

Canada's population estimates: Subprovincial areas, July 1, 2023

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On July 1, 2023, the combined population of Canada's 41 census metropolitan areas (CMAs) reached 29,814,146 people.

The population growth experienced in CMAs (+3.5%) from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023, outpaced that of Canada as a whole (+2.9%). In comparison, census agglomerations (CAs) saw a population growth rate of 2.0%, while areas outside CMAs and CAs grew at a combined rate of 1.1%. These differences are a sign that Canada continues to get more urbanized, as the proportion of Canadians living in a CMA reached almost three in four (74.4%) on July 1, 2023.

However, it should be noted that the population growth rate for areas outside CMAs and CAs was at its highest in over 20 years and that 2022/2023 was the third consecutive year in which these regions grew faster than 1.0%.

Increases from coast to coast

For the second year in a row, all 41 CMAs across Canada saw their population increase in the 12-month period ending on July 1, 2023. There were 33 CMAs that grew at a faster pace than they did during the previous year.

As a result of the notable growth the CMA of Halifax, Nova Scotia, experienced from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023 (+3.9%), it is now home to more than half-a-million people, with its population reaching 518,711. During the same period, the CMAs of Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo, Ontario, and Moncton, New Brunswick, both saw the fastest annual population growth of any CMA since at least 2001/2002—the earliest period for which comparable data are available—, at 6.0% each, due in large part to strong international migration.

In the 12 months ending on July 1, 2023, each of the six CMAs with a population of over one million experienced their fastest growth since at least 2001/2002. Among them, Calgary, Alberta, came in first, with a growth rate of 5.9%. It was followed by Edmonton (+4.1%), Alberta, and Vancouver (+4.1%), British Columbia, Toronto (+3.3%), Ontario, Montréal (+2.9%), Quebec, and Ottawa–Gatineau (+2.6%), in Ontario and Quebec.

International migration remains important for growth in census metropolitan areas

For the first time since at least 2001/2002, the population growth resulting from the net increase in the number of non-permanent residents (NPRs) was higher than that from immigrants in most CMAs (31 of 41) from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023. This finding is in line with high increases of NPRs [observed at the national level](#).

Difference between the data of non-permanent residents from Statistics Canada and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Statistics Canada collaborates closely with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and other federal departments to estimate the number of non-permanent residents (NPRs) living in Canada. The demographic estimates from Statistics Canada are updated on an ongoing basis, as new or revised data become available from its partners. Caution should be exercised before comparing data on NPRs from Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program with those from IRCC due to the different objectives of the two data sources.

Permanent immigration remains a significant component of population growth in CMAs and, while the [Government of Canada's Immigration Levels Plan](#) determines the number of immigrants, regional dynamics change over time. From July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023, all CMAs in British Columbia, except for Abbotsford–Mission, saw fewer



immigrants than the previous year. Meanwhile, several CMAs saw increases in the annual number of immigrants arriving over the same period, with St. John's (+81.2%), Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatoon (+69.4%), Saskatchewan, and Regina (+68.6%), Saskatchewan, seeing the largest changes.

Census metropolitan areas in Alberta overtake those from British Columbia as the top destination for interprovincial migrants

Important changes were observed in the patterns of migration between provinces in the year ending on July 1, 2023. The Vancouver CMA (-4,795) saw its highest net loss to interprovincial migration in over 20 years, after having recorded its most important net gain the previous year (+10,892).

From July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023, Alberta overtook British Columbia as the region recording the biggest gains from exchanges between provinces. All four CMAs in Alberta saw net gains from exchanges with other provinces, with Calgary (+26,662), Edmonton (+16,082) and Lethbridge (+1,651) recording their highest net gains since at least 2001/2002, and Red Deer (+1,277) recording its highest since 2005/2006.

In contrast, every CMA in Ontario recorded a net loss from interprovincial migration during the 12-month period ending on July 1, 2023. This marked the second year in a row that all Ontario CMAs saw net losses, with 12 out of 15 seeing their largest net losses since at least 2001/2002.

These trends are in line with the analysis from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's [2024 Housing Market Outlook](#). This report indicates that more affordable home prices and a stronger economic outlook in the Prairies make them particularly attractive to homebuyers and job seekers at the expense of Ontario and British Columbia.

The CMAs of Toronto (-93,024), Montréal (-20,624) and Vancouver (-18,399) continued to experience high levels of net losses to migratory exchanges with other regions of their respective provinces. Those net losses from large CMAs are often reflected as net gains in smaller municipalities in their periphery, fuelling urban spread.

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Note to readers

This release includes preliminary postcensal population estimates for census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census divisions, census subdivisions and economic regions by age and gender as of July 1, 2023. Revised estimates as of July 1, for the years 2016 to 2022, are also available. See the Tables tab for more information.

The estimates released today are based on 2021 Census of Population counts, adjusted for census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements, to which are added the population growth estimates for the period from May 11, 2021, to the date of the estimate. These estimates are based on the 2021 Standard Geographical Classification.

The annual period of reference is July 1 of a certain year to July 1 of the following year. Therefore, 2022/2023 refers to the period from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023.

Definitions

*To calculate rates, the denominator is taken as 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.*

A **census metropolitan area (CMA)** is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from census place of work data.

Census subdivision is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., reserves, settlements and unorganized territories). For the sake of brevity, the terms **census subdivision** and **municipality** have the same meaning.

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.

An **immigrant** refers to a person who is a permanent resident or a landed immigrant. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Persons who are born abroad to a Canadian parent are not immigrants but are included in the returning emigrant component. For the Centre for Demography, the terms **immigrant**, **landed immigrant** and **permanent resident** refer to the same concept.

Non-permanent resident refers to a person from another country with a usual place of residence in Canada and who has a work or study permit, or who has claimed refugee status (asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups). Family members living with work or study permit holders are also included unless these family members are already Canadian citizens, landed immigrants (permanent residents), or non-permanent residents themselves. For the Centre for Demography, the terms **non-permanent resident** and **temporary immigrant** refer to the same concept.

Permit holders and their family members are non-permanent residents who are not asylum claimants, but who hold a permit (for work, study or temporary residence). This classification also includes their family members who are not Canadian citizens, landed immigrants (permanent residents) or non-permanent residents themselves.

Persons who claimed refugee status include **asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups**. Separate estimates for asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups are not available. Asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups are defined as:

- **Asylum claimant** refers to a foreign national who has made a refugee claim while in Canada on a temporary basis and whose claim is pending decision.
- **Protected person** refers to a person who has made a claim in Canada and received a positive decision. For population estimates, protected persons leave this population if they obtain permanent residence.
- **Related groups** include those who received a negative decision or withdrew or abandoned their claim and have not yet regularized their status or departed Canada.

Acknowledgements

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Available tables: [17-10-0148-01](#) to [17-10-0155-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3608](#).

The publication *Annual Demographic Estimates: Subprovincial Areas*, July 1, 2023 ([91-214-X](#)), 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).