



A profile of the Canadian population: *where we live*

This document provides detailed analysis of the 2001 Census population data released March 12th, 2002.

To access the complete report, including colour maps, charts, tables and photographs, please consult Statistics Canada's website (www.statcan.ca). On the home page, choose Census.

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Highlights from the 2001 Census of Population

- ◆ Canada has experienced one of the smallest census-to-census growth rates in its population. Between 1996 and 2001, the nation's population increased by 1,160,333 people, a gain of 4%. The Census counted 30,007,094 people in Canada on May 15, 2001, compared with 28,846,761 in 1996. Growth rates decelerated in every province except Alberta, compared with the early 1990s.
- ◆ Only three provinces and one territory registered growth rates above the national average of 4%. Alberta's population surged by 10.3%, compared with 5.9% between 1991 and 1996. Ontario gained 6.1%, British Columbia 4.9% and Nunavut 8.1%.
- ◆ Six provinces experienced small changes in population (less than 1.5% in either direction): Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- ◆ The population of Newfoundland and Labrador declined for the second consecutive census period. Between 1996 and 2001, the province's population decreased 7%, more than double the 2.9% rate of decline during the previous five years. Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories also showed declines of more than 5%.

- ◆ For Canada as a whole, immigration was the main source of growth in population between 1996 and 2001, as the nation experienced a decline of about one-third in natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) compared with the previous 5-year period.
- ◆ The trend in urbanization continued. In 2001, 79.4% of Canadians lived in an urban area with a population of 10,000 people or more, compared with 78.5% in 1996.
- ◆ 7 of 27 census metropolitan areas had a growth rate at least double that of the national average of 4%; the largest growth rates were in Calgary, Oshawa and Toronto.
- ◆ From 1996 to 2001, the nation's population has continued to concentrate further in four broad urban regions: the extended Golden Horseshoe in southern Ontario; Montréal and its adjacent region; the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and southern Vancouver Island; and the Calgary-Edmonton corridor. ¹Between 1996 and 2001, these four regions combined grew 7.6% compared with virtually no growth (+0.5%) in the rest of the country. In 2001, 51% of Canada's population lived in these regions compared with 49% in 1996.

Canada's 2001 population: growth rates and trends

One of the lowest census-to-census increases

Canada registered a population growth rate of 4% between 1996 and 2001, an increase of about 1.16 million people, according to the first data from the 2001 Census of Population. There have been only two other periods in which the population grew this slowly: during the Depression of the 1930s and the period between 1981 and 1986.

Between 1981 and 1986, the population increased by only 966,150 as a result of exceptionally low levels of immigration. Fewer than half a million immigrants settled in Canada during that period.

During the baby boom years, the census recorded

five-year growth rates of 14.6% in 1956 and 13.4% in 1961. By the mid-1960s, however, the growth rate was declining as fertility rates dropped. There was a brief reversal of the downward trend in growth between 1986 and 1996 when a large number of immigrants arrived and a small increase in fertility occurred.

The five years leading up to the 2001 Census were marked by a decline of about one-third in natural increase compared to the 1991 to 1996 period. The number of deaths rose primarily because Canada's population is aging. Also, the number of births declined, for two reasons. First, the already low fertility rates dropped even further in the late 1990s. Second, the generation of parents who were born in the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s belonged to the smaller "baby bust" generations that followed the baby boom.

With natural increase declining, immigration accounted for more than one-half of Canada's population growth between 1996 and 2001.

Canada compared to the world

Canada's 4% growth rate is well above that of many other developed countries. The population of the less developed nations increased at a rate of 8.4%, while more developed countries grew at a far slower rate of 1.5%. The population of the world rose 7% between 1995 and 2000, according to the United Nations.

For the first time in 100 years, the demographic growth rate in Canada was lower than in the United States. This is due to the American fertility rate, which is exceptionally high for a developed country. The annual average number of births for each woman has remained above 2.0 in the United States for the last 10 years.

