

Canada's population estimates, fourth quarter 2025

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Population growth in Canada continues to slow in the fourth quarter of 2025

Preliminary demographic estimates indicate that Canada's population was 41,472,081 on January 1, 2026.

According to these preliminary estimates, the population of Canada decreased by 103,504 people (-0.2%) from October 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026.

These preliminary demographic estimates will be updated in the coming months according to the process used for decades by the Demographic Estimates Program at Statistics Canada. It is possible that these coming updates will be of greater scope than in past years, given recent and rapidly evolving [changes to government policies regarding international migration](#).

For example, a [new immigration measure to support Quebec workers and employers](#) was announced on March 13, 2026, and could have an impact on the upcoming updated estimates of the number of non-permanent residents.

In particular, these changes could be linked to increases in the number of extensions of work and study permits, which cannot be accounted for at the time the preliminary estimates are produced, but that will be included during the subsequent updates.

Even though the estimated population growth for the fourth quarter of 2025 will be updated in the coming months, it is expected to remain well below the levels observed in the fourth quarters of 2023 and 2024. By comparison, the population of Canada increased by 80,385 people (+0.2%) from October 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025, and by 256,804 people (+0.6%) from October 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024.

How demographic estimates are calculated and maintained

Statistics Canada releases its preliminary demographic estimates approximately three months after the reference date. For example, new demographic estimates are released today for January 1, 2026. They reflect the most accurate picture of the Canadian population using information that is currently available.

To produce preliminary estimates, Statistics Canada combines timely administrative data with statistical models. Updated and final estimates are based on more accurate data and require less modelling but are available later. As a result, the population decrease noted today could be smaller, or greater, or even turn into an increase when the estimates are updated in a few months, after more complete and accurate administrative data become available.

For more information about how the population estimates are calculated, readers can access the [Technical Guide on Demographic Estimates at Statistics Canada](#).

From October 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026, the preliminary estimates show that British Columbia (-0.4%), Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Ontario (all -0.3%) had the largest rates of population decrease among the provinces and territories.

Over the same period, Alberta (+0.1%) had the fastest growth rate of any province or territory.



Fewer non-permanent residents the leading factor in slowing population growth

From October 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026, preliminary estimates indicate that the number of non-permanent residents in Canada decreased by 171,296. All provinces and Yukon saw a decrease in their population of non-permanent residents during this period.

After reaching 3,149,131 on October 1, 2024, the number of non-permanent residents living in Canada steadily decreased to 2,676,441 on January 1, 2026. However, the potential impact of permit extensions mentioned earlier may lead to an update of the number of non-permanent residents for years 2025 and 2026.

The decrease in the number of non-permanent residents living in Canada noted in the fourth quarter of 2025 was mainly attributable to decreases among people holding a study permit only, a work permit only, or both a work and study permit.

Differences between data on 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 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 when comparing data on non-permanent residents from Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program with temporary residents and asylum claimants from IRCC due to the different objectives of the two organizations.

For more information, please see "[Non-permanent residents data at Statistics Canada](#)" and "[How does Statistics Canada estimate the number of non-permanent residents?](#)" These products define non-permanent resident data at Statistics Canada and the various data sources available to users.

Permanent immigration levels also contribute to slower demographic growth

Canada welcomed 83,168 permanent immigrants in the fourth quarter of 2025. This represents a decline of 19.6% compared with the number of permanent immigrants welcomed in the same quarter of 2024 (103,438), but is in line with the [target established by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for the 2025 calendar year](#).

Although the number of new immigrants to Canada was lower in the fourth quarter of 2025 than in the fourth quarters of 2024 and of 2023, it was the only component of growth which was positive. Natural increase (births minus deaths) was negative (-781) in the fourth quarter of 2025, meaning that there were more deaths than births in Canada during the quarter. The contribution of new immigrants to population growth served to mitigate the population decrease caused by drops in the total number of non-permanent residents and negative natural increase.

Ontario remained the number one destination for immigrants, welcoming 42.3% (35,159) of all new immigrants to Canada in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Among the provinces, only Quebec saw more new immigrants in the fourth quarter of 2025 (13,361) than in the same quarter of 2024 (12,496). All other provinces and Yukon welcomed fewer immigrants during the fourth quarter of 2025 compared with the same quarter one year earlier.

