

Population Change, 2001-2006

Abstract

Between 2001 and 2006, Canada's population grew by 5.4%. Only two provinces, Alberta and Ontario and three territories registered growth rates above the national average. The three Maritime provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) had the smallest population growth, while Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan experienced population declines. In 2006, about 21.5 million people, almost two-thirds of Canada's population lived in 33 census metropolitan areas (CMAs). Between 2001 and 2006, the population of these CMAs climbed 6.9%, faster than the national average. Barrie registered the fastest population growth of any CMA (19.2%), followed by Calgary (13.4%), Oshawa (11.6%) and Edmonton (10.4%).

Between 2001 and 2006, Canada's population grew from 30 007 094 to 31 612 897, a gain of 5.4%. This compares with a growth rate of 4.0% in the previous intercensal period, from 1996 to 2001. Between 2001 and 2006, only two provinces and the three territories registered growth rates above the national average. Alberta's population surged by 10.6%, while Ontario gained 6.6%, Yukon, 5.9%, Northwest Territories, 11.0% and Nunavut, 10.2%. Care should be exercised in comparing the Northwest Territories 2006 Census population counts with counts from the 2001 Census. In 2001, the net undercount for the Northwest Territories was estimated at 8.11%, substantially higher than the national level of 2.99%, and almost double its 1996 level. The increase in the population between 2001 and 2006 is likely overstated due to improvements in coverage of the Northwest Territories in 2006.

The three Maritime provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) had the smallest population growth (less than 1.0%), while Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan experienced population declines, at a rate of 1.5% and 1.1%, respectively. For the first time since it joined Confederation, the population growth of British Columbia was slightly below the national average, at 5.3%, although still higher than the previous intercensal period, 1996 to 2001 (4.9%).

In 2006, about 21.5 million people, almost two-thirds of Canada's population lived in 33 census metropolitan areas (CMAs). Between 2001 and 2006, the population of these CMAs climbed 6.9%, faster than the national average of 5.4%. The CMAs with the strongest growth were located in three regions: the Greater Golden Horseshoe region in southern Ontario, the Calgary Edmonton corridor in Alberta, and British Columbia's Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island. Barrie registered the fastest population growth of any CMA (19.2%), followed by Calgary (13.4%), Oshawa (11.6%), and Edmonton (10.4%). Moncton was the only CMA in the Atlantic provinces whose growth rate (6.5%) surpassed the national average between 2001

and 2006. CMAs with the weakest growth include Regina and Thunder Bay, which grew minimally at a rate of 1.1% and 0.8%, respectively, while Saguenay (-2.1%) and Saint John (0.2%) experienced declines.

The rate of growth among the mid-size urban centres (census agglomerations or CAs) between 2001 and 2006 was 4%, although eight of the CAs had a growth rate of more than 10%, with seven of them in Alberta (Okotoks, 46.7%; Wood Buffalo, 23.6%; Grande Prairie, 22.3%; Red Deer, 22%; Lloydminster, 21%; Canmore, 11.6%; and Medicine Hat, 11.5%). Most CAs whose population declined since 2001 were located in resource-based economic areas. For example, the CAs with the fastest-declining populations were all in northern British Columbia (Kitimat, 12.6%; Prince Rupert, -12.5%; Quesnel, -8.1%; Terrace, -7%; and Williams Lake, 5.1%), in a region dependent on the forestry industry.

Of the 25 fastest-growing small towns and rural communities since 2001, 14 are located less than 50 kilometres from Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver. Six others are found close to another CMA. Sylvan Lake, near the CA of Red Deer, Alberta, is the fastest-growing small town (at 36.1%). And 9 of these fastest-growing small towns were in Quebec, most of them north of Montréal in the resort area of the Laurentians (for example, Prévost, 22.4%; Chertsey, 21.7%; and Sainte Adèle, 15.4%). Also growing was the resort town in Ontario called Wasaga Beach (21.0%), on the shores of Georgian Bay.

In contrast, the 25 fastest-declining small towns and rural communities were located far from the urban centres, such as Kapuskasing (-7.9%) in northern Ontario, La Sarre (-5.1%) in Quebec and Flin Flon (-6.8%) in northern Manitoba. Others were in mountainous areas, such as Banff (-6.1%) and Crowsnest Pass (-8.2%) in Alberta and Trail (-4.5%) and Kimberley (-5.3%) in British Columbia. Still others were in agricultural areas, such as Oromocto, New Brunswick (-5.0%) or close to the ocean, such as Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador (-8.0%) and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia (-5.3%).

Between 2001 and 2006, the rural population increased by 1.0%, but unevenly geographically: rural areas close to urban centres grew at a much faster rate (4.7%) than more remote rural areas which faced a slight decline (-0.1%). Apart from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Alberta experienced the fastest-growing rural population between 2001 and 2006 (+3.8%). Even so, this rate of growth was still below the national average.