The population of Mexico, the other member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), increased 8.5% between 1995 and 2000, about double that of Canada.

1. The designation of these regions is based on clustered patterns of demographic growth observed between 1996 and 2001. The metropolitan areas of Ottawa - Hull (with over one million people in 2001), Windsor, and Halifax also experienced significant population growth during this period.

Provincial and territorial population changes

A century of population growth

Canada stepped into the 21st Century six times as large as it was at the dawn of the 1900s when 5.4 million people were counted. In 1901, 4 out of every 10 people lived in Ontario, which had 2.2 million residents. The Northwest Territories registered more than 20,000 inhabitants at that time.

Some provinces grew much more than others during the past century. The Atlantic Provinces increased at a modest rate of about one-quarter of the national average. For example, Prince Edward Island showed a relatively small population increase during the century, as did the Yukon. Quebec increased at about three-quarters of the national rate, while Ontario remained close to the national rate. The West, which was sparsely populated at the turn of the previous century, experienced tremendous growth, with Alberta's population soaring 40 times in 100 years.

Trends into the 21st Century

Between 1996 and 2001, provincial growth rates decelerated in every province except Alberta. The population of Alberta soared 10.3%, up substantially from the rate of 5.9% during the previous five years. Shifts in migration from one province to another were responsible for the most significant census-to-census changes in provincial and territorial growth rates. Natural increase declined in all provinces and territories, while immigration remained relatively stable.

This is the first in a series of announcements from the 2001 Census. In this report, analysis of immigration and interprovincial migration is based on administrative data sources. Subsequent reports from the 2001 Census will paint a complete picture of the impact of these factors on provincial and regional populations.

Provinces and territories with above-average growth rates

Three provinces and one territory recorded growth rates above the national average of 4.0% between 1996 and 2001. By far, Alberta had the highest rate of growth, 10.3%, more than 2.5 times the national average. Ontario gained 6.1%, while British Columbia rose 4.9%. The population of Nunavut increased 8.1%.

The 2001 Census counted 2,974,807 people in Alberta, which comprised 9.9% of the total population enumerated by the census, compared with 9.3% in 1996. Alberta's booming economy attracted an estimated net inflow of 140,000 migrants from the rest of the country over the 1996-2001 period. This was in direct contrast to the period between 1986 and 1991, when more people left Alberta than moved into it. The positive net growth in Alberta's population was the strongest since the early 1980s at the height of the "oil boom".

The census enumerated 11,410,046 people in Ontario, an increase of more than 656,000 since 1996, the largest growth in absolute numbers among the provinces. This gain represented 57% of the total growth in Canada's population between 1996 and 2001. Ontario accounted for 38% of the nation's population in 2001.

The 6.1% growth in Ontario was due to a high level of immigration, as more than one-half of the immigrants who came to Canada during the past five years settled in Ontario. Unlike Alberta, Ontario's net interprovincial migration, while positive, did not contribute significantly to its population growth.

British Columbia is the only province in which the population has grown at a rate faster than the national average in every census since the province joined Confederation in 1871. The census counted 3,907,738 people in British Columbia, up 4.9% from 1996. While B.C.'s growth rate was higher than the national average, it was less than half the

13.5% increase experienced between 1991 and 1996. In fact, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, British Columbia had the highest growth rate of all provinces.

This slowdown in growth was due mainly to a significant change in the direction of the patterns of interprovincial migration. Between 1996 and 2001, British Columbia incurred a net outflow of migrants to other provinces of about 40,000 people. This compares with a net inflow of 170,000 between 1991 and 1996. However, this outflow of Canadians was more than compensated by the high number of international immigrants who settled in British Columbia.

