

Canada's population estimates, first quarter 2026

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Population estimates show a decrease in the population of Canada for the first quarter of 2026

The population of Canada was estimated at 41,417,056 on April 1, 2026, a decrease of 55,025 people (-0.1%) from January 1 to April 1, 2026. These preliminary demographic estimates will be updated in September 2026, according to the official process used by the Demographic Estimates Program at Statistics Canada.

How demographic estimates are calculated and maintained

Statistics Canada releases its preliminary quarterly demographic estimates approximately three months after the reference date. For example, new demographic estimates are released today for April 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](#).

Permanent immigration and natural increase slow in the first quarter of 2026

Canada welcomed 83,149 permanent immigrants in the first quarter of 2026. This represents a decline of 20.2% compared with the number of permanent immigrants welcomed in the same quarter of 2025 (104,210) and is in line with the [lower target established by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for the 2026 calendar year](#).

Natural increase (births minus deaths) was negative (-155) in the first quarter of 2026, meaning there were more deaths than births in Canada during this quarter. By comparison, natural increase in the first quarter of 2025 was positive, at 983. Natural increase is usually low during the winter months, because there are typically fewer births and more deaths during the colder months. Natural increase was also negative in the first quarters of 2022 and 2023.

Fewer non-permanent residents, according to preliminary estimates

The preliminary number of non-permanent residents decreased by 117,879 people in the first quarter of 2026, but this number will be updated in September 2026.

Larger-than-usual updates to non-permanent resident estimates for recent years are anticipated, given the rapidly evolving context and shifting international migration policies. Over the last few months, the number of permit extensions granted by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada has increased, while associated [processing times have lengthened](#). As a result, updates of a greater magnitude to recent non-permanent resident estimates may occur, which could lead to more pronounced upward changes to population estimates.

More information on how Statistics Canada is responding to these rapid changes is available in the article "[Ongoing work on international migration statistics at Statistics Canada](#)."



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.

Note to readers

The demographic estimates for the first quarter of 2026 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. These estimates are not to be confused with the 2026 Census population counts, which will be released on February 10, 2027.

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.

Acknowledgements

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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 [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).