

Aboriginal Population, 2006

The Aboriginal population of Canada is diverse with distinct cultures, traditions and languages. Using the Census of Population, Aboriginal peoples may be identified using any of four concepts: Aboriginal identity; Aboriginal ancestry; member of an Indian band/First Nation; and Registered or Treaty Indian. The maps focus on the Aboriginal identity population, that is, persons who identified as North American Indian (First Nations people), Métis or Inuit.

The Aboriginal population shown in the 2006 map represents the population which reported 'Aboriginal identity' according to the derived census Aboriginal identity variable. Aboriginal identity refers to those persons who identified with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation.

The First Nations population represents the population which reported only 'North American Indian' identity according to the census. Both single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question are possible, however, only the population reporting a single response of 'North American Indian' is included in these maps.

The Métis population represents the population which reported only 'Métis' identity according to the census. Both single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question are possible, however, only the population reporting a single response of 'Métis' is included in these maps.

The Inuit population represents the population which reported only 'Inuit' identity according to the census. Inuit of the western Arctic are known as Inuvialuit; in these maps, the term 'Inuit' includes Inuvialuit.

The text was adapted from Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-558/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 97-558-XIE2006001. 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 Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at www.statcan.gc.ca, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.

Definitions of underlined terms

Aboriginal ancestry: Refers to those persons who reported at least one Aboriginal ancestry (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) to the ethnic origin question. 'Ethnic origin' refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors. 'Aboriginal ancestry' was referred to as 'Aboriginal origin' prior to the 2006 Census. The content of the variable remains unchanged in 2006 compared with previous censuses. (Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Dictionary).

Aboriginal identity: Refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. In 1991 and previous censuses, the Aboriginal population was defined using the ethnic origin question (ancestry). The 1996 Census included a question on the individual's perception of his/her Aboriginal identity. The question used in the 2006 and 2001 censuses is the same as the one used in 1996. (Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Dictionary).

First Nation(s): The term "First Nations" came into common usage in the 1970s to replace "band" or "Indian", which some people found offensive. Despite its widespread use, there is no legal definition for this term in Canada. The term itself has two main uses:

- (1) First Nations people: Many people today prefer to be called "First Nations" or "First Nations people" instead of "Indians". Generally, First Nations people is used to describe both Status and Non-Status Indians. The term is rarely used as a synonym for "Aboriginal peoples" (i.e., it usually doesn't include Inuit or Métis people);
- (2) First Nation: First Nation has been adopted by some Indian communities to replace the term "Indian band". Many Indian bands started to replace the word "band" in their name with "First Nation" in the 1980s. (Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

Inuit: Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. The word "Inuit" means "the people" in Inuktitut, the Inuit language, and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. The term "Eskimo", applied to Inuit by European explorers, is no longer used in Canada. (Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

Member of an Indian Band or First Nation: Refers to those persons who reported being a member of an Indian Band or a First Nation of Canada. (Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Dictionary)

Métis: The word "Métis" is French for "mixed blood". The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three Aboriginal peoples. Historically, the term "Métis" applied to the children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies, and of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the North. Today, the term is used broadly to describe people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who

identify themselves as Métis. they are distinct from Indian people, Inuit, or non-Aboriginal people. (Many Canadians have mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry, but not all identify themselves as Métis.) (Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

Registered or Treaty Indian: Refers to those persons who reported they were registered under the Indian Act of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who are registered under the Indian Act and can prove descent from a band that signed a treaty. Although there was a question in the 1991 Census on registration status, the layout of the 1996 question was somewhat different. In 1991, Question 16 on Registered Indians had two components. In the first part of the question, respondents were asked about their registration status, while the second part of the question dealt with band membership. The question used in 1996 asked only for registration or treaty status, while band membership was dealt with in a separate question. The wording of the question, starting in 1996, differs slightly from the one in previous censuses. Prior to 1996, the term 'treaty' was not included in the question. It was added in 1996 at the request of individuals from the Western provinces, where the term is more widely used. The 2006 Census question is the same as the one used in 1996 and 2001. (Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census Dictionary)