANSACTIONS GENERATE SIGNIFICANT SPENDING IN THE ECONOMY³

Purchases and sales of homes trigger additional expenditures that have broad economic impacts. The current study estimates that a total of \$50,950 in ancillary expenditure is generated by the average housing transaction in Canada over a period of three years from the date of purchase. Ancillary expenditure on a per household basis is up 2.6% since the last (2013) study. On a per household basis, economic contributions from MLS[®] home sales and purchases have generally been rising over the 22 years that Altus Group Economic Consulting has studied this on behalf of CREA (see **Figure 1**). Since 1991, ancillary expenditure generated by the average housing transaction in Canada has risen by at annual average rate of 5.3%

Figure 1



Ancillary Expenditures Generated by the Average Housing Transaction, Canada, 1991-2013

* Based on previous Altus Group Economic Consulting's reports for The Canadian Real Estate Association **Source:** Altus Group Economic Consulting

Figure 2 indicates the distribution of ancillary expenditures among the various services and goods typically associated with housing transactions, for Canada and five regions⁴. Although the analysis was based on spending in 2013, the returns capture typical spending by household in the first, second and third year after purchase. A number of professional fees are involved, including legal and real estate fees, mortgage insurance premiums, fees for appraisals, surveys, and other services involved in the purchase and sale of a home.

³ For purposes of this paper, a transaction is defined as the sale of a home by a vendor to a purchaser and all ancillary expenditures typically associated with the change of ownership.

⁴ Analysis based on data from the Survey of Household Spending (SHS). Due to SHS sample sizes, some of the analysis had to be completed at the regional level rather than the provincial level.

Figure 2

Estimated Expenditures Generated by the Average Housing Transaction, Canada and Regions, 2013

	Canada	Atlantic	QC	ON	Prairies	BC		
Dollars								
General Household Purchases	3,550	3,100	3,075	3,600	4,000	3,350		
Furniture and Appliances	6,575	5,700	5,325	6,625	7,750	6,500		
Moving Costs	1,325	1,100	1,025	1,225	1,625	1,475		
Renovations	9,525	7,200	7,900	9,525	10,900	10,050		
Services: Financial, legal, real estate, appraisal, survey, other professionals	22,900	13,075	15,975	24,500	19,000	30,550		
Taxes (excluding GST)	7,075	1,950	3,875	10,200	1,125	10,800		
TOTAL	50,950	32,125	37,175	55,675	44,400	62,725		

Source: Estimates by Altus Group Economic Consulting based on special tabulations from Statistics Canada 2013 Survey of Household Spending

The analysis reflects the importance of renovation work associated with moving house – a figure that includes repairs and alterations to both the structure itself and the surrounding yard. Canadawide, owners of recently purchased homes spent an incremental (over and above typical spending) \$9,500 on renovations during the first three years after the purchase. Across Canada, incremental spending on renovations varies from \$7,200 per household in Atlantic Canada to \$10,900 in the Prairies. This is up by nearly 5% nationally compared to the previous report published in 2013, with the strongest increase seen in Atlantic Canada.

In addition, there are also significant expenditures for furniture and appliances and general household purchases such as bedding, towels, lighting fixtures, tools, blinds, etc. By region, households in the prairies spend the most on these discretionary items, while households in Quebec spend the least. While still strong, spending on furniture and appliances has moderated somewhat compared to the 2013 report.

Each transaction through Canadian MLS[®] Systems generates some \$10,200 and \$10,800 in transfer taxes and land registration fees for government in Ontario and B.C., respectively. These are significantly higher than other regions in Canada.

The \$50,950 in ancillary expenditures per transaction relates only to the costs of moving from one home to another. It does not include any renovation expenditures by the vendors of homes, preparing their properties for sale (or expenditures involved in the building and fitting out of newly constructed homes).



SPIN-OFF BENEFITS OF MLS® ACTIVITY AVERAGE \$23.7 BILLION ANNUALLY FROM 2012 TO 2014

There are a large number of resale housing transactions in Canada every year. Between 2012 and 2014 an average of 464,363 homes changed hands annually through the Multiple Listing Service[®] (MLS[®]) of real estate Boards across Canada.⁵⁶

Considering the average of \$50,950 additional expenditure per transaction, it is clear that home purchases and sales generate very significant volumes of spending and major spin-offs to other industries. For the average of 464,363 homes processed annually through MLS[®] systems in Canada during the period between 2012 and 2014, spending attributable to moving house totalled approximately \$23.7 billion per year – a significant contribution to the total Canadian economy. This is up by some 4.9%, or \$1.1 billion, compared to the 2013 report.