The Daily is Statistics Canada's official release bulletin. The Daily for March 13, 2007 (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/070313/dq070313a-eng.htm>), marked the public release of this census variable. Highlight tables allowing users to perform simple rank and sort functions with the data at various levels of geography are available for this variable here: Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2006 Census. (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-550/Index.cfm?Page=INDX&LANG=Eng>)

The text was adapted from Statistics Canada, Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006, 2006 Census (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-550/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue number 97-550-XWE2006001. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from the Statistic Canada's regional offices, its World Wide Web site at www.statcan.gc.ca, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.

Definition of underlined terms

Census Agglomeration: A census agglomeration (CA) is a large urban area (known as the urban core) together with adjacent urban and rural areas (known as urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. A CA has an urban core population of at least 10 000, based on the previous census. However, if the population of the urban core of a CA declines below 10 000, the CA is retired. Once a CA attains an urban core population of at least 100 000, based on the previous census, it is eligible to become a CMA. CAs that have urban cores of at least 50 000, based on the previous census, are subdivided into census tracts. Census tracts are maintained for CAs even if the population of the urban cores subsequently fall below 50 000. A CA may be consolidated with adjacent CAs if they are socially and economically integrated. This new grouping is called consolidated CA and the component CAs are called primary census agglomerations (PCAs). (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA): A census metropolitan area (CMA) is a very large urban area (known as the urban core) together with the adjacent urban and rural areas (known as urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100 000, based on the previous census. Once an area becomes a CMA, it is retained as a CMA even if the population of its urban core declines below 100 000. All CMAs are subdivided into census tracts. A CMA may be consolidated with adjacent census agglomerations (CA) if they are socially and economically integrated. This new grouping is known as a consolidated CMA and the component CMA and CA are known as the primary census metropolitan area (PCMA) and primary census agglomeration(s) (PCA). A CMA may not be consolidated with another CMA. (Source: 1996 Census Dictionary, Statistics Canada)

Map Sources

Population Change, 2001-2006

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2006 Census, Catalogue number 97-550-XWE2006002.

References

Reference material is designed to help users make the most of census data. They cover various aspects of the census and are intended to support the use of census data. Statistics Canada. Census 2006. Reference material (<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/index-eng.cfm>)

Statistics Canada. 2007. 2006 Census Dictionary. (<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>)

Weiss, Carolyn; Cillis, Patricia; Rothwell, Neil. 2008. The Population Ecumene of Canada: Exploring the Past and Present. Geography Working Paper Series. Catalogue no. 92F0138M, No. 2008003. Geography Division, Statistics Canada. (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/92f0138m/92f0138m2008003-eng.pdf>)

Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Aboriginal Population Profiles
<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-594/index.cfm?Lang=E>
These profiles contain free information on the Aboriginal identity population for various communities in Canada where the Aboriginal identity population is above 250. Communities, include; cities, towns, villages, Indian reserves and Indian settlements, counties or their equivalents and metropolitan areas.

Statistics Canada. 2006 Census. Analysis Series
<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/index-eng.cfm>
This series, launched via The Daily for each of the eight major releases, includes a number of comprehensive analytical articles which will supplement day of release information. These catalogued articles provide an analytical perspective on 2006 Census topics.

Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Highlight Tables
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/highlights/index.cfm>
This page provides tables for population and dwelling counts; age and sex; families and households; languages, immigration and citizenship; Aboriginal peoples; labour, language used at work, place of work, commuting to work, education; ethnic origin and visible minorities; income, and earnings, and shelter costs. Available on each official day of release, the tables will present information highlights by topic via key indicators for various levels of geography.

Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Trends
<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/92-596/index.cfm?Lang=eng>



This product presents a series of summary data trends spanning three censuses: 2006, 2001 and 1996. The product is designed to facilitate the analysis and comparison of the changing demographic and socio-economic composition of selected geographic areas across Canada.

Statistics Canada. 2006 Community Profiles

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>

These profiles present community-level information from the 2006 Census of Population. Users can search for an area of interest using the search engine provided in this site. Users can access data on population and dwellings, age, marital status, families, income, languages, immigration, education, labour force, income, and more.

Statistics Canada. Census Tract (CT) Profiles, 2006 Census

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-597/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Census tracts are small, relatively stable geographic areas that usually have a population of 2,500 to 8,000. They are identified using seven-character numeric 'names' (e.g., 0005.00) and are located in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and larger census agglomerations (CAs). From this page you can visualize each census tract via a map and/or retrieve profile data for the census tract.

Statistics Canada. Learning Resources

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/index-eng.htm>

This page gives support material, such as data, reference material and lesson plans, for teaching and learning in schools at elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels.

