Population projections: Canada, provinces and territories, 2018 to 2068

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Today, Statistics Canada looks to the future with the release of a new edition of population projections for Canada, the provinces and the territories.

Population projections investigate how the Canadian population might evolve in the years ahead. Statistics Canada publishes several scenarios to highlight the uncertain nature of population projections, making it clear that the future is not yet defined.

Readers can now access the publications *Population Projections for Canada (2018 to 2068), Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043)*, *Population Projections for Canada (2018 to 2068), Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043): Technical Report on Methodology and Assumptions*, as well as the new infographic "What will the population of Canada look like in 2068?"

55 million Canadians by 2068?

While the populations of many developed countries are expected to decrease, Canada's population is projected to grow over the next 50 years, largely because of strong immigration.

Population growth, however, is likely to vary across the country, with the population of some provinces and territories increasing and others decreasing. As a result, the provinces and territories may experience diverse opportunities and challenges over the coming decades.

The Canadian population has grown substantially in recent years, increasing from 30.7 million people in 2000 to 37.1 million in 2018.

The projections show that growth would continue in Canada over the next 50 years, and that the population could reach between 44.4 million and 70.2 million inhabitants by 2068. In the medium-growth scenario, the Canadian population would grow from 37.1 million inhabitants in 2018 to 55.2 million by 2068.

According to the low- and medium-growth scenarios, the rate of population growth would slow in the coming years, owing mainly to an increasing number of deaths relative to births. The expected increase in the number of deaths is mainly related to population aging.

In all scenarios, immigration would remain the key driver of population growth over the next 50 years, as has been the case since the early 1990s.

Increasing share of people aged 65 and older, decreasing share of the working-age population

According to all scenarios, Canada's population would continue to become older in the coming years at both the national and the provincial and territorial levels.

Over the next two decades in particular, the proportion of people aged 65 and older in the population would grow rapidly as the large baby-boom cohort (those born between 1946 and 1965) reaches age 65. This transition could affect Canadian society in various ways, placing additional pressure on pension and health care systems and decreasing the share of the working-age population.

By 2068, the proportion of the population aged 65 and older would reach between 21.4% and 29.5%, depending on the scenario. In comparison, 17.2% of Canadians were aged 65 and over in 2018.

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During the same period, the share of the working-age population—that is, people aged 15 to 64, most of whom are in the labour force—would decrease according to all projection scenarios, from 66.7% in 2018 to between 57.9% and 61.4% in 2068.

Centenarians: The fastest-growing age group

By 2068, the number of Canadians aged 80 and older would reach 5.5 million according to the medium-growth scenario, compared with 1.6 million in 2018.

Driven by the baby boomers reaching age 100 and increasing life expectancy, the number of centenarians (people who are aged 100 or older) in Canada would peak at 90,200 people in 2065 according to the medium-growth scenario, compared with 10,000 people in 2018.

As a result, centenarians would be the fastest-growing age group between 2018 and 2068. However, they would remain a very small share of the total population (0.2% or less in all projection scenarios).

Ontario and Alberta would make up more than half of Canada's projected population growth between 2018 and 2068

According to all projection scenarios, the population of Ontario would increase over the next 25 years, reaching between 16.5 million and 20.4 million inhabitants by 2043. Ontario would remain the most populous province according to all scenarios.

In all scenarios, the rate of population growth in Alberta would be the highest among Canadian provinces over the next 25 years. By 2043, Alberta's population would number between 6.0 million and 7.3 million inhabitants depending on the scenario, compared with 4.3 million in 2018.

Together, Alberta and Ontario would account for more than half of Canada's projected growth between 2018 and 2043 in all scenarios.

Alberta's population could surpass that of British Columbia by 2043 according to almost all scenarios. The other Prairie provinces would also see considerable growth over the next 25 years: by 2043, the combined population of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta would be slightly larger than Quebec's population in all projection scenarios.

The rate of population growth in Quebec would remain lower than that of Canada in most scenarios. As a result, Quebec's share of the total Canadian population could decrease from 22.6% in 2018 to between 20.1% and 20.6% by 2043.

A similar phenomenon would occur in the Atlantic provinces. Low—and, in some scenarios, negative—growth rates would cause the populations of the Atlantic provinces to represent either a stable or a decreasing share of the Canadian population by 2043.

While the population of the three territories would increase in all projection scenarios, its share of the total Canadian population would remain stable, at 0.3% between 2018 and 2043.

Large regional differences in population aging

While population aging would continue to occur in all parts of the country, there would be considerable variation in the pace and degree of aging among the provinces and territories.

In 2043, the proportion of seniors aged 65 and older would be lower than the national average in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, varying between 16.5% and 21.8% depending on the scenario.

In contrast, the Atlantic provinces would have the largest proportion of those aged 65 and older in the country, with this proportion surpassing 30% for Newfoundland and Labrador in all scenarios.

In 2043, the populations of the territories are projected to remain the youngest populations in Canada according to all scenarios. The proportion of seniors aged 65 and older would not exceed 9.4% in Nunavut or 17.0% in the Northwest Territories.

Summary

Population projections provide an opportunity to think about changes that the country will probably experience in the future. According to these new projections, the Canadian population would continue to increase over the next 50 years. However, growth rates would vary considerably among the provinces and territories, and some could experience population decrease. Population aging is projected to remain a prominent and inevitable feature of population change in Canada in the coming years. These demographic changes will alter the composition and distribution of the Canadian population, and are therefore likely to have economic, political and social consequences.

Available tables: 17-10-0057-01 and 17-10-0058-01.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3602.

The publication *Population Projections for Canada (2018 to 2068), Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043)* (**91-520-X**) is now available.

The publication *Population Projections for Canada (2018 to 2068), Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043): Technical Report on Methodology and Assumptions* (**91-620-X**) is also available.

The infographic "What will the population of Canada look like in 2068?," part of *Statistics Canada — Infographics* (**11-627-M**), 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; **STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca**) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; **STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca**).