The distribution of spending has also shifted compared to the 2013 study. Compared to the 2010-2012 period (studied in the 2013 report), total incremental spending is slightly higher, but has shifted into services, renovations, and taxes in terms of the composition, and away from moving service spending and furniture and appliances. The long-term view is that the contribution from MLS[®] transactions to the Canadian economy will continue to trend upward.

Spin-off benefits from MLS[®] home sales and purchases were significant in all provinces. **Figure 3** illustrates total ancillary spending by province. A majority of the spending nation-wide is found in Canada's largest four provinces, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and B.C. All provinces experienced millions of dollars of annual spin-off benefits from home sales through this period.

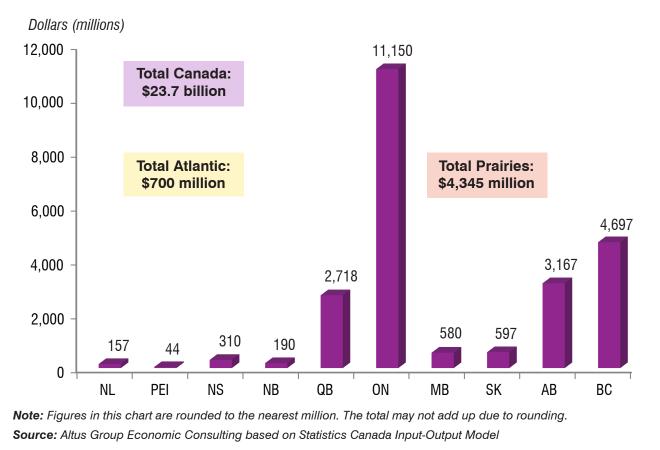
⁵ It excludes Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

⁶ The Multiple Listing Service[®] (MLS[®]) is a co-operative listing system operated by real estate Boards to provide maximum exposure to properties for sale. MLS[®] is a registered certification mark owned by The Canadian Real Estate Association.



Figure 3

Average Annual Spin-Off Benefits of MLS® Activity, Canada and Provinces, 2012-2014

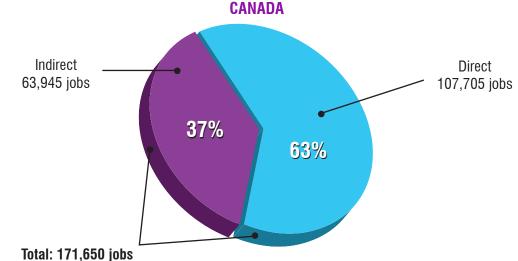


AN AVERAGE OF 171,650 DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS GENERATED ANNUALLY BY HOME SALES AND PURCHASES THROUGH MLS®

Expenditures on activities such as the purchase or sale of a home result in three distinct rounds of impacts on the economy (see **Figure 4**):

- Direct impacts economic activity in the industries supplying products and services to homebuyers. Examples include jobs generated in the appliance, construction, and real estate sectors involved in producing and providing the specific goods and services required by purchasers.
- Indirect impacts economic activity in industries providing goods and services to the industries involved in the direct round. Examples include the raw materials and components used in producing appliances purchased by homebuyers; the wood and other industries involved in providing inputs to the manufacture of building products used in home renovations; and the computers and other goods used by financial and real estate service firms involved in the sale of financing for the home. The chain reaction spreads across the economy and provides employment in a wide range of industries that supply those directly involved in providing goods and services to the home buyer.
- Spin-off impacts the "multiplier" effect resulting from the expenditure of incomes generated in the first two rounds. The wages, salaries and other income that accrue to households as a result of the direct and indirect rounds will, in turn, generate economic activity and additional jobs as these households spend their incomes in the general economy. The relationship between these spin-off impacts and the initial expenditure resulting from the purchase of a home is less clear than for the direct and indirect rounds much household spending would occur regardless of whether it is financed by wages and salaries, or through unemployment insurance, other government transfers or savings if the direct and indirect employment did not occur. All told, the magnitude of jobs induced by this round of economic impact could be an additional 46,634 jobs across Canada.

Figure 4



Average Annual Direct and Indirect Employment Generated by MLS[®] Home Sales, Canada, 2012-2014

Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada Input-Output Model



Direct and indirect employment resulting from housing sales in Canada is significant. 171,650 jobs are estimated to have been generated annually by MLS[®] home sales in Canada over the period 2012-2014.

