

Overview

The number of Aboriginal people surpassed the one million mark in the 2006 Census, when 1,172,790 people identified themselves as an Aboriginal person, either North American Indian (or First Nations person), Métis or Inuit.

Aboriginal people make up a growing share of Canada's total population—3.8% of people enumerated in the recent census, up from 3.3% in 2001 and 2.8% in 1996.

In 2006, First Nations people accounted for 60% of the total Aboriginal population, Métis 33%, and Inuit, 4%. Most First Nations people are Status Indians, meaning they are registered under the *Indian Act*. In 2006, 564,870 First Nations people reported they were Registered Indians; they made up 81% of the total First Nations population.

The Aboriginal population has been growing faster than the non-Aboriginal population: it increased 45% from 1996 to 2006, nearly six times faster than the 8% growth rate of the non-Aboriginal population in the

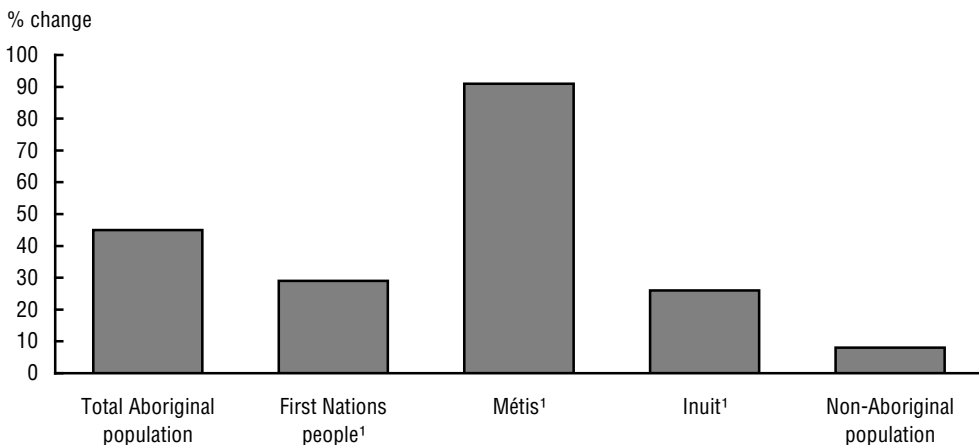
same period. (Only the Indian reserves and settlements that participated in both these censuses are included in this comparison.)

Of the three Aboriginal groups, the fastest population gain is among the Métis. Their numbers almost doubled (up 91%) to 389,785 people from 1996 to 2006. This growth rate is nearly three times as fast as the 29% increase for First Nations people, whose numbers reached 698,025. The number who identified themselves as Inuit increased 26% to 50,485 people.

Demographic trends, such as high birth rates, are one factor. As well, more people are identifying themselves as an Aboriginal person, and more Indian reserves participated in the 2006 Census than in previous censuses.

The Aboriginal population is also younger: in 2006, its median age was 27 years, compared with 40 years for non-Aboriginal peoples. (Median age is the point where half of the population is older, and half is younger.)

Chart 1.1
Population growth, by Aboriginal identity, 1996 and 2006



Note: Only the Indian reserves and settlements that participated in both censuses are included when comparing data from 1996 and 2006.

¹ Includes people who reported a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit identity only.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996 and 2006.

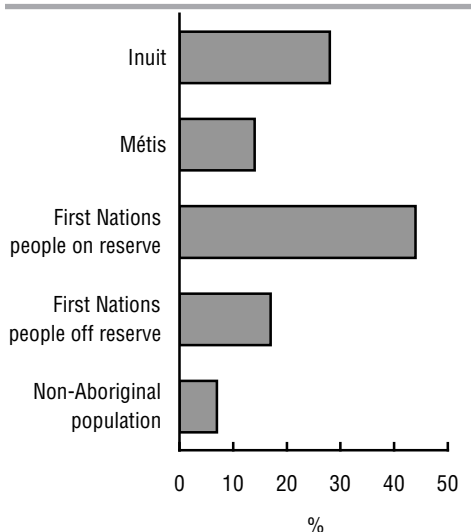
Housing conditions only modestly improved

While the housing conditions of some Aboriginal people have improved in the past decade, others are living in poorer conditions—overcrowded and in homes needing major repair—than those enjoyed by non-Aboriginal people. This is particularly true of First Nations people on reserves and Inuit in the North.

