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## 1 Aboriginal Population

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### Description

Aboriginal population can be defined in a number of ways, and there are three indicators of aboriginal population available from the Census. The first is aboriginal identity, which counts those who reported being an Aboriginal Person; the second is registered or treaty Indian status as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada; and the third is aboriginal ancestry.

### Specific Indicators

- Percentage of the population who reported being an Aboriginal person
- Percentage of the population who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada
- Percentage of the population who reported having Aboriginal ancestry

### Ontario Public Health Standards

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) establish requirements for the fundamental public health programs and services carried out by boards of health, which include assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, disease and injury prevention, and health protection. The OPHS consist of one Foundational Standard and 13 Program Standards that articulate broad societal goals that result from the activities undertaken by boards of health and many others, including community partners, non-governmental organizations, and governmental bodies. These results have been expressed in terms of two levels of outcomes: societal outcomes and board of health outcomes. Societal outcomes entail changes in health status, organizations, systems, norms, policies, environments, and practices and result from the work of many sectors of society, including boards of health, for the improvement of the overall health of the population. Board of health outcomes are the results of endeavours by boards of health and often focus on changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, environments, and policies. Boards of health are accountable for these outcomes. The standards also outline the requirements that boards of health must implement to achieve the stated results.

### Outcomes related to this indicator

Societal Outcome (Foundational Standard): Population health needs are anticipated, identified, addressed, and evaluated.

### Assessment and/or Surveillance Requirements Related to this Indicator

The board of health shall use population health, determinants of health and health inequities information to assess the needs of the local population, including the identification of populations at risk, to determine those groups that would benefit most from public health programs and services (i.e., priority populations).

### Protocol Requirements Related to this Indicator

The board of health shall analyze population health data and interpret the information to describe the distribution of health outcomes, preventive health practices, risk factors, determinants of health, and other relevant information to assess the overall health of its population. The board of health shall collect or access the following types of population health data and information: i) Socio-demographics including population counts by age, sex, education, employment, income, housing, language, immigration, culture, ability/disability, and cost of a nutritious food basket; <http://www.ontario.ca/publichealthstandards>

### Corresponding Health Indicator from Statistics Canada and CIHI

None

### Data Sources (see Resources: [Data Sources](#))

**Numerator & Denominator:** [Canadian Census \(to 2011, 20% sample\), \(2016, 25% sample\), National Household Survey \(2011, voluntary\)](#)

**Original source:** Statistics Canada

**Distributed by:** Statistics Canada

**Suggested citation (see Data Citation Notes):**

[year] Census, Statistics Canada

2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada

### Survey Questions

Survey & Question #	Question	Response Options	Accompanying Instructions to the Interviewer
Question 17 – Census/National Household Survey	What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person’s ancestors?	Open-ended, four eleven-letter spaces for responses provided.	An ancestor is usually more distant than a grandparent. For example, Canadian, English, French, Chinese, East Indian, Italian, German, Scottish, Cree, Mi’kmaq, Salish, Métis, Inuit, Filipino, Dutch, Ukrainian, Polish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Korean, Jamaican, Greek, Iranian, Lebanese, Mexican, Somali, Colombian, etc.

<p>Question 18 – Census/National Household Survey</p>	<p>Is this person an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?</p>	<p>No, not an Aboriginal Person Yes, First Nations (North American Indian) Yes, Métis Yes, Inuk (Inuit)</p>	<p>Answer this question regardless of whether or not this person is an Aboriginal person of North America. Aboriginal people are usually those with ancestors who resided in North America prior to European contact and who can identify with one of the three Aboriginal groups listed on the questionnaire— First Nations (North American Indian), Métis and Inuit. Persons who consider themselves to be East Indian or Asian Indian, or who have ethnic roots on the subcontinent of India, should respond “No” to this question. Individuals who refer to themselves as Métis in the context of mixed ancestry, but who do not have North American Aboriginal ancestry—for example, those from Africa, the Caribbean and South America— should respond “No.”</p>
<p>Question 20 – Census/National Household Survey</p>	<p>Is this person a Status Indian (Registered or Treaty Indian as defined by the <i>Indian Act</i> of Canada)?</p>	<p>Yes, Status Indian (Registered or Treaty) No</p>	<p>Select the circle “Yes, Status Indian (Registered or Treaty) for persons who: - Are Registered</p>