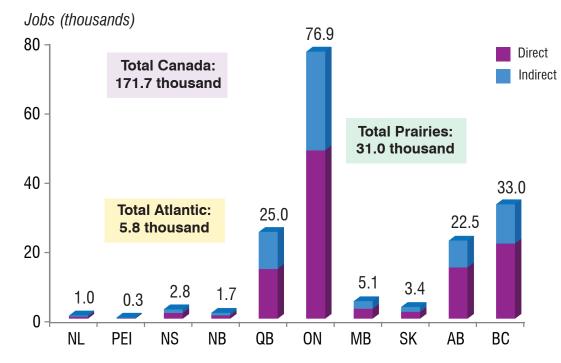
Most of these jobs (107,705) were generated in the direct round – the jobs required to produce the goods and services purchased by homebuyers. The remaining 63,945 jobs were generated to provide inputs necessary to produce the goods and services that were purchased directly by homebuyers.

The results from the current analysis show a marginally smaller multiplier for job impact than in the previous studies. In part, this reflects a modest shift in spin-off expenditures from MLS[®] home sales toward taxes, which generate no jobs.

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of direct and indirect jobs generated by home sales and purchases, by province.

Figure 5

Average Annual Direct and Indirect Employment Generated by MLS[®] Home Sales by Province, 2012-2014



Note: Figures in this chart are rounded to the nearest hundred. The total may not add up due to rounding. **Source:** Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada Input-Output Model

All told, jobs generated directly and indirectly through the sale and purchase of MLS[®] homes accounted for nearly one per cent of jobs across the Canadian economy.

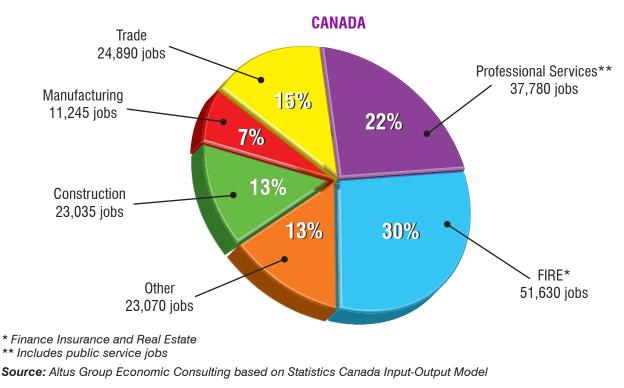


MAIN IMPACTS FROM HOUSING TRANSACTIONS ARE IN FINANCE, REAL ESTATE, TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUT MANY OTHER INDUSTRIES ALSO BENEFIT

Professional services, including professional, technology and public administration services, represent a large share of jobs generated by the home sales through MLS[®]. Approximately 37,780 jobs have been created in those sectors during the period 2012-2014 and the majority of those jobs are from the indirect round (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6

Average Annual Direct and Indirect Employment, by Industry, Generated by MLS[®] Home Sales, 2012-2014



In addition, some 51,630 jobs have been created in the finance, insurance and real estate industry as a result of the average number of MLS[®] home sales annually.

Construction and trade industries benefit from MLS[®] home sales as well. During the 2012-2014 period, MLS[®] home sales created some 23,035 construction jobs and 24,890 trade jobs annually.

A significant number of jobs were also created in a variety of other industries – manufacturing, warehouse storage, and other services all have jobs that rely on economic activity generated by the sale and purchase of MLS[®] homes in Canada.



Most of the jobs in the finance, insurance and real estate industries are generated in the direct round (see **Figure 7**). Lawyers, real estate agents, appraisers, surveyors, etc. all play a significant role in the sale of a home. Some 82% of the jobs generated in these industries are in the direct round.

In the construction industry, most of the jobs created (94 per cent) are also in the direct round. In general, renovation and repair expenditures typically occur when someone moves into a home and these works are directly related to a home purchase.

Among other industries (e.g. manufacturing, professional and other services), most of the employment impacts are in the indirect round – supplying goods and services to industries involved in the direct round.