Inuit live in some of the most crowded living conditions in Canada. (Crowding is defined as more than one person per room in the dwelling.) Most Inuit live in Inuit Nunaat, the northern region spanning the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Quebec, and Labrador. In that region, more than 15,000 Inuit—38% of the total Inuit Nunaat population—lived in crowded conditions in 2006, down from 43% in 1996.

Crowding, combined with extreme weather, can cause much wear and tear on homes in Inuit Nunaat. In 2006, 31% of Inuit

Chart 1.2
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in dwellings in need of major repairs, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 1.a
Aboriginal population in Canada, the territories and selected provinces, 2006

	% of population
Canada	3.8
Nunavut	85.0
Northwest Territories	50.3
Yukon	25.1
Saskatchewan	14.9
Manitoba	15.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of population, 2006.

lived in houses that, in the judgment of the respondent, needed major repairs, up from 19% in 1996. Crowding and the need for major repairs are also more prevalent on reserves. In 2006, 26% of First Nations people living on reserves lived in crowded conditions, down from 33% in 1996. However, 44% of First Nations people on reserves lived in a home in need of major repairs, up from 36% in 1996. Crowding and the need for major repairs are especially common for First Nations people on reserves in the Prairie provinces.

More Métis living in rural areas are in crowded housing conditions than those living in urban areas—5% versus 3% in 2006. These figures were down from 1996, when the rates were 11% for rural and 5% for urban areas. The same pattern is evident for those living in dwellings in need of major repairs: 18% of Métis in rural areas lived in homes in need of major repairs in 2006, compared with 12% of Métis in urban areas.

Inadequate housing may be associated with myriad health problems. Crowded living conditions can lead to the transmission of infectious diseases, and can add to the risk of injuries, mental health problems, tensions within the family, and violence.

Sports participation just as strong among Aboriginal children

Aboriginal children are just as likely to take part in sports as their non-Aboriginal

counterparts, according to the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS).

Approximately 65% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and younger participated in sports at least once a week outside school hours, a rate comparable to that of non-Aboriginal children. Twenty-three percent of children reported never having participated, 12% took part less than once a week, 39% participated one to three times a week, and 26% took part in some type of sport four or more times per week. Aboriginal boys were more likely to take part in sports than girls. Children aged 5 to 11 were more active in sports than younger or older children.

Métis and Inuit children were more likely to participate than were First Nations children. First Nations children living off reserves were also more active than those living on reserves. Otherwise, the children's region of residence was not relevant; the results showed no differences in sports participation between Aboriginal children who lived in urban, rural, and Arctic regions. (These data were gathered from a select number of

reserves that participated in the 2001 APS: they are not representative of the entire on-reserve population.)

Aboriginal children who take part in sports are more likely to come from higher-income families and to have parents with higher levels of education, according to the APS. Sports participants are also more likely to take part if they have fewer siblings and live with both parents.

Obesity a serious health problem

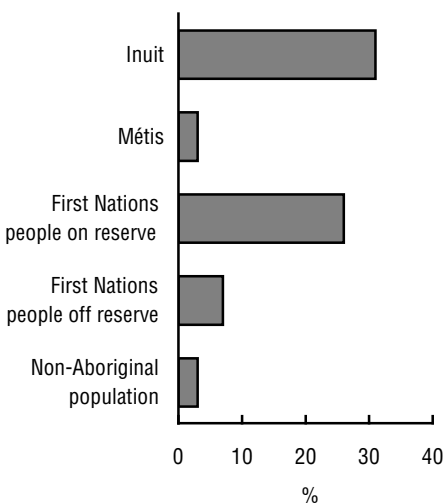
A 2008 study of Aboriginal people aged 19 to 50 living in Ontario and the western provinces, excluding reserves, found that they were 2.5 times more likely to be obese or overweight in 2004 as their non-Aboriginal contemporaries. The differences in rates were sharpest among Aboriginal women, particularly those aged 19 to 30, compared with non-Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal people in the study are more likely than other Canadians to report chronic health problems, notably conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and arthritis, which have been linked to obesity. Besides eating habits, the differences in obesity and overweight rates may also reflect differences in income, education and leisure-time physical activity.