"Portrait of Canadian emigration" infographic

Also released today, the infographic "[Portrait of Canadian emigration](#)" provides an overview of characteristics of Canadian emigrants, using 2021 Census data and tax data. It presents results disaggregated by various characteristics, including age, immigrant status, level of education, occupation and more.

Alberta remains the top destination for interprovincial migrants

For a 14th consecutive quarter, Alberta recorded the largest net gain from migratory exchanges between the provinces and territories. The net gain seen in Alberta (+3,684 people) from October 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026, was lower than in the same quarter of 2024, when the province saw a net gain of 4,993 people from interprovincial migration. Nevertheless, the net gain for Alberta in the fourth quarter of 2025 was far larger than the net gains seen in British Columbia (+1,227) and Nova Scotia (+826), the only other provinces or territories that experienced net gains from interprovincial migration.

Meanwhile, Ontario (-1,598) and Quebec (-1,579) had almost identical losses to interprovincial migration in the fourth quarter of 2025. This represented a larger loss for Quebec compared with the same quarter in 2024 (-1,093) while it was a smaller loss for Ontario (-2,082).

Population growth also slows in 2025

The new estimates released today allow for an analysis of population growth over the entire calendar year 2025.

Population growth had already begun to slow at the start of 2025, and the increase in the population over the first six months of the year (January to June, +77,136) was not enough to outweigh the losses observed in the last six months of the year (July to December, -179,572).

Currently, the preliminary estimates show that the population of Canada decreased by 102,436 people (-0.2%) from January 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026. This reduction is due to the decreases in population seen in the third (-76,068) and fourth (-103,504) quarters of 2025.

However, the overall population decrease in 2025 should be interpreted with caution; the recent increases in the number of extensions of work and study permits noted earlier could lead to larger than usual updates in the coming months.

Note to readers

The demographic estimates for the fourth quarter of 2025 released today are considered preliminary and will be updated following the standard procedure followed by Statistics Canada for decades. They are based on 2021 Census counts, adjusted for census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements. To these counts, the population growth estimates for the period from May 11, 2021, to the date of the estimate are added.

Statistics Canada's demographic estimates are updated every year through its usual process, alongside the annual September release for the second quarter. Several factors may explain why preliminary estimates differ from the updated and final estimates released later. For example, if there is a long gap between the expiration of one non-permanent resident permit and the issuance of the next, it may result in a decrease of one person in the preliminary estimates; however, this would not be reflected in the updated and final estimates. Moreover, the schedule for updated and final estimates provides more time for receiving late registrations of births and deaths, as well as for using more complete data sources, such as annual tax files used to measure interprovincial migration.

Canada's population clock (real-time model)

[Canada's population clock \(real-time model\)](#) was updated today 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.

Population growth or **total growth** in Canada is equal to natural increase (births minus deaths) plus international migratory increase (immigrants plus net non-permanent residents minus net emigration). At the provincial and territorial level, total population growth also includes interprovincial migratory increase.

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 Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program, 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 Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program, the terms **non-permanent resident** and **temporary immigrant** refer to the same concept. Caution should be exercised when comparing data on non-permanent residents from Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program with temporary residents and asylum claimants from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), due to the different objectives of the two organizations.

Permit holders and their family members are non-permanent residents who are not asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups 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.

Interprovincial migration represents all movement from one province or territory to another involving a change in the usual place of residence. A person who takes up residence in another province or territory is an **out-migrant** with reference to the province or territory of origin and an **in-migrant** with reference to the province or territory of destination.

Acknowledgements

The Demographic Estimates Program of Statistics Canada is grateful for the ongoing partnership with IRCC, which greatly contributes to the accuracy of the estimations of immigrants and non-permanent residents.

Available tables: [17-10-0009-01](#), [17-10-0020-01](#), [17-10-0040-01](#), [17-10-0045-01](#), [17-10-0059-01](#) and [17-10-0121-01](#).

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

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

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

The product "[Quarterly estimates of the number of non-permanent residents by type, 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.

The product "[Portrait of Canadian emigration](#)" ([11-627-X](#)) is also available.

The [Population and demography statistics](#), [Immigrants and Non-permanent Residents Statistics](#) and [Older adults and population aging statistics](#) portals are 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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).