

2006 Census Bulletin

DATA ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Aboriginal Identity

Data on Aboriginal Peoples, from the 2006 Census of Canada, was taken on May 16, 2006 and released on January 15, 2008. The census counts the Aboriginal population who identify themselves as First Nations, Métis (those of mixed Indian and European ancestry), or Inuit, or who report themselves as being "Registered Indians", or members of an Indian Band or First Nation. Statistics Canada reports that more people are identifying themselves as Aboriginal, while the number of Indian Reserves participating in the Census increased.

Highlights for Canada, BC and the Metro Vancouver region are provided in this bulletin.

Canada's Aboriginal Population Tops the One Million Mark

The Aboriginal population of Canada now accounts for 1,172,790 people (or 3.8% of the nation's 31 million people). In 1996, the Aboriginal population accounted for 799,010 people (3.3% of Canada's population); there were 976,305 Aboriginals in 2001 (or 2.8% of the national population). The 2006 Aboriginal population includes 698,025 First Nations people (or North American Indian), 389,785 Métis, 50,485 Inuit, and 34,495 Multiple or Other Aboriginals. Women accounted for 51.2% of the Aboriginal population.

Table 1. Canadian Census Population by Aboriginal Identity

	2006 counts	% distribution 2006	% change (2001 to 2006)	% chang (1996 to 2006)
Total population of Canada	31,241,030	100.0%	5.4%	9.5%
Non-Aboriginal identity population	30,068,240	96.2%	4.9%	8.4%
Aboriginal identity population	1,172,790	3.8%	20.1%	44.9%
Total Aboriginal identity population	1,172,790	100.0%	20.1%	44.9%
North American Indian	698,025	59.5%	14.6%	29.1%
Métis	389,780	33.2%	33.3%	90.9%
Inuit	50,480	4.3%	12.0%	25.5%
Multiple or Other Aboriginals	34,500	2.9%	5.4%	9.5%

Source: Statistics Canada's 2006 Census

The Census results show that the Aboriginal population in Canada has increased by 45% in the past decade. This is nearly six times faster than the 8% increase for the non-Aboriginal population. Several factors may account for the growth of the Aboriginal population. These include demographic factors, such as higher birth rates. In addition, more individuals are identifying themselves as an Aboriginal person, and there has also been a reduction in the number of incompletely enumerated Indian reserves since 1996.

British Columbia's Aboriginal Population Second to Ontario

BC's total of 196,075 Aboriginal People (representing 4.8% of the provincial population) is second to Ontario's total of 242,495. Overall, BC's Aboriginal population has grown by 15% between 2001 and 2006, which is three times the rate of non-Aboriginal Canadians, and the second highest rate in Canada after Ontario.

In BC, First Nations account for 66 percent of the Aboriginal population, followed by Métis (30 percent), and Inuit (0.4%); the remainder either identified with more than one group or were members of an Indian Band or First Nations and did not identify as Aboriginal.



Aboriginals, Younger and More Urban

Aboriginal people are much younger, on average, than the non-Aboriginal population. The median age of the Aboriginal population in BC was 28 years in 2006 (higher than the national Aboriginal average of 26.5 years), compared with 41 years for the non-Aboriginal population. In 2006, Aboriginal people made up 5% of BC's working age population (those between the ages of 15 and 64).

One quarter of the Aboriginal population was under 15, compared with only 16% of the non-Aboriginal population. Thirteen percent of BC's non-Aboriginal population was between the ages of 15 and 24, compared with 18% of the Aboriginal population. At the other end of the spectrum, 15% of BC's non-Aboriginal population was 65 and over, compared with only 5% of the Aboriginal population.

More Aboriginal peoples choose to live in cities instead of remote rural areas. Across Canada, 54% of Aboriginals in 2006 lived in urban centres, up 4% since 1996. In BC, 60% of the Aboriginal population lived in urban areas while 26% lived on Indian Reserves.

Overall, 20.5% of BC's Aboriginal population lives in Metro Vancouver; this represents a slight decrease from 2001 when 21.7% of the province's Aboriginal population lived in this region.

Table 2. Numbers of Aboriginal People in Metropolitan Areas in BC, 2006

	2006 Total Aboriginal Population	% of BC Aboriginal Population
British Columbia	196,075	100%
Vancouver	40,310	20.6%
Victoria	10,905	5.6%
Kamloops	7,050	3.6%
Kelowna	6,115	3.1%
Abbotsford	5,880	3.0%
Chilliwack	5,600	2.9%
Port Alberni	3,252	1.7%
Squamish	800	0.4%

Of all municipalities with an Aboriginal population of 250 or above in BC in 2006, Alert Bay had the highest proportion of the population of Aboriginal people (48%), followed by Burns Lake (37%), and Prince Rupert (35%).

Metro Vancouver Has the Third Largest Aboriginal Population in Canada

There are 40,310 Aboriginals living in Metro Vancouver (or 1.9% of the region's population), the third largest Aboriginal population in Canadian urban centres behind Winnipeg (68,380) and Edmonton (52,100).

For Metro Vancouver, the 2006 Aboriginal population represents an increase of 9.4% over the 2001 figure (35,855) – compared to a 6.5% increase for the region's population as a whole – and an increase of 29.4% over the region's 1996 Aboriginal population (31,140).

Regionally: Vancouver, Surrey, and Burnaby Have the Majority of All Urban Aboriginals

The 2006 Census figures show that City of Vancouver had the largest number of Aboriginals of all the Metro Vancouver jurisdictions in 2006 (11,145), followed by Surrey (7,630) and Burnaby (3,005). Combined, these three municipalities represent 54% of all urban Aboriginals living in Metro Vancouver.