For example, inactive leisure time is associated with excess weight for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Both groups in the study were equally likely to be inactive; however, among the inactive, 50% of Aboriginal people were obese, compared with 23% of non-Aboriginal people.

Overweight and obesity rates among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men are similar. Among Aboriginal women, the higher rates compared with non-Aboriginal women are associated, in part, with higher calorie intake by those aged 19 to 30: these Aboriginal women's average daily intake exceeds that of non-Aboriginal women by 359 calories.

Chart 1.3
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in a crowded dwelling, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Inuktitut still strong but in slight decline

In much of the North, Inuktitut, the Inuit language, continues to be one of the most widely spoken Aboriginal tongues, though its use is declining. Some Inuit are learning it as a second language.

In the 2006 Census, 32,200 Inuit, or 64% of the Inuit population, reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue, a decline of four percentage points since 1996. Mother tongue is the first language a person learns at home in childhood and still understands today.

The proportion of Inuit who speak Inuktitut most often at home is also decreasing. In 2006, about 25,500 Inuit, or 50% of the population, reported it as their 'home language'—the language they speak most often at home—down eight percentage points from 1996.

Some Inuit learn Inuktitut as a second language. About 11,100 Inuit youth aged

14 and younger, 63% of the Inuit youth population, know it as their mother tongue. About 12,200 Inuit, or 69%, can speak Inuktitut well enough to carry on a conversation, down from 72% in 1996.

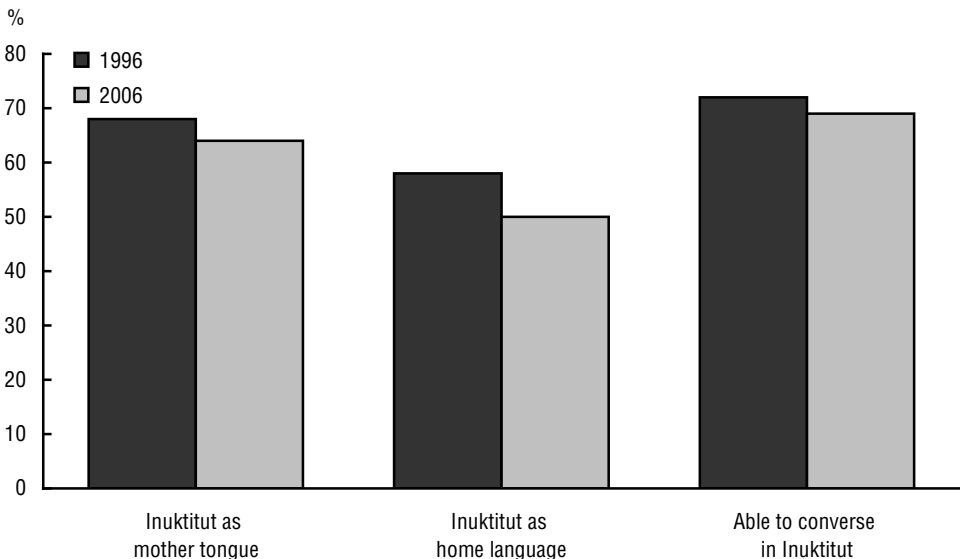
Inuit living in the North are much more likely than those in Canada's southern urban areas to speak Inuktitut.

In 2006, just 15% of Inuit in urban areas could converse in Inuktitut, compared with 84% in Inuit Nunaat—the Inuit homeland in northern Canada.

However, fluency with Inuktitut varies greatly across Inuit Nunaat. In Nunavik, 99% of Inuit could speak it well enough to converse; in Nunavut, 91% could.

By contrast, just 27% of Inuit in Nunatsiavut could converse in the language and only 20% in the Inuvialuit region could do so.

Chart 1.4
Inuit population, by use of Inuktitut



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996 and 2006.

The urban Aboriginal population

The 2006 Census counted 623,470 Aboriginal people living in urban centres. An estimated 50% of the urban Aboriginal population were First Nations people and 43% were Métis. Few Inuit live in urban centres in the South. An estimated 68% of the urban First Nations population reported that they were registered under the *Indian Act*.

About 291,000 Aboriginal people, or 25% of the total Aboriginal population, lived in 9 of Canada's 33 census metropolitan areas in 2006. Even so, Aboriginal people comprise a small share of the population in Canada's biggest cities.

