

Projections of the Aboriginal population and households in Canada, 2011 to 2036

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According to a new set of projections, the population who reported an Aboriginal identity would grow faster than the non-Aboriginal population from 2011 to 2036.

The Aboriginal population was estimated at 1,502,000 in 2011. In all scenarios considered, it would reach between 1,965,000 and 2,633,000 people by 2036. This would represent an average annual growth of between 1.1% and 2.3%, higher than the 0.9% for the population as a whole. As a result, Aboriginal people would account for between 4.6% and 6.1% of the Canadian population in 2036, compared with 4.4% in 2011.

Two main factors explain the projected higher growth of the Aboriginal population in the coming years: higher fertility and changes in self-reported identification during the life course.

Aboriginal people could account for about one in five people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan

By 2036, Ontario would remain the province with the highest number of Aboriginal people. However, Manitoba and Saskatchewan would remain the provinces with the highest proportion of Aboriginal people in their total population. In each, about one in five people would be an Aboriginal person.

Aboriginal people would continue to represent a large proportion of the population of the territories in 2036. Specifically, Aboriginal people would account for between 88% and 90% of the population of Nunavut, between 51% and 56% of the population of the Northwest Territories and between 22% and 25% of the population of Yukon.

The Aboriginal population is projected to age, but would remain younger than its non-Aboriginal counterpart

The Aboriginal population would age under all projection scenarios, as is the case for the rest of the population. However, it would remain younger because of its higher fertility and mortality rates. The median age of the Aboriginal population is projected to rise from 27.7 years in 2011 to between 34.7 years and 36.6 years by 2036. By comparison, the median age of the non-Aboriginal population would rise, but at a slower pace, from 40.5 years to 44.5 years during this period. The median age separates a population in two groups of equal size, one younger and one older.

The registered Indian population would surpass one million by 2036

The Aboriginal population is not homogeneous and includes several groups. In these projections, distinct results are presented for the people who self-identified as Registered Indians, as well as those who self-identified as First Nations people (Non-Status Indians), Métis or Inuit, without reporting a registered Indian status.

In 2011, approximately half of all Aboriginal people (768,000) were Registered Indians, while nearly one in three (437,000) were Métis. An additional 223,000 were Non-Status Indians and 63,000 were Inuit.

Each of these four Aboriginal populations would grow from 2011 to 2036 under all of the selected scenarios. Registered Indians would remain the largest Aboriginal population group, representing between 1,088,000 and 1,196,000 people by 2036. The Métis population would range from 531,000 to 835,000, the non-status Indian population from 245,000 to 489,000 and the Inuit population from 86,000 to 95,000.



The population growth for Registered Indians and the Inuit would depend mostly on their level of fertility, while the future numbers of Métis and Non-Status Indians would be mostly dependent on the continuation or not of the trends in the changes of self-declared identity of individuals in the future, which has been favourable to the growth of these two groups in recent decades.

The projection scenarios also show that each of these four Aboriginal groups would remain younger than the non-Aboriginal population by 2036. But, in almost all cases, the median age for each group would increase notably because of the projected increase of life expectancy.

By 2036, the median age of the registered Indian population would range from 32.7 years to 36.1 years (compared with 26.3 years in 2011), while the Inuit population would have a median age between 28.8 years and 32.3 years (compared with 23.1 years in 2011). For these two groups, the level reached by the median age would largely depend on their future fertility.

The median age of the non-status Indian population would range from 26.8 years to 33.0 years by 2036, compared with 27.1 years in 2011, and the level reached would depend largely on future trends related to the changes of self-declared identity of individuals. As for the Métis, their median age would reach about 40 years in all scenarios in 2036 compared with 31.1 years in 2011.

The regional distribution of these four Aboriginal groups would continue to differ greatly from one group to the other at the end of the projection, as was the case in 2011. In all scenarios, more than half of Non-Status Indians and about half of Métis would live in a [census metropolitan area](#) by 2036, the highest proportions among the groups considered. Just under half of Registered Indians would live on an Indian reserve and most Inuit would live in one of the four Inuit regions by 2036.

The number of Aboriginal households would increase by 2036

The number of Aboriginal households would also grow in the next 25 years. There were about 699,000 households in 2011 with at least one Aboriginal person, representing 5.1% of all households in Canada. By 2036, the number of Aboriginal households would reach between 986,000 and 1,214,000, and would represent between 5.5% and 6.8% of all households in Canada.

On Indian reserves, the total number of households—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—was estimated at 120,000 in 2011. This number would increase to between 191,000 and 208,000 by 2036.

Note to readers

This release presents new demographic projections developed by Statistics Canada with financial support from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). They present projected results for Aboriginal identity in Canada based on estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey, the data from which were adjusted to take into account (among other things) net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated Indian reserves. They were generated using the Demosim microsimulation demographic projection model.

The AANDC's classification of Aboriginal identity was used for the purpose of these projections. The Aboriginal identity population includes people who reported having registered Indian status and, of those who did not report having registered Indian status, people who reported being First Nations people (Non-Status Indians in this report), Métis, Inuit or other Aboriginal people. This classification differs from the one used in other Statistics Canada products. However, data based on the latter are available on request.

These projections are not predictions, but rather an effort to provide a picture of what the Aboriginal population may be in the years to come under various growth scenarios. The scenarios developed provide a plausible range of Aboriginal population growth based on our knowledge of that population. The reader is asked to consider this range instead of a single scenario.

The scenarios take into account the uncertainty surrounding the future evolution of the fertility of Aboriginal people, changes in the reporting of Aboriginal identity during an individual's lifetime (more commonly known in the literature as 'ethnic mobility') and internal migration. To make it possible to compare Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, the various assumptions involving Aboriginal people, in each scenario, were combined with a series of assumptions corresponding to medium growth in the non-Aboriginal population.

These projections also take into account a number of components and characteristics other than those mentioned above. The methodology of the projections is described in more detail in a separate report entitled *Demosim: An Overview of Methods and Data Sources* (91-621-X).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5131.

The publication *Projections of the Aboriginal Population and Households in Canada, 2011 to 2036* (91-552-X), is now available in the *Publications* module of our website, under *Browse by key resource*.

The publication *Demosim: An Overview of Methods and Data Sources* (91-621-X) is also now available in the *Publications* module of our website, under *Browse by key resource*.

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