Among the three territories, the 2001 Census showed an increase in population in only Nunavut, the newest territory that came into existence in April 1999. Nunavut had an estimated 26,745 residents, up 8.1% from the number living within its boundaries at the time of the 1996 Census. Nunavut's growth rate was due mainly to the high birth rate among the Inuit population, and to development in its capital, Iqaluit, the population of which increased by 24.1%. One-half of Nunavut's growth occurred in Iqaluit.

While still outstripping the national average, Nunavut's growth rate has actually decelerated substantially during the last five years. If the territory had been in existence at the time, the 1996 Census would have shown a population increase of 16.4%. The deceleration in the growth rate recorded in the 2001 Census was due to a decline in natural increase and to net outflows resulting from migration to other territories and provinces.

Provinces and territories with small population changes

Six provinces experienced small changes in their populations from 1996 to 2001: Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Among these provinces, Quebec's population increased 1.4%. Manitoba and Prince Edward Island both showed identical increases of 0.5%.

There was virtually no change in Nova Scotia (-0.1%), while the population of New Brunswick declined by 1.2%, and Saskatchewan by 1.1%.

Most of these provinces tend to have net outflows of migration to other provinces. This is particularly the case with respect to Manitoba and Saskatchewan because of their proximity to Alberta.

Natural increase declined in each of these six provinces between 1996 and 2001. Furthermore, relative to their population, they tend to receive small numbers of immigrants.

Quebec's growth rate decelerated from 3.5% between 1991 and 1996 to 1.4% between 1996 and 2001 because of declines in both its natural increase and the number of immigrants that it received.

Provinces and territories with population declines of 5% or more

One province and two territories incurred population declines of 5% or more between 1996 and 2001. They were Newfoundland and Labrador, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Newfoundland and Labrador's population experienced its second consecutive census-to-census decline. The census counted 512,930 people in the province, down 7% from the previous census. This was more than twice the 2.9% rate of decline between 1991 and 1996. Newfoundland and Labrador had the strongest net outflow of interprovincial migrants of any province. It also had the nation's lowest fertility rate.

The census counted 28,674 people in the Yukon, down 6.8%, and 37,360 in the Northwest Territories, down 5.8%. Demographic change in the territories is quite volatile because of the small size of their population. Between 1991 and 1996, growth rates in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories were much higher than the Canadian average. However, leading up to the 2001 Census, high net outflows of migration to the rest of Canada contributed to the declines in population.

Sub provincial population dynamics

The continuing urbanization of Canada

Canada is one of the most urbanized nations, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In 2001, 79.4% of Canadians lived in an urban centre of 10,000 people or more, compared with 78.5% in 1996. During this five-year period, the population of these areas increased 5.2%, while the population living outside them declined slightly (-0.4%).

The only province in which the population of urban centres declined was Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the decline in the census metropolitan area of St. John's was less pronounced than in both the rural regions and the other urban centres in the province. As a result, 33.7% of the province's population was concentrated in St. John's in 2001, compared with 31.5% in 1996.

Metropolitan areas near the Canada-U.S. border that attract immigrants, and whose economies are based on manufacturing or services, increased most. Populations of areas with resource-based economies declined, such as northern Quebec, northern Ontario and northern British Columbia and large segments of rural Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The only exception was Alberta, where the oil industry attracted newcomers.

Profiling our large metropolitan areas

Growth varied widely across census metropolitan areas

In 2001, just over 64% of Canada's population, or about 19,297,000 people, lived in the nation's 27 census metropolitan areas, up slightly from 63% in 1996. The population in 11 of the 27 increased at a faster rate than the 4% national average, while 9 others had smaller positive growth, and the population of 7 declined.

With three exceptions, the census metropolitan areas with the strongest growth were located in three regions: the extended Golden Horseshoe in southern Ontario, the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, and British Columbia's Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island.

The three exceptions were Ottawa-Hull, Windsor and Halifax. Immigration played a major role in Windsor's growth (+7.3%), followed by migration from other parts of Ontario. The growth in Ottawa-Hull was the result of a mix of internal and international migration, as well as natural increase. Ottawa-Hull had nearly 1,064,000 people, a 6.5% increase.

