

Understanding sex at birth and gender of people in Canada

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Understanding who we are

Today, the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics (CGDIS) released the first infographic in a series titled "[Understanding who we are: Sex at birth and gender of people in Canada](#)."

As part of the Disaggregated Data Action Plan, Statistics Canada continues to collect and publish diversity data in response to the growing need for better disaggregated data in Canada. This infographic series provides brief, easily understood information about concepts and terms related to diversity and inclusion to raise awareness of the many diverse groups living in Canada.

This infographic is being released ahead of Gender Equality Week, held September 18 to 24, 2022. Gender Equality Week celebrates the progress made in advancing gender equality in Canada while reflecting on the work that remains to be done to enable everyone, regardless of their gender, to reach their full potential.

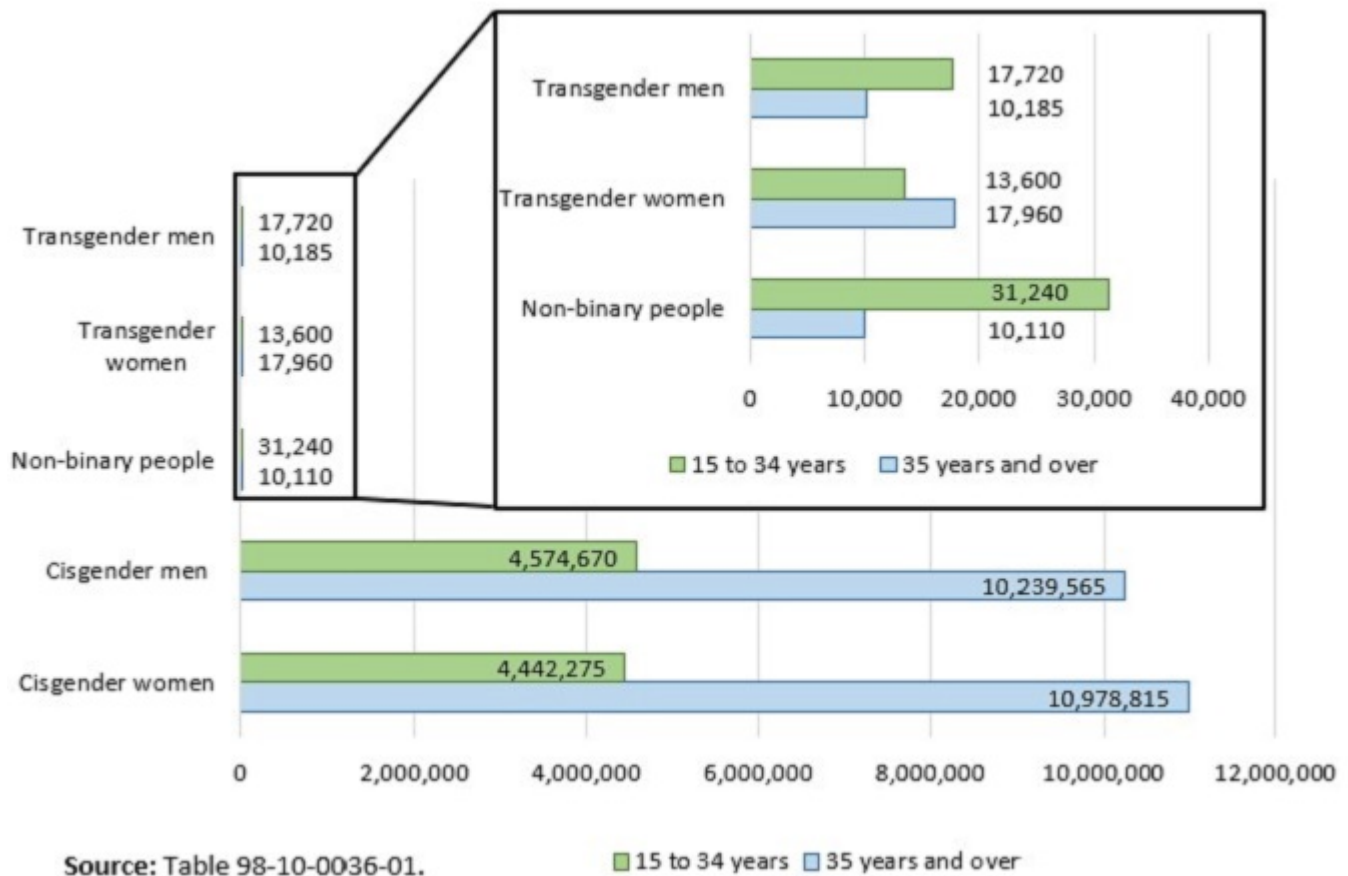
Sex at birth and gender of person are two different but interrelated concepts

Sex at birth is assigned based on a person's reproductive system and other physical characteristics at birth, whereas gender is an individual's personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person. A non-binary person is not exclusively a man nor a woman; [non-binary people may also identify themselves using other terminology](#).