Figure 7

Average Annual Direct and Indirect Employment by Industry Generated by MLS[®] Home Sales and Purchases, Canada, 2012-2014

	Direct	Indirect	TOTAL	Distribution	Direct as % of Total
		Jobs	%		
Manufacturing	3,510	7,735	11,245	7	31
Construction	21,710	1,325	23,035	13	94
Trade	17,660	7,230	24,890	15	71
FIRE ¹	42,520	9,110	51,630	30	82
Professional Services ²	17,865	19,915	37,780	22	47
Other	4,440	18,630	23,070	13	19
TOTAL	107,705	63,945	171,650	100	63

¹ Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

² Includes Public Services

Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada Input-Output Model



MLS® SALES AND PURCHASES HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON JOB CREATION IN EVERY PROVINCE

Figure 8 illustrates employment impacts from ancillary spending related to the sale and purchase of homes through Real Estate Boards'/Associations' MLS[®] Systems by province and region. Some notable observations include (from west to east):

- B.C. experiences the highest relative job impact of any province. MLS[®] home sales and purchases in B.C. generate 32,960 direct and indirect jobs nearly 1 in 70 jobs across the entire B.C. economy, much higher than the national average of 1 in 104 jobs.
- In Alberta, the proportion of jobs generated in finance, insurance and real estate industries is the higher than the national average – 33% in the region vs. the national average of 30%.
- Home sales through MLS[®] Systems in Saskatchewan generated 3,430 direct and indirect jobs, of which 21% are in the trade sector, the highest proportion in Canada.
- Manitoba has the second-highest proportion of total jobs generated from MLS[®] home transactions that are indirect, approximately 43%. This is partially because a large number of jobs are created in the manufacturing and other service sectors, which have low direct job impact ratios. In addition, the province has one of the lowest shares of jobs created in the financial, insurance and real estate industries.
- Ontario benefited the most among the 10 provinces from MLS[®] home sales during the 2012-2014 period – each year, some 76,875 jobs were created as a result of MLS[®] transactions.
- The sale and purchase of MLS[®] homes in Quebec generated about 25,000 jobs annually during the 2012-2014 period. Quebec had the smallest proportion of jobs generated in the construction industry, at 12%.
- Atlantic Canada is the region with the lowest relative economic impact from existing home sales. The total jobs generated by the sale and purchase of MLS[®] homes in Atlantic Canada about 5,800 jobs accounts for about 1 in 200 jobs across that economy, compared with 1 in 104 jobs Canada-wide.



Figure 8

Average Annual Direct and Indirect Employment By Industry, Generated by MLS[®] Home Sales and Purchases, by Province, 2012-2014

						-				_
	NL	PEI	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC
Direct Jobs										
Manufacturing	0	0	20	10	990	1,600	240	50	255	345
Construction	95	55	355	275	2,755	9,845	755	550	2,930	4,095
Trade	135	45	360	205	2,470	7,900	580	535	2,445	2,985
FIRE ¹	300	55	620	270	5,800	17,955	785	430	6,580	9,725
Professional Services ²	90	45	260	155	1,940	9,325	400	345	1,675	3,630
Other	20	10	50	70	425	1,845	145	115	880	880
TOTAL	640	210	1,665	985	14,380	48,470	2,905	2,025	14,765	21,660
Indirect Jobs										
Manufacturing	25	10	145	120	1,840	3,095	370	185	880	1,065
Construction	5	0	20	10	220	640	50	30	150	200
Trade	40	15	120	60	1,195	3,155	245	185	955	1,260
FIRE ¹	50	20	150	100	1,315	4,450	340	175	930	1,580
Professional Services ²	75	45	340	245	3,070	9,355	475	365	2,280	3,665
Other	120	45	330	220	2,985	7,710	700	465	2,525	3,530
TOTAL	315	135	1,105	755	10,625	28,405	2,180	1,405	7,720	11,300
TOTAL (Direct and Indirect) Jobs										
Manufacturing	25	10	165	130	2,830	4,695	610	235	1,135	1,410
Construction	100	55	375	285	2,975	10,485	805	580	3,080	4,295
Trade	175	60	480	265	3,665	11,055	825	720	3,400	4,245
FIRE ¹	350	75	770	370	7,115	22,405	1,125	605	7,510	11,305
Professional Services ²	165	90	600	400	5,010	18,680	875	710	3,955	7,295
Other	140	55	380	290	3,410	9,555	845	580	3,405	4,410
TOTAL	955	345	2,770	1,740	25,005	76,875	5,085	3,430	22,485	32,960

¹ Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

² Includes Public Services

Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada Input-Output Model



APPENDIX

ESTIMATING ECONOMIC BENEFITS GENERATED BY MLS® HOME SALES AND PURCHASES

This appendix reviews the methodology used to generate estimates of the economic benefits resulting from MLS[®] home sales and purchases in Canada. The methodology can be broadly divided into two sections:

- Estimating the expenditures resulting from MLS® home sales and purchases; and
- Estimating the economic impacts of these expenditures.

A summary of the methodology used by Altus Group Economic Consulting to generate each of these estimates is provided below.