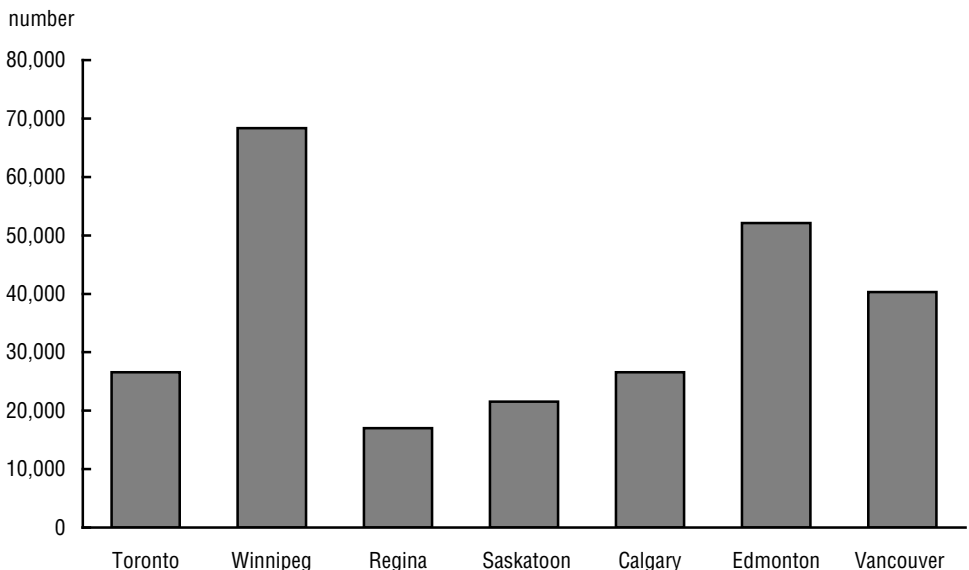
Winnipeg is home to the largest number of Aboriginal people: 68,380 people in 2006, or 10% of Winnipeg's population. Métis comprise the majority of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population, at 40,980 people, followed by First Nations, at 25,900, and Inuit, at 350.

Edmonton has the second largest Aboriginal population: 52,100 people or 5% of the city's population. The Métis also make up the largest segment of the Aboriginal population in Edmonton, with 27,740 people. Also, 22,435 First Nations people and 595 Inuit lived there in 2006.

Vancouver is home to 40,310 Aboriginal people, or 2% of its population. First Nations people make up the Aboriginal majority there, with a count of 23,515. The Métis population is next with 15,070 people, followed by the Inuit, at 210 people.

The 26,575 Aboriginal people in Toronto in 2006 made up 0.5% of its population; 26,575 Aboriginal people lived in Calgary (2% of its population). Saskatoon had 21,535 Aboriginal inhabitants or 9% of its population, and Regina had 17,105, about 9% of its population.

Chart 1.5
Urban Aboriginal population, selected census metropolitan areas, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 1.1 Aboriginal identity population, by sex and by province and territory, 2006