The 2021 Census of Population marked the first time that data on gender were collected, allowing for cisgender and transgender men, cisgender and transgender women, and non-binary people to be captured. In 2021, [14,842,140 \(48.93%\) people in Canada aged 15 years and older were cisgender and transgender men](#), [15,452,645 \(50.94%\) were cisgender and transgender women](#), and [41,350 \(0.14%\) were non-binary](#). Cisgender people accounted for 99.66% of the population—the remaining 0.33% were transgender and non-binary people.



Infographic 1 – Cisgender, transgender and non-binary people, aged 15 to 34 years and 35 years and older in Canada, 2021



Everyone has a gender identity and gender expression that is experienced and presented differently

Different genders exist on a spectrum. Gender is a multidimensional concept influenced by several factors, including cultural and behavioural norms and self-identity. Gender includes two concepts: gender identity (the internal and individual feelings a person has) and gender expression (the outward presentation of gender, regardless of gender identity, through body language, behaviour, or esthetic choices).

Looking ahead

Future infographics in the series will include First Nations people, Métis and Inuit, persons with disabilities, racialized groups, and the 2SLGBTQI+ population. The infographics will feature new information as Statistics Canada continues to participate in and respond to important consultation work, such as the [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy](#) and the [sexual diversity statistical standard](#).

These infographics will be made available through the [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics \(GDIS\) Hub](#) and the [Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation Statistics Hub](#). Future improvements to the GDIS Hub will be put in place starting in October 2022, including new features such as a [data visualization tool](#), new indicators on different characteristics of people living in Canada, and more. Feedback about these improvements can be sent to statcan.cgdis-csgdi.statcan@statcan.gc.ca.

Note to readers

Statistics Canada's main [classification of sex at birth](#) includes two categories: male and female. It provides a [variant classification of sex at birth](#), which includes an additional category for intersex. However, for reasons related to the small size of this population and the challenges in identifying intersex people, Statistics Canada does not currently collect specific information on intersex people in Canada.

Sex at birth of person and gender of person are separate from and should not be confused with sexual orientation. [Sexual orientation includes three dimensions: sexual attraction, sexual behaviours and sexual identity \(e.g., being asexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian, heterosexual or pansexual\)](#). People in the 2SLGBTQI+ population may have either a gender identity or a sexual orientation, or both a gender identity and a sexual orientation that fits within the 2SLGBTQI+ acronym.

Census data are [collected from only one person per household](#). Respondents are asked questions about the individuals living within a private household. Therefore, the data on sex at birth of person and gender of person may be self-reported or collected by proxy (i.e., reported by another person within the household). Additionally, transgender and non-binary people may be hesitant to report their gender. Because of this method of data collection and the degree of privacy, safety and potential hesitation may impact how a person responded to sex at birth and gender of person questions. Although questions were asked regardless of age, data featured here include only those aged 15 years or older since children aged 14 years or younger may not be fully aware of their gender identity or may not have defined it yet.

Statistical standards provide a consistent guide for measuring variables of interest

Statistics Canada released new statistical standards for [sex at birth of person](#) and [gender of person](#) in April 2018. The 2018 standards were used in the 2021 Census, conducted in May 2021. These statistical standards were further updated in October 2021 after [extensive engagement](#) and [public consultation](#) with Canadians on sex, gender and self-identification. The changes made to the statistical standards reflected the cultural shift in how sex and gender are understood in Canada.

Statistical standards are a [set of rules used to standardize how data are collected and how statistics are produced and published](#) for a given [variable of interest](#).

Why is it important to talk about the changes to the sex at birth of person and gender of person statistical standards?

The changes to the sex at birth and gender of person statistical standards mark a change in the understanding of sex and gender. [Previous versions of the sex at birth statistical standards](#) did not include the distinction of "at birth." Until 2018, gender did not have its own statistical standard. [Previous versions of the classification of gender](#) did not include the distinction between men, women and non-binary people, or the [distinction between cisgender, transgender and non-binary people](#) until 2021.

Who is impacted by the statistical standards for sex at birth of person and gender of person?

Everyone has a sex at birth and a gender, meaning that everyone living in Canada is impacted by the existing statistical standards for sex at birth of person and gender of person. The statistical standards are vital to accurately and consistently report on the different experiences of cisgender, transgender and non-binary people living in Canada.

Some people may experience different challenges based on a combination of characteristics, such as gender and sexual orientation

Statistics Canada has reported recurrent challenges in the daily lives of 2SLGBTQI+ people in Canada, including [lower income](#), [lack of safe housing availability](#) and experiences of [violent victimization](#) and discrimination based on gender identity and expression [at school](#) and [in the workplace](#) among both cisgender and transgender people.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3901](#).

The publication "[Understanding who we are: Sex at birth and gender of people in Canada](#)" is now 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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).