

Canada's population estimates, third quarter 2020

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, December 17, 2020

Population growth essentially stops due to COVID-19

Canada's population was estimated at 38,008,005 on October 1, up 2,767 (+0.0%) from July 1, 2020. This was the lowest quarterly growth since at least January 1, 1946 (the point at which comparable national data become available).

In six provinces and two territories, the population decreased for the first time since at least the third quarter of 1951 (the point at which comparable provincial data become available). The largest declines (by number) were in British Columbia (down 1,861 people, or -0.0%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (down 1,105 people, or -0.2%).

The population rose slightly in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta and Yukon, with the largest increase (by number) in Alberta (up 6,236 people, or +0.1%).

Deaths from COVID-19 had a small impact on population growth in the third quarter. Out of 69,114 total deaths from July to September, 706 were from COVID-19 (according to the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)), down from 8,495 in the second quarter. The largest demographic impact on the total population came from losses in international migration (-27,143).

Canada's efforts to contain COVID-19 continue to dampen population growth during the third quarter

In March, Canada implemented restrictions on international travel to curb the spread of COVID-19. As the majority of population growth in Canada typically comes from international migration, this has had a profound impact on the country's population growth in 2020.

Total international migration was negative for only the second time in any quarter since the third quarter of 1971 (the point at which comparable records for the components of population growth become available). Canada welcomed 40,069 immigrants in the third quarter of 2020 (61.4% fewer than in the third quarter of 2019), but reported a record net loss of almost 66,000 non-permanent residents. [International students](#) usually come to Canada in large numbers in the third quarter of the year, but many were not able to do so in 2020 because of the border restrictions.

As a result, all of Canada's growth in the third quarter came from natural increase (+29,910), or the difference between births (99,024) and deaths (69,114).

Fewer moves between provinces and territories

During the third quarter, 65,795 people moved to another province or territory, down 21.0% year over year and the fewest number of migrants in a third quarter since comparable record keeping began (third quarter of 1971).

British Columbia had the highest net gain from interprovincial migration in the third quarter (+4,742 people), while Nova Scotia's net gain (+1,471) was the highest the province has seen since the third quarter of 1984. However, the gains in these two provinces due to interprovincial migration were not enough to offset losses in international migration, so their populations decreased.

Saskatchewan (-2,774) and Manitoba (-1,780) lost the most people through interprovincial migration. Saskatchewan has had net interprovincial migration losses since the third quarter of 2013, while Manitoba has had net losses to other provinces and territories since the second quarter of 2004.



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.

At the national level, comparable records by quarter for population growth are available from January 1, 1946. At the provincial and territorial level, comparable records by quarter for population growth are available from July 1, 1951 (from July 1, 1991, for Nunavut). Comparable records by quarter at the national, provincial and territorial levels for the components of population growth are available from July 1, 1971.

Certain components of the demographic estimates were adjusted to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (deaths and the components of emigration). As the adjustments closely follow what was done in the second quarter of 2020 (see [Technical Supplement: Production of Demographic Estimates for the Second Quarter of 2020 in the Context of COVID-19](#)), a technical supplement was not produced for the third quarter.

Canada's population clock (real-time model)

[Canada's population clock \(real-time model\)](#) was updated today with the most recent 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 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 who is lawfully in Canada on a temporary basis and who holds a work, study or other (excluding visitor visas) permit issued for 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. 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.

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 *Quarterly Demographic Estimates, July to September 2020* ([91-002-X](#)) publication 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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).