

# Canada's population estimates, first quarter 2020

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## Canadian demographics impacted by COVID-19

Over the first three months of 2020, Canada's population increased by 76,221 persons (+0.2%) to reach 37,971,020 on April 1, 2020. This was the smallest first quarter increase since 2015 (+36,084).

COVID-19 arrived in Canada in January 2020 and the first death was reported on March 9, 2020. By the end of the first quarter (January 1 to March 31, 2020), COVID-19 was beginning to have an impact on Canada's population growth, but it is likely that a larger impact will be felt in the second quarter of 2020 (April 1 to June 30, 2020).

### Accounting for COVID-19 in Population Estimates: Technical Supplement

The first quarter estimates measure Canada's population growth over the period of January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2020. During this time period, COVID-19 started to impact Canada. The estimates for some demographic components were adjusted to take into account the effect of the global pandemic on the population of Canada.

For an explanation of how the population estimates have taken COVID-19 into account, please see: [Technical Supplement: Production of Demographic Estimates for the First Quarter of 2020 in the Context of COVID-19](#).

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) reported 96 deaths from COVID-19 by March 31. The number of COVID-19-related deaths as of March contributed only slightly to this quarter, which posted the most estimated deaths in a first quarter since the beginning of the current demographic reporting system (July 1971) at almost 80,000 deaths. This increase in the number of deaths was expected since it is related to the overall aging of the population.

The Canada/US border was closed to all but essential travel on March 21, 2020 and airlines offered fewer flights from international locations. This led to a decrease in the number of returning emigrants of over 900 persons, down from 5,948 in the first quarter of 2019 to 5,013 in the first quarter of 2020.

International migration accounted for 82.3% of Canada's population growth in the first quarter. There were almost 4,000 more permanent immigrants in the first quarter of 2020 (69,787) than in the first quarter of 2019 (65,936). The majority of these immigrants came before the travel restrictions began.

Shifts occurred mostly with temporary immigration, that is, the number of non-permanent residents that Canada welcomed during the first quarter of 2020. While still positive, the net increase in the number of temporary immigrants was almost 80% lower than what was observed during the same period last year. This was mostly due to a decrease in the number of temporary immigrants with a valid study permit.

For the first three months of 2020, the highest population growth was recorded in Prince Edward Island among the provinces (+0.4%) and Nunavut among the territories (+1.0%).

Population exchanges between the provinces and territories (interprovincial migration) were uneven in the first quarter. Alberta (+3,123) and British Columbia (+3,247) gained in their exchanges with other provinces or territories, mainly with other Western provinces and Ontario. This is the first time since 2003 that Quebec has gained in interprovincial migration for two consecutive quarters. The greatest losses were found in Ontario (-2,507) and Saskatchewan (-3,295). For the first time in almost five years, Ontario lost population due to interprovincial migration.



## Note to readers

The estimates released today are based on 2016 Census counts adjusted for census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated Indian reserves, to which are added the population growth estimates for the period from May 10, 2016, to the date of the estimate.

This analysis is based on preliminary data. These data will be revised over the coming year, and it is possible that some trends described in this study will change as a result of these revisions. Therefore, this analysis should be interpreted with caution.

### Canada's population clock (real-time model)

Canada's population clock has been updated with the most recent data from quarterly population estimates released by Statistics Canada.

Canada's population clock is an interactive learning tool aiming to give Canadians a sense of the pace of the country's population renewal. The population estimates and census counts remain the measures used by various government programs.

### Definitions

For the purpose of calculating **rates**, the denominator is the average population during the period (the average of the start-of-period and end-of-period populations). For the sake of brevity, the terms **growth**, **population growth** and **population growth rate** have the same meaning.

**Natural increase** is the difference between the number of births and deaths.

**Net international migration** basically refers to the total number of moves between Canada and abroad that result in a change in the usual place of residence. It is calculated by adding immigrants, returning emigrants and net non-permanent residents, then subtracting emigrants and net temporary emigration.

An **immigrant** (or permanent immigrant) refers to a person who is or has been a landed immigrant (permanent resident) and who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants are either Canadian citizens by naturalization (the citizenship process) or permanent residents under Canadian legislation. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others have arrived recently. Most immigrants are born outside Canada, but a small number are born in Canada. Also, children born in other countries to parents who are Canadian citizens who are temporarily residing in another country are not included in the category as they are Canadian citizens at birth. The terms **immigrant**, **landed immigrant** and **permanent resident** are equivalent.

A **non-permanent resident** (or temporary immigrant) is a person lawfully in Canada on a temporary basis under the authority of a valid document (work permit, study permit, ministerial permit) issued to that person along with members of their family living with them. This group also includes individuals who seek refugee status upon or after their arrival in Canada and remain in the country pending the outcome of processes relative to their claim. Note that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada uses the term **temporary resident** rather than non-permanent resident. The number of **net non-permanent residents** is calculated by subtracting the number of non-permanent residents estimated at the beginning of the period from the number estimated at the end of the period.

**Interprovincial migration** represents all movement from one province or territory to another involving a change in the usual place of residence.

**Available tables:** [17-10-0009-01](#), [17-10-0020-01](#), [17-10-0040-01](#), [17-10-0045-01](#) and [17-10-0059-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [3601](#).

The publication *Quarterly Demographic Estimates*, Vol. 34, no. 1 ([91-002-X](#)), is now available.

The article "Technical Supplement: Production of Demographic Estimates for the First Quarter of 2020 in the Context of COVID-19" ([91F0015M](#)) is now available.

The product [Quarterly demographic estimates, provinces and territories: Interactive dashboard](#) ([71-607-X](#)) is also available.

The product [Canada's population clock \(real-time model\)](#) ([71-607-X](#)) is also available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).