

2011 National Household Survey: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit

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New data from the National Household Survey (NHS) show that 1,400,685 people reported an Aboriginal identity in 2011, representing 4.3% of the total Canadian population. Aboriginal people accounted for 3.8% of the population in the 2006 Census. A detailed analysis is available in the report [Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit](#).

Of the people reporting an Aboriginal identity in 2011, 851,560, or 60.8%, identified as First Nations (North American Indian) only. Another 451,795, or 32.3%, identified as Métis only; and 59,445, or 4.2%, identified as Inuit only.

Other Aboriginal identities accounted for an additional 26,475 people, or 1.9% of the Aboriginal population, and 11,415 people, or 0.8%, reported more than one Aboriginal identity.

Ontario was the province where the largest number of Aboriginal people lived, with 301,425, representing 21.5% of the total Aboriginal population. In addition, nearly 6 in 10 (57.6%) Aboriginal people lived in one of the four western provinces. In 2011, 16.6% of the Aboriginal population lived in British Columbia; 15.8% in Alberta; 14.0% in Manitoba and 11.3% in Saskatchewan.

Aboriginal people made up the largest shares of the population of two territories. In Nunavut, 86.3% of the population were Aboriginal people and in the Northwest Territories 51.9%. In Yukon, Aboriginal people accounted for 23.1% of the population.

Young population

The Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population.

Children aged 14 and under accounted for more than one-quarter (28.0%) of the Aboriginal population, compared with 16.5% among the non-Aboriginal population.

Additionally, Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 comprised 18.2% of the Aboriginal population, compared with 12.9% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Seniors aged 65 and over represented about 6% of the Aboriginal population, less than half of the proportion of 14.2% in the non-Aboriginal population.

The median age of the Aboriginal population was 28 years in 2011, compared with 41 for the non-Aboriginal population. (The median is the age where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger.)

Inuit had a median age of 23 and were the youngest of the three Aboriginal groups. The median age was 26 for First Nations people, and 31 for Métis.

First Nations people

About 201,100 First Nations people lived in Ontario in 2011, the largest number in Canada. Another 155,020 lived in British Columbia and 116,670 lived in Alberta. First Nations people accounted for less than 4% of the population in each of these provinces.

First Nations people represented almost one-third of the population of the Northwest Territories, nearly one-fifth of Yukon's and about 10% of the population of Manitoba as well as of Saskatchewan.

First Nations people were younger than the non-Aboriginal population in every province and territory. The youngest First Nations population lived in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where their median age was 20 and 21 respectively. This was half of the median age (41 years) for the non-Aboriginal population in both provinces.

Métis

Most people who identified themselves as Métis lived in either the western provinces or in Ontario. In 2011, 96,865 Métis lived in Alberta, the largest population among the provinces and territories. They represented 21.4% of all Métis in Canada.

One-quarter of Métis lived in four western census metropolitan areas. Winnipeg had the highest population of Métis at 46,325. It was followed by Edmonton with 31,780, Vancouver (18,485) and Calgary (17,040).

The youngest Métis population lived in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where their median age was 28. The median age for non-Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan was 41 years and in Alberta it was 37. Métis living in New Brunswick were the oldest with a median age of 41. The median age for non-Aboriginal people in that province was 44 years.

Inuit

About three-quarters (73.1%) of Inuit in Canada, or 43,460 people, lived in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories and comprises four Inuit regions: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region.

Among these four regions, Nunavut had the largest Inuit population, with 27,070. Inuit living in Nunavut accounted for about half (45.5%) of the total Inuit population in Canada and represented 85.4% of Nunavut's population.

The youngest Inuit population lived in Nunavik and Nunavut. In both of these Inuit regions, the median age of Inuit was 21 years, and about 4 in 10 Inuit were children aged 14 and under.

Living arrangements of Aboriginal children

Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada were living in a variety of arrangements in 2011.

Among the 392,105 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under, half (49.6%), or 194,585 children, were living in a family with both of their parents, compared with three-quarters (76.0%) of non-Aboriginal children.

Another third (34.4%) or 134,845 Aboriginal children lived in a lone-parent family compared with 17.4% of non-Aboriginal children. Among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in lone-parent families, the majority lived with a female lone parent.

Fewer than 1 in 10 (8.5% or 33,405) Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were stepchildren, compared with 5.8% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

About 10,525 Aboriginal children (2.7%) lived in skip-generation families, that is, with one or both grandparents where no parents were present. This was the case for 0.4% of non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under.

Of the roughly 30,000 children aged 14 and under in Canada who were in foster care, nearly half (48.1%) were Aboriginal children. In 2011, 14,225 or 3.6% of Aboriginal children were foster children, compared with 0.3% of non-Aboriginal children.

Aboriginal languages

In 2011, 240,815 Aboriginal people, or 17.2% of the total Aboriginal population, reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in an Aboriginal language.

In the 2011 NHS, 202,495 Aboriginal people reported an Aboriginal mother tongue, fewer than the number of Aboriginal people who reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in an Aboriginal language. This implies that a number of Aboriginal people have acquired an Aboriginal language as a second language.

The ability to converse in an Aboriginal language was highest among Inuit. In 2011, 63.7% of Inuit reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in an Aboriginal language, mostly Inuktitut. Among First Nations people, the proportion was 22.4%, and among Métis, 2.5%.

Additional analysis can be found in the *National Household Survey in Brief Series* article "[Aboriginal peoples and language](#)."

Note to readers

The majority of Indian reserves and settlements participated in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). However, 36 of the 863 inhabited reserves were incompletely enumerated because enumeration was either not permitted, was interrupted before completion, or because of natural events (for example, forest fires). Most of the people living on reserves are First Nations Registered Indians, and consequently, the impact of the incomplete enumeration will be greatest on data for this population.

Estimates and trends from other data sources suggest that the Inuit population living outside of Inuit Nunangat is overestimated at the national level. Information on the quality of the NHS data on Aboriginal peoples as well as explanations of concepts, classifications, questions and comparability with other data sources can be found in the [Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide](#).

National Household Survey

This is the first release of data from the NHS. The second release will be on June 26 and the third release on August 14.

The analytical document [Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit](#) presents the results of the NHS on Aboriginal peoples. In addition, there is a companion analytical article in the *National Household Survey in Brief Series* entitled "[Aboriginal peoples and language](#)".

A second analytical document [Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada](#), also released today, analyzes findings from the NHS on immigration, place of birth, ethnic origin, visible minorities, language and religion. There are also two companion articles in the *National Household Survey in Brief Series* for this topic entitled "[Obtaining Canadian citizenship](#)" and "[Generation status: Canadian-born children of immigrants](#)".

Data and highlights on key topics found in these analytical products are also available for various standard levels of geography in the [National Household Survey Focus on Geography Series](#).

Various data and reference products are also available from the [2011 National Household Survey](#) website. The data products offer a wide range of data for standard geographic areas, available in the [National Household Survey Profile](#) and [National Household Survey Data Tables](#).

The [National Household Survey User Guide](#) provides information on the methodology, collection, processing, evaluation and data quality of the NHS.

A brief portrait of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is presented on [video](#).

Users are also invited to [Chat with an expert](#) on May 10, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5178.

The report *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit* (99-011-X2011001) is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

Additional analysis is also available in the *National Household Survey in Brief* (99-011-X2011003) "Aboriginal peoples and languages".

Census tract level data will be available at a later date.

For more information, contact Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).