The City of Surrey had the largest influx of the region's Aboriginal population between 1996 and 2006 and experienced a jump of 2,560 persons (or 27.9% of the region's total growth. This was followed by Langley Township (14.1%) and Maple Ridge (8.6%). These three communities experienced 50.2% of the region's growth in persons of Aboriginal identify over the same 10-year period.

Vancouver's share of the percentage of total growth for period between 1996 and 2006 was 2%. Other Metro Vancouver communities who experienced a slight decrease in the number of Aboriginals during the same period of time, or where the growth in the number of Aboriginals was less than 2% of the overall regional growth, were: Anmore, Belcarra, Bowen Island, Electoral Area A, Lions Bay, North Vancouver District, Port Moody, Richmond, West Vancouver and White Rock.

Non-Aboriginals on Indian Reserves Far Outnumber the Aboriginal Population

The population on Indian Reserves in the province, consisting of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, is of general interest but also of more specific interest in light of the current focus on Aboriginal and treaty-related issues.

A total of 7,550 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were living on Indian Reserves located within Metro Vancouver in 2006, an increase of 791 persons (or 11.7%) from 2001. Only 2,880 persons (or 38%) of the Indian Reserve population in the region are, in fact, Aboriginals. In 1996, there were 2,280 persons living on Indian Reserves. This represents an increase of 26.3% over the 10-year period. Indian Reserves currently represent 7.1% of the region's Aboriginal population.

Table 3. Fast Facts

	BC	Metro Vancouver
Total Population (2006)	4,074,385	2,097,960
Aboriginal Identity	196,070	40,310
Total Number of Indian Reserves	1,701	23
Total Number of Inhabited Indian Reserves	487	15
Total Number of First Nations	203	10

Source: Statistics Canada's 2006 Census

Indian Reserves in the region with the largest populations in 2006 include: Capilano 5 (Squamish), Burrard Inlet 3 (Tsleil-Waututh), Musqueam 2 (Musqueam), Tsawwassen 0 (Tsawwassen), and Mission 1 (Squamish). The Capilano, Burrard Inlet and Tsawwassen reserves received a combined 83.9% of the total population growth on Indian Reserves between 2001 and 2006.

First Nations with Indian Reserves in the region that have the largest populations include: Squamish Nation (with 41.5%t of the population of all Indian Reserves in Metro Vancouver); Tsleil-Waututh Nation (18.6%); and Musqueam (18.2%).

Table 4. Aboriginal Population living Off-Reserve in Municipalities and On Indian Reserves located in Metro Vancouver, 2006 Census

Metro Municipalities (Off-Reserve)	Total population, 2006	Total Aboriginal identity population	% of Aboriginal identity	North American Indian single response	Métis single response	Inuit single response	Multiple Aboriginal identity responses	Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere
Anmore	1,785	20	0.0%	10	-	-	-	-
Belcarra	676	20	0.0%	-	20	-	-	-
Bowen Island	3,362	130	0.0%	120	10	-	-	-
Burnaby	202,799	3,005	7.5%	1,665	1,065	20	85	165
Coquitlam	114,565	1,560	3.9%	710	730	15	25	80
Delta	96,723	1,700	4.2%	955	690	25	10	20
Greater Vancouver A	11,050	55	0.0%	55	-	-	-	-
Langley DM	23,606	2,450	6.1%	1,005	1,320	-	50	70
Langley City	93,726	850	2.1%	405	425	-	10	10
Lions Bay	1,328	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Maple Ridge	68,949	1,870	4.6%	730	1,070	10	10	50
New Westminster	58,549	1,835	4.6%	980	770	25	30	30
North Vancouver District	45,165	755	1.9%	420	295	-	15	20
North Vancouver City	82,562	930	2.3%	670	225	-	10	25
Pitt Meadows	15,623	385	0.0%	230	130	-	15	-
Port Coquitlam	52,687	905	2.2%	500	390	-	10	10
Port Moody	27,512	470	1.2%	225	230	-	10	-
Richmond	174,461	1,275	3.2%	705	490	10	10	60
Surrey	394,976	7,630	18.9%	3,630	3,705	40	85	170
Vancouver	578,041	11,140	27.6%	7,515	3,235	45	145	210
West Vancouver	42,131	155	0.0%	65	75	-	-	10
White Rock	18,755	285	0.0%	140	135	10	-	10
Living Off - Reserve Total	2,109,031	37,425	90.2%	20,735	15,010	200	520	940
Metro Reserves								
Barnston Island 3	49	35	0.0%	35	-	-	-	10
Burrard Inlet 3	1,405	1,405	3.5%	-	-	-	-	-
Capilano 5	2,492	855	2.1%	840	10	-	-	10
Coquitlam 1	24	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Coquitlam 2	5	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Katzie 1	246	220	0.5%	210	-	-	-	10
Katzie 2	37	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Langley 5	0	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Matsqui 4	426	70	0.2%	60	-	-	-	10
McMillan Island 6	63	55	0.1%	50	-	-	-	-
Mission 1	569	520	1.3%	505	-	-	-	15
Musqueam 2	1,371	610	1.5%	600	10	-	-	-
Semiahmoo	5	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-
Semiahmoo	109	55	0.0%	50	-	-	-	-
Seymour Creek 2	75	65	0.2%	60	-	-	-	-
Tsawwassen	674	200	0.5%	195	-	-	-	-
Indian Reserves Total	7,550	4,090	9.9%	2,605	20	-	-	55
Metro Vancouver Total	2,116,581	40,310	100.0%	23,515	15,070	210	520	985
British Columbia Total	4,074,385	196,070		129,580	59,445	795	1,655	4,605

Source: Statistics Canada's 2006 Census