Halifax continued to strengthen its position as the major urban centre of Atlantic Canada, accounting for 39.6% of Nova Scotia's population in 2001, compared with 37.7% in 1996. With a population of 359,180, it grew 4.7% during the five-year period, almost equally because of international immigration and natural increase.

The census metropolitan area with the strongest rate of growth by far was Calgary, the population of which soared 15.8% to 951,400. Between 1996 and 2001, Calgary accounted for 47% of the total growth of Alberta. The census metropolitan area of Edmonton increased 8.7%, about half the rate of Calgary.

The second strongest growth occurred in the census metropolitan area of Oshawa, where the population increased 10.2% to 296,300. In third place was the largest census metropolitan area, Toronto, the population of which surged 9.8% to almost 4,683,000.

The census counted just over 3,426,000 people in Montréal, the second largest census metropolitan area, a 3% increase. Vancouver, the third largest, had about 1,987,000 people, up 8.5% from 1996.

The population of seven census metropolitan areas declined between 1996 and 2001. The biggest decrease occurred in Greater Sudbury, where the population fell 6% to about 155,600, followed by Thunder Bay with a 3.7% decrease to about 122,000. Populations also declined in St. John's,

Nfld., Saint John, N.B., Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi-Jonquière and Regina.

Growth concentrated in four large urban regions

From a demographic point of view, four major urban regions continue to emerge, and they account for a large and growing proportion of the nation's population. These regions are: Ontario's extended Golden Horseshoe; Montréal and adjacent region; British Columbia's Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island; and the Calgary-Edmonton corridor.²

In 2001, about 15.3 million people lived in these four regions, a 7.6% increase from 1996 compared with a 0.5% gain in the rest of the country. These four regions accounted for 51% of the nation's population, compared to 49% in 1996 and approximately 41% in 1971.

The extended Golden Horseshoe

The census counted a population of 6.7 million in the extended Golden Horseshoe, a 9.2% increase from 1996. This region consists of the urban centres of Oshawa, Toronto, Hamilton and St. Catharines-Niagara, plus Kitchener, Guelph and Barrie. It accounted for 59% of Ontario's population and 22% of the nation's population in 2001. Almost one-half of Canada's total population growth occurred there.

The main factor behind this growth was international immigration, most of which was concentrated in the Toronto area. More than 445,000 immigrants settled in the census metropolitan area of Toronto between 1996 and 2001. This added nearly 2% per year to Toronto's population over this period.

Six of the nation's 25 fastest-growing municipalities were in the extended Golden Horseshoe. They include Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill, Brampton and Barrie, all of which contain populations of 100,000 or more, and all of which increased 20% or more. The population of Caledon increased 26.8% to 50,595.

The census metropolitan area of St. Catharines-

Niagara increased only 1.2%, the slowest rate of all CMAs in the extended Golden Horseshoe. It did not attract large numbers of immigrants, and its rate of natural increase was almost zero. St. Catharines-Niagara has one of the oldest populations among all CMAs.

Montréal and adjacent region

This region includes Montréal, as well as Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Saint-Hyacinthe, Sorel, Joliette and Lachute. In 2001, its population amounted to just over 3.7 million, up 2.8% from 1996, which was the slowest rate of growth among the four urban regions. This region accounted for 52% of Quebec's population and 12% of Canada's.

Relative to its population, the census metropolitan area of Montréal did not receive as many immigrants as Toronto or Vancouver. Between 1996 and 2001, it received 126,000 new immigrants, a rate of 7 a year for every 1,000 population (the national average), compared with 19 for Toronto and 18 for Vancouver. Furthermore, Montréal had a net outflow of population to other provinces.