	Canada	Newfound-land and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario
	number						
Both sexes							
Total Aboriginal identity population¹	1,172,790	23,450	1,730	24,175	17,655	108,430	242,490
North American Indian	698,025	7,765	1,230	15,240	12,385	65,085	158,400
Métis	389,785	6,470	385	7,680	4,270	27,980	73,605
Inuit	50,480	4,715	30	320	185	10,950	2,040
Non-Aboriginal identity population	30,068,240	477,155	132,475	878,915	701,995	7,327,475	11,786,405
Males							
Total Aboriginal identity population ¹	572,090	11,525	760	11,770	8,645	53,525	117,590
North American Indian	338,050	3,820	565	7,320	5,810	31,690	75,955
Métis	193,500	3,170	145	3,940	2,450	14,305	37,030
Inuit	25,025	2,365	10	140	70	5,475	940
Non-Aboriginal identity population	14,754,175	232,445	64,230	423,800	342,505	3,592,455	5,760,285
Females							
Total Aboriginal identity population ¹	600,695	11,925	970	12,405	9,010	54,905	124,905
North American Indian	359,975	3,950	660	7,915	6,575	33,395	82,440
Métis	196,280	3,310	245	3,740	1,815	13,680	36,580
Inuit	25,455	2,345	20	180	110	5,480	1,095
Non-Aboriginal identity population	15,314,065	244,715	68,245	455,115	359,495	3,735,020	6,026,115
	Manitoba	Saskat-chewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut
	number						
Both sexes							
Total Aboriginal identity population¹	175,395	142,045	188,215	196,075	7,580	20,665	24,890
North American Indian	100,645	91,550	97,130	129,575	6,275	12,640	105
Métis	71,810	48,120	85,500	59,445	805	3,580	130
Inuit	565	220	1,610	795	255	4,190	24,610
Non-Aboriginal identity population	958,115	811,960	3,067,990	3,878,310	22,610	20,445	4,380
Males							
Total Aboriginal identity population ¹	85,720	69,640	91,670	94,855	3,665	10,180	12,545
North American Indian	48,715	44,530	47,155	63,190	3,035	6,210	55
Métis	35,615	23,945	41,985	28,595	400	1,860	60
Inuit	280	110	790	335	100	1,990	12,405
Non-Aboriginal identity population	471,200	399,840	1,539,125	1,903,530	11,545	10,790	2,425
Females							
Total Aboriginal identity population ¹	89,675	72,400	96,545	101,215	3,915	10,480	12,345
North American Indian	51,935	47,020	49,970	66,390	3,245	6,430	50
Métis	36,185	24,175	43,515	30,855	400	1,715	65
Inuit	280	105	820	455	150	2,200	12,205
Non-Aboriginal identity population	486,915	412,120	1,528,860	1,974,780	11,070	9,655	1,960

1. The total Aboriginal identity population includes the Aboriginal groups (North American Indian, Métis and Inuit), multiple Aboriginal responses and Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 1.2 Population, by Aboriginal identity, highest level of schooling and sex, 2006

	All levels	Less than high school	High school only	Trade school ¹	College ¹	University ²	University ³
	number						
Both sexes	25,664,220	6,098,330	6,553,425	2,785,420	4,435,135	1,136,150	4,162,225
Aboriginal identity population	823,890	359,780	179,585	93,885	119,680	22,950	42,280
North American Indian	473,235	228,985	94,380	49,240	62,340	13,685	21,440
Métis	291,330	100,770	74,575	38,220	49,210	8,035	18,265
Inuit	32,775	19,885	4,435	3,135	3,935	505	790
Multiple Aboriginal identities	5,590	2,010	1,435	755	835	165	355
Other Aboriginal identity	20,960	8,125	4,760	2,535	3,350	555	1,410
Non-Aboriginal population	24,840,335	5,738,550	6,373,835	2,691,535	4,315,455	1,113,195	4,119,950
Males	12,470,785	3,004,625	3,032,870	1,778,080	1,906,335	479,095	2,045,725
Aboriginal identity population	393,680	182,410	81,210	58,525	45,755	8,190	15,610
North American Indian	223,370	115,165	41,725	30,705	22,870	4,790	7,065
Métis	142,840	52,845	34,745	24,020	19,760	2,975	7,670
Inuit	15,965	9,795	2,005	2,020	1,660	170	260
Multiple Aboriginal identities	2,610	1,020	650	450	310	55	100
Other Aboriginal identity	8,895	3,585	2,075	1,325	1,145	190	505
Non-Aboriginal population	12,077,100	2,822,210	2,951,660	1,719,555	1,860,580	470,905	2,030,105
Females	13,193,435	3,093,700	3,520,555	1,007,335	2,528,800	657,055	2,116,505
Aboriginal identity population	430,205	177,365	98,380	35,360	73,925	14,760	26,665
North American Indian	249,865	113,825	52,660	18,530	39,465	8,895	14,370
Métis	148,490	47,925	39,825	14,205	29,455	5,050	10,600
Inuit	16,810	10,090	2,430	1,110	2,270	335	540
Multiple Aboriginal identities	2,975	990	785	300	525	110	240
Other Aboriginal identity	12,065	4,540	2,680	1,210	2,210	370	910
Non-Aboriginal population	12,763,230	2,916,335	3,422,175	971,980	2,454,875	642,295	2,089,840

Note: Population aged 15 years and older.

