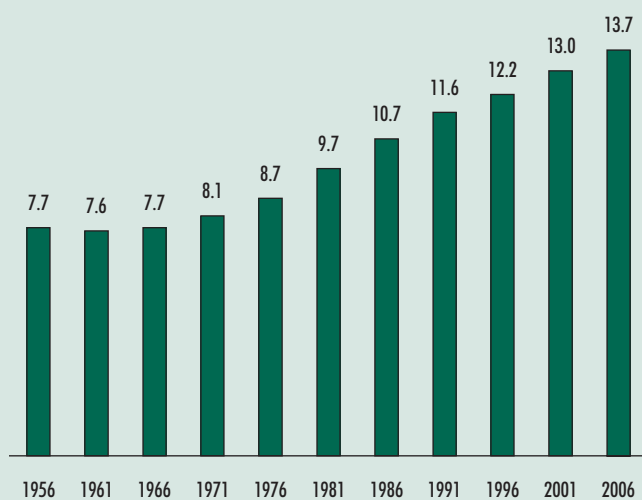


# CST Census snapshot of Canada — Population (age and sex)

The census is the richest source of information on the social, cultural, demographic and economic status of Canadian society. Canadian Social Trends will be highlighting some of the key trends observed in data released from the 2006 Census.

Data from the latest census confirm that the Canadian population is aging rapidly. There were, for example, over 4.3 million Canadians aged 65 and over in 2006, a 12% increase since 2001. In fact, the growth rate in the number of seniors was more than double the rate of overall population increase (5%) in the previous five years. As a result, people aged 65 and over made up almost 14% of Canada's population in 2006, up from just under 10% in 1981.

% of the population who are 65 or older



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population, 1956 to 2006.

As well, older seniors make up the fastest growing segment of the 65-plus population in Canada. In 2006, for example, over a half million Canadians were aged 85 and over, up 25% from 2001. As a result, those aged 85 and over currently represent around 12% of the overall senior population in Canada, up from 8% as recently as 1986.

Given this trend, it is not surprising that there has also been a substantial increase in the number of centenarians living in Canada. At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 4,635 Canadians aged 100 or older, 22% more than there were in 2001.

Women also continue to make up the majority of the senior population in Canada. In 2006, 56% of all Canadians aged 65 and over were female. As well, the share of the seniors' population accounted for by women rises substantially with age. In fact, women currently make up almost 70% of all those aged 85 and over.

While the growing number of seniors tends to attract most of the newspaper headlines, the working population is also aging rapidly. In 2006, baby-boomers, people born between 1946 and 1965, were between ages 41 and 60 and they still remained the largest population cohort in Canada. As a result, the fastest growing 10-year age cohort in the country between 2001 and 2006 was aged 55 to 64. Indeed, this pre-retirement age group grew by 28%, a rate of growth more than five times the national average. In contrast, the population aged 15 to 24 increased by only 5% in the same period. In fact, the 2006 Census shows that there are barely enough young people entering the working age group to replace those approaching retirement; just 1.1 persons 15 to 24 for every person aged 55 to 64, compared with 2.3 in 1976. As well, projections show that in about 10 years, Canada may have more people at retirement age than people at the age where they can begin working. An aging working-age population presents considerable challenges for Canadian employers who will have to adjust to a high rate of employee turnover, employee retention, health of older workers and continuous training of employees.

As the baby-boomers aged, moving out of the 30 to 39 age group, the smaller-sized baby-bust cohort replaced them in this age group. This is the age at which women have most of their children. It is, therefore, not surprising that the number of children under age 15 has decreased since 1996 and that they now account for only 18% of the population in 2006, a 50-year low.

Overall, the age distribution in the provinces generally follows the national pattern. The populations of the three Prairie Provinces, though, tend to be somewhat younger, on average, than the rest of the country. In 2006, close to 20% of the populations in each of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were under the age of 15, whereas the figure in the remaining provinces averaged around 17%. Alberta is also characterized by a relatively small senior population. That year, just 11% of Alberta residents were aged 65 or over, while in the other provinces the figure was either 14% or 15%.

## Age pyramid of the Canadian population in 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

The territories are also characterized by relatively young populations. In 2006, one in four residents of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut was under the age of 15, compared with 18% nationally. At the same time, seniors made up only 5% of residents of the three territories compared to 14% nationally.

For more information on census population age and sex counts, or about the Census in general, visit the Census website at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>.