Growth rates varied among the municipalities that form the Montréal and adjacent region. Four of the 25 fastest growing municipalities in Canada are in this region: Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot, Blainville, Mirabel and Saint-Colomban. In addition, the urban centres of Joliette and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu grew more quickly than the census metropolitan area of Montréal. However, the population of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Saint-Hyacinthe and Sorel-Tracy, on the south shore of the island of Montréal, all declined in population.

The rest of Quebec outside Montréal and the adjacent region experienced, on average, a slight decline in population. However, this average is the result of slow growth in parts of the province and decline elsewhere.

2. The designation of these regions is based on clustered patterns of demographic growth observed between 1996 and 2001. The metropolitan areas of Ottawa - Hull (with over one million people in 2001), Windsor, and Halifax also experienced significant population growth during this period.

The census metropolitan areas of Sherbrooke, Québec and the Quebec portion of the census metropolitan area of Ottawa-Hull all grew in population.

Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island

More than two-thirds of British Columbia's population is concentrated in the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island region. This region had a population of just over 2.7 million people in 2001, up 7.3% from 1996. It accounted for 69% of B.C.'s total, and 9% of the nation's population.

This region consists of the urban centres of Vancouver, Abbotsford and Chilliwack on the mainland, and Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo and Parksville on Vancouver Island. As in the case of the Golden Horseshoe, the main component of growth was international immigration. For example, more than 180,000 immigrants settled in the census metropolitan area of Vancouver from 1996 to 2001, a rate of 18 new immigrants a year for every 1,000 population, similar to the rate in Toronto. The second most important component of growth was natural increase.

There was a significant difference in growth between the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island. The population of the Lower Mainland grew 8.3% and southern Vancouver Island increased 2.7%. The southern Vancouver Island region, one of Canada's more popular retirement areas, attracted few immigrants and its natural increase was low because its population is older.

Surrey, Richmond, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and New Westminster each grew 10% or more between 1996 and 2001.

The Okanagan Valley and Kamloops region were the only other parts of British Columbia to incur significant growth. With a population of fewer than 9,000, Whistler was the only B.C. municipality among the 25 fastest-growing municipalities. Its population increased 24% between 1996 and 2001, down substantially from a rate of 61% between 1991 and 1996 when it was the nation's fastest

growing municipality.

The rest of British Columbia experienced no change in population.

Calgary-Edmonton corridor

The municipalities in the Calgary-Edmonton corridor had a total population of 2,150,000 in 2001, up 12.3% from 1996, the largest growth rate of all four regions. The corridor, stretching from Calgary in the south to Edmonton in the north, and which includes Leduc, Red Deer and Wetaskiwin, accounted for 72% of Alberta's population and 7% of Canada's.

The main factor behind this growth was migration from other provinces. In large part, Canadians left other resource-based regions for Alberta.

A second contributor to the growth in the corridor was a strong rate of natural increase, the result of a relatively young population. Calgary and Edmonton are also beginning to attract international immigration, but this represented less of a contribution to demographic growth. Six of the 25 fastest-growing municipalities in Canada are in this corridor.

The rest of Alberta increased 5.3%, due to growth in the oil fields in the north, and increases in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

Shifts and growth within large metropolitan areas

The "donut" effect

In several census metropolitan areas, the population in the core municipality is growing more slowly than in the areas around it forming a donut. The larger the difference in the growth between the two, the more pronounced the "donut effect". This phenomenon was particularly prominent in census metropolitan areas such as Saskatoon and Regina. The population of the core municipality of the CMA of Saskatoon increased 1.6% between 1996 and 2001, while the other municipalities around this core increased 14.6%. Similarly, the population of the core municipality of the CMA of Regina

declined 1.2%, while the municipalities surrounding it incurred a 10% increase.

If the 27 census metropolitan areas are considered as a group, the population of their core municipalities increased 4.3% between 1996 and 2001. This was one-half the growth rate of their surrounding municipalities (+8.5%).

The growth in these surrounding municipalities has been fuelled by migration and natural increase, as young families choose to live and raise children in suburbs. Seventeen of the 25 fastest-growing municipalities in Canada are those that surround the core of census metropolitan areas.