ESTIMATING THE EXPENDITURES RESULTING FROM MLS® HOME SALES AND PURCHASES

To provide estimates of the amount spent by families who moved house, special tabulations were obtained from Statistics Canada's 2013 Survey of Household Spending. These tabulations provided estimates of the expenditures by families during the first, second and third years after purchasing a house, versus all other homeowners. The average expenditures of families who had moved in either 2013, 2012 or 2011 versus those who had not moved were then compared for a variety of expenditure categories that were considered likely to be affected by moving to a different home. From these data and additional analysis, estimates of the average expenditures generated by families who move to a different dwelling were prepared.

This analysis was conducted at the Canada-wide level. It was then indexed to the regional level, based on the average spending per reporting owner household for any given spending category compared with spending Canada-wide. Suppression of data from the Survey of Household Spending because of small sample sizes in some provinces confined some of the analysis to the regional level.

It should be noted that these include only the expenditures incurred by the family that moved to a dwelling. This included items such as moving costs, new appliances or equipment to be used in the home, renovation expenditures, fees paid to lawyers, surveyors, mortgage lenders, etc. The only exception is a calculation included in the analysis to account for real estate brokerage fees generated from MLS[®] transactions, which in most cases are borne by the property vendor.

The analysis did not distinguish between those moving into a new home versus a resale home, and it did not include the additional economic impacts that would have been generated through the construction of new homes.



ESTIMATING THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXPENDITURES GENERATED AS A RESULT OF HOME PURCHASES

Estimates for the economic impact of additional expenditures generated by moving to a different home were derived through the use of Statistics Canada's Interprovincial Input-Output Model. The current model relates to the year 2010. An input-output model is used to estimate the impacts of various types of economic activities. It is an accounting framework of an economy's production system. It shows the interconnections that exist between the various sectors of the economy when goods and services are produced. Using an input-output model, it is possible to determine which goods and services are required to achieve a certain production level in a particular industry – or the economy as whole.

The model can take an estimate of expenditures on a given economic activity (in this case, moving to a different home) and translate it into the impacts on various industries – and ultimately, the amount of income and jobs created. A key component of an input-output model is the set of "input structures" for each economic activity covered by the model. An input structure literally splits the original expenditure among all the different inputs that are used in that economy activity. For example, in purchasing a home, expenditures are incurred in a variety of industries – appliances, construction, various service industries, etc. Each of these industries has an input structure of its own that involves inputs from a variety of other industries plus labour and owners of firms in that industry.

An input-output model includes a full array of input structures that have been estimated for all industries in the economy. Use of the model in this analysis involves estimating the impacts of spending incurred by those who move to a different dwelling. To generate these estimates, it was necessary first to provide an "input structure" for households that move to a different dwelling. To formulate this input structure, the estimates of average expenditures generated by families who move to a different dwelling derived from the analysis of the Survey of Household Spending were converted into the input categories used by the Statistics Canada Interprovincial Input-Output model. Specifically, estimated spending per mover by region in each of the affected expenditure categories is reflected in the table summarized in the report (**Figure 2**).

This input structure was used by Statistics Canada to simulate the impacts on spending by movers using the Interprovincial Input-Output model. In generating the estimates, Statistics Canada grossed the expenditures up to \$438.6 million excluding taxes (i.e. to cover the estimated spending of 10,000 movers), then distributed among the 10 provinces via an index of average MLS[®] transactions over the study period. The results were re-estimated by Altus Group Economic Consulting based on average annual MLS[®] home sales over the 2012-2014 period and are presented in the main body of the report.

Findings are presented in terms of "jobs" generated. This is the term used by the Input-Output Division of Statistics Canada in its estimates of employment generated. The term "jobs" is close to but not the same as "person-years of employment". The estimate of jobs provides the number of workers that would be employed for a full-year; however, the estimate includes both full and permanent part-time jobs at the ratios appropriate for each of the industries involved.



The Interprovincial Input-Output model was run as one single simulation for all 10 provinces. Thus, the impacts of trade flows between provinces are imbedded in the estimates. In this way, the jobs generated by province presented in **Figure 8** of the report reflect the impact of home sales in all provinces. In reality, although most jobs are generated from sales in the same province, some cross-provincial effects are present. For example, if a homebuyer in B.C. purchases a washing machine manufactured in Quebec, that ancillary spending will help create manufacturing jobs in Quebec. Conversely, if a home buyer in P.E.I. engages the services of a moving company that uses gasoline mined and refined in Alberta as an input, that ancillary spending activity will help generate oil and gas related jobs in Alberta.

Any questions or comments about the service or products CREA provides? You can contact us on-line at info@crea.ca.



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