1. Certificate or diploma.

2. Certificate or diploma below bachelor's degree.

3. Degree at the bachelor's level or higher.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 1.3 Aboriginal identity population, by age group, sex and province and territory, 2006

	Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario
	number						
Both sexes, all ages	1,172,790	23,450	1,730	24,175	17,655	108,430	242,490
0 to 4	108,895	1,445	230	1,745	1,350	8,680	19,815
5 to 9	114,765	1,805	210	2,080	1,605	9,185	21,075
10 to 14	125,235	2,145	160	2,480	1,490	9,650	23,435
15 to 19	118,105	2,300	170	2,430	1,695	9,590	22,335
20 to 24	93,905	1,920	100	1,905	1,240	8,200	18,540
25 to 34	161,570	3,035	235	3,220	2,195	14,440	33,680
35 to 44	169,465	3,675	230	3,630	2,870	16,005	37,935
45 to 54	143,285	3,395	215	3,515	2,645	14,775	33,720
55 to 64	81,090	2,175	100	1,930	1,445	9,910	19,340
65 and older	56,465	1,545	75	1,230	1,105	7,995	12,615
Males, all ages	572,090	11,525	760	11,770	8,645	53,525	117,590
0 to 4	55,380	700	120	880	690	4,460	10,150
5 to 9	58,910	920	95	1,060	815	4,560	10,685
10 to 14	64,120	1,135	75	1,240	715	5,015	11,840
15 to 19	60,250	1,150	65	1,170	885	4,840	11,600
20 to 24	45,390	940	70	945	615	3,975	8,925
25 to 34	76,220	1,375	120	1,455	1,040	7,015	15,440
35 to 44	79,205	1,735	70	1,690	1,390	7,865	17,945
45 to 54	67,540	1,735	85	1,715	1,310	7,225	15,895
55 to 64	39,420	1,140	30	1,020	720	5,005	9,475
65 and older	25,650	695	30	595	460	3,565	5,620
Females, all ages	600,695	11,925	970	12,405	9,010	54,905	124,905
0 to 4	53,515	745	110	870	660	4,215	9,660
5 to 9	55,860	885	110	1,015	795	4,625	10,390
10 to 14	61,110	1,005	80	1,240	780	4,640	11,595
15 to 19	57,855	1,150	105	1,260	810	4,750	10,740
20 to 24	48,510	980	35	960	625	4,220	9,610
25 to 34	85,350	1,660	115	1,770	1,155	7,420	18,240
35 to 44	90,260	1,940	160	1,940	1,480	8,140	19,985
45 to 54	75,745	1,660	125	1,805	1,335	7,550	17,825
55 to 64	41,670	1,040	70	910	720	4,910	9,865
65 and older	30,810	855	50	635	645	4,425	7,000

See source at end of table.

Table 1.3 Aboriginal identity population, by age group, sex and province and territory, 2006 (continued)

	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut
	number						
Both sexes, all ages	175,395	142,045	188,215	196,075	7,580	20,665	24,890
0 to 4	18,810	16,600	18,315	16,195	640	1,875	3,195
5 to 9	19,180	16,540	19,300	18,005	690	1,950	3,135
10 to 14	20,200	17,510	20,945	21,045	735	2,355	3,070
15 to 19	17,910	16,130	19,630	19,945	700	2,290	2,980
20 to 24	14,250	11,990	16,535	14,875	550	1,590	2,200
25 to 34	23,830	19,365	28,730	25,605	990	2,770	3,475
35 to 44	23,720	17,845	26,510	29,615	1,230	3,020	3,175
45 to 54	19,215	13,705	20,420	26,425	1,045	2,350	1,850
55 to 64	10,940	7,115	10,695	14,420	580	1,330	1,100
65 and older	7,340	5,240	7,125	9,930	420	1,125	705
Males, all ages	85,720	69,640	91,670	94,855	3,665	10,180	12,545
0 to 4	9,585	8,395	9,405	8,130	315	920	1,630
5 to 9	10,100	8,655	9,930	9,155	345	990	1,590
10 to 14	10,475	8,925	10,625	10,960	370	1,190	1,550
15 to 19	8,805	8,275	9,940	10,400	395	1,170	1,550
20 to 24	6,630	5,770	8,105	7,180	280	850	1,105
25 to 34	11,375	8,775	14,010	12,175	445	1,270	1,725
35 to 44	10,895	8,415	12,005	13,525	635	1,470	1,550
45 to 54	9,050	6,620	9,385	12,085	460	1,080	890
55 to 64	5,390	3,345	4,985	6,790	240	700	575
65 and older	3,405	2,455	3,280	4,460	180	540	370
Females, all ages	89,675	72,400	96,545	101,215	3,915	10,480	12,345
0 to 4	9,230	8,200	8,910	8,065	325	955	1,565
5 to 9	9,080	7,885	9,375	8,850	340	965	1,540
10 to 14	9,725	8,585	10,320	10,090	370	1,160	1,520
15 to 19	9,105	7,855	9,690	9,545	300	1,120	1,430
20 to 24	7,620	6,220	8,430	7,695	275	740	1,095
25 to 34	12,450	10,590	14,720	13,430	540	1,500	1,750
35 to 44	12,820	9,425	14,505	16,095	595	1,550	1,625
45 to 54	10,165	7,080	11,035	14,345	585	1,270	960
55 to 64	5,550	3,775	5,710	7,635	335	635	520
65 and older	3,935	2,780	3,845	5,470	240	585	330

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 1.4 Population, by Aboriginal identity, labour force characteristics and sex, 2006

	All labour force status	In the labour force	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force
	number				
Both sexes	25,664,220	17,146,135	16,021,180	1,124,960	8,518,085
Aboriginal identity population	823,890	519,250	442,395	76,860	304,635
North American Indian	473,235	278,455	228,285	50,175	194,780
Métis	291,325	204,165	183,785	20,375	87,165
Inuit	32,775	20,100	16,020	4,080	12,675
Multiple Aboriginal identities	5,590	3,595	3,290	310	1,990
Other Aboriginal identity	20,960	12,935	11,015	1,920	8,025
Non-Aboriginal population	24,840,335	16,626,880	15,578,780	1,048,100	8,213,450
Males	12,470,785	9,020,595	8,431,530	589,065	3,450,190
Aboriginal identity population	393,680	264,980	222,350	42,625	128,700
North American Indian	223,370	141,100	113,150	27,950	82,275
Métis	142,840	105,790	94,720	11,070	37,050
Inuit	15,965	10,195	7,770	2,430	5,770
Multiple Aboriginal identities	2,610	1,810	1,615	195	800
Other Aboriginal identity	8,890	6,085	5,100	985	2,805
Non-Aboriginal population	12,077,100	8,755,615	8,209,180	546,435	3,321,485
Females	13,193,435	8,125,540	7,589,650	535,890	5,067,895
Aboriginal identity population	430,205	254,270	220,040	34,230	175,935
North American Indian	249,860	137,360	115,135	22,220	112,505
Métis	148,490	98,370	89,060	9,310	50,120
Inuit	16,810	9,905	8,255	1,645	6,905
Multiple Aboriginal identities	2,975	1,785	1,670	115	1,190
Other Aboriginal identity	12,065	6,850	5,920	935	5,215
Non-Aboriginal population	12,763,230	7,871,265	7,369,605	501,660	4,891,960
	Participation rate	Employment rate		Unemployment rate	
		%			
Both sexes	66.8	62.4		6.6	
Aboriginal identity population	63.0	53.7		14.8	
North American Indian	58.8	48.2		18.0	
Métis	70.1	63.1		10.0	
Inuit	61.3	48.9		20.3	
Multiple Aboriginal identities	64.3	58.9		8.6	
Other Aboriginal identity	61.7	52.6		14.8	
Non-Aboriginal population	66.9	62.7		6.3	
Males	72.3	67.6		6.5	
Aboriginal identity population	67.3	56.5		16.1	
North American Indian	63.2	50.7		19.8	
Métis	74.1	66.3		10.5	
Inuit	63.9	48.7		23.8	
Multiple Aboriginal identities	69.3	61.9		10.8	
Other Aboriginal identity	68.4	57.4		16.2	
Non-Aboriginal population	72.5	68.0		6.2	
Females	61.6	57.5		6.6	
Aboriginal identity population	59.1	51.1		13.5	
North American Indian	55.0	46.1		16.2	
Métis	66.2	60.0		9.5	
Inuit	58.9	49.1		16.6	
Multiple Aboriginal identities	60.0	56.1		6.4	
Other Aboriginal identity	56.8	49.1		13.6	
Non-Aboriginal population	61.7	57.7		6.4	

Note: Population aged 15 and older.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.