On the other hand, the opposite occurred in the census metropolitan areas of Abbotsford and Ottawa-Hull, where growth was higher in the core than in the municipalities surrounding them.

Rural and small town areas

Rural and small town areas, that is, those areas outside urban centres with core populations of 10,000 or more, recorded a 0.4% decline in population between 1996 and 2001. The population of these areas declined in every province except Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. In 2001, 20.3% of Canadians lived in rural and small town areas, down from 21.5% in 1996.

The growth of these rural areas and communities depended on the proportion of their residents who commuted to urban centres. The population of rural areas in which more than 30% of the residents commuted to urban centres increased 3.7%. The growth in these areas was mainly the result of people who moved just beyond urban boundaries to live in a more rural setting.

Except for the most remote areas, rural and small town areas in which the proportion of commuters was less than 30% declined in population. Between 1996 and 2001, they lost population through migration. In addition, because their population was aging, their rate of natural increase was low, and in some cases, negative.

The population of the most remote rural areas grew 1%. Their rate of natural increase was still high enough to offset any out-migration. The high rate of natural increase may be attributed to the higher birth rate among Aboriginal people.

Changes in population at the community level

Fastest-growing municipalities, and those with the largest declines

For municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more, five of the 10 fastest-growing during the past five years are located in Alberta, underscoring the growth in the province since the 1996 Census.

At the top of the list were three Alberta municipalities: Cochrane, whose population surged 58.9% to just under 11,800; Sylvan Lake, where it rose 44.5% to almost 7,500; and Strathmore, whose population increased 43.4% to just over 7,600.

Between 1991 and 1996, growth rates for many municipalities in British Columbia were in double digits. According to the 2001 Census, these double-digit rates shifted to municipalities in Alberta.

For example, the ski resort of Whistler, B.C., which led all municipalities in the 1996 Census with a growth rate of almost 61%, was 17th in the 2001 Census, with a growth rate of 24%. The other two fastest-growing municipalities in Alberta in 2001 were Okotoks, where the population increased 36.8% to almost 11,700, and Rocky View No. 44, where it rose 31.6% to about 30,700.

A second development shown by the 2001 Census is the appearance of three large Ontario municipalities on the list of the top 10 fastest-growing municipalities. These municipalities were all located within the extended Golden Horseshoe urban region of southern Ontario: Vaughan, Barrie and Richmond Hill.

Of the municipalities with a population of 100,000 or more, Vaughan led the way with a gain of 37.3% to just over 182,000.

Leading the list of municipalities with the largest declines was Greenstone in northern Ontario, where the population declined 13.3% to just under 5,700. It was followed by Mackenzie in northern British

Columbia, which fell 13.2% to about 5,200.

Several of the municipalities where population declined were in resource-based areas of northern Ontario, northern Quebec and northern British Columbia.

Methodological notes

The objective of every census is to provide detailed information at a single point in time on the demographic, social and economic conditions of the population. One of its goals is to enumerate the entire population on Census Day.

Inevitably, however, some people are not counted, either because their household did not receive a census questionnaire (for example, a household living in a separate apartment in a house) or because they were not included in the questionnaire completed for the household (for example, a boarder or lodger).

Some people may also be missed because they have no usual residence and did not spend census night in any dwelling. On the other hand, a small number of people may also be counted twice (for example, a student living away from home).

To determine how many individuals were missed or counted more than once, Statistics Canada conducts post-censal coverage studies of a representative sample of individuals.

The results of these studies provide information used to adjust the census counts for the purpose of producing current (quarterly and annual) population estimates which take into account net under-enumeration in the census.

In 1996, after adjustment for net under-enumeration, the population estimate for Canada was 2.6% higher than the population enumerated in the census.

The studies of the completeness of enumeration of the 2001 Census will be completed early in 2003, and will be used to revise and update the population estimates.