			<p>Indians under the <i>Indian Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are Treaty Indians, only if they are Registered Indians under the <i>Indian Act</i></li> <li>-Have become Registered since June 1985, when Bill C-31 changed the <i>Indian Act</i></li> </ul> <p>All other persons should mark "No," including persons who may be entitled to register under provisions of the <i>Indian Act</i>, but for some reason have not.</p>
Question 21 – Census/National Household Survey	Is this person a member of a First Nation/Indian band?	<p>Yes, member of a First Nation/Indian band</p> <p>No</p>	<p>A First Nation/Indian band is a group of people for whom lands have been set apart and/or money is held by the Crown. A member of a First Nation/Indian band is an individual who is recognized as being a member of a First Nation/Indian band, as defined by either the band itself or the <i>Indian Act</i>. Individuals should report their First Nation/Indian band affiliation rather than their tribal affiliation—for example, "Chemawawin First Nation Band" instead of "Cree."</p>

## Alternative Data Sources

### **Numerator & Denominator:** [Canadian Community Health Survey](#)

**Original source:** Statistics Canada

**Distributed by:** Statistics Canada

**Suggested citation (see [Data Citation Notes](#)):**

Canadian Community Health Survey [year], Statistics Canada

### **Survey Question**

SDC\_Q4\_1: Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit?

Note: Since 2011, only respondents who indicated that they were born in Canada, the United States, Germany or Greenland were asked this question.

### **Numerator & Denominator:** [Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System](#)

**Original source:** Selected Public Health Units

**Distributed by:** Institute for Social Research, York University

**Suggested citation (see [Data Citation Notes](#)):**

Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [year], Participating Public Health Units

### **Survey Question**

eth1: To what ethnic or cultural group do you belong?

eth2: In addition to being Canadian to what ethnic or cultural group did you, or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?

### **Numerator & Denominator:** On & Off-reserve Registered Indian Population

**Original source:** Indian Register

**Distributed by:** Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

**Suggested citation (See [Data Citation Notes](#)):**

Indian Register [year], Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

**Browsing instructions:** visit <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/>

Select your language (English or Français) to view the main site.

- Under 'Indigenous peoples', select 'First Nations'
- Under 'Find out more', select 'First Nations Profiles'
- To find relevant reserve population, under 'Quick Links', select 'First Nation', or 'Reserve/Settlement/Village', or 'Geographic location'
- Under 'General Information', select 'Reserves' to see on what reserves registered members of the selected First Nations live on
- Under 'General Information', select 'Registered Pop.' To see population numbers on own reserve, other reserves, crown land, & off reserve by sex

### **Use & Limitations**

CCHS and RRFSS are most often used for stratification or weighting other indicators, rather than as a primary estimate of Aboriginal population. For RRFSS, ethnicity is not directly comparable to identity. On & Off-reserve Registered Indian Population data provide additional context to the Census data, and can be used to complement those indicators. These data are available at the Indian reserve / band level. Some health regions have multiple bands within their geographic boundaries. Off-reserve registered Indians will not necessarily live within the bounds of the health region that contains their reserve.

## Analysis Check List

None

## Method of Calculation

### Percentage of the population that is Aboriginal: Aboriginal population

Aboriginal identity population x 100

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Total population in private households by Aboriginal identity  
Percentage of population in private households who are Registered or Treaty Indians

Registered or treaty Indian x 100

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Total population in private households by Registered or Treaty Indian status  
Percentage of population in private households by Aboriginal Ancestry

Aboriginal ancestry x 100

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Total population in private households by Aboriginal ancestry

## Basic Categories

- Aboriginal Identity (total)
- Aboriginal group: First Nation (North American Indian), Métis, Inuk (Inuit), or multiple Aboriginal identities. All four of these categories are mutually exclusive.
- Aboriginal ancestry (total)
- Aboriginal ancestry categories (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) are NOT mutually exclusive, and will therefore sum to more than the Aboriginal ancestry (total)
- Geographic areas: public health unit, census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations, census subdivisions.

## Indicator Comments

### Aboriginal group

- Aboriginal group refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, or with two or more of these groups.<sup>1,2</sup> This is a subset of the aboriginal identity indicator, which also includes those who did not state that they belonged to an aboriginal group, but DID state that they either belonged to an Indian band/First Nation (see *Member of an Indian band or First Nation*, below) or were registered/Treaty Indians.
- According to the Métis National Council, a 'Métis' is a person who 'self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.'<sup>3</sup>
- Caution should be exercised in analyzing trends for Aboriginal peoples based on previous census data. Over time, patterns in Aboriginal self-identification have changed. In recent years, a growing number of people who had not previously identified with an Aboriginal group are

now doing so. Changes in the participation of First Nations people living on reserve in the census over time also affect historical comparison.<sup>4</sup>

- Prior to the 1996 Census, counts for Aboriginal persons were calculated using the ethnic origin/ancestry question.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Member of an Indian band or First Nation*

- Member of an Indian band or First Nation refers to those persons who reported being a member of an Indian band or a First Nation of Canada.<sup>1,2</sup>
- In 1991, band membership was a subcomponent of Question 16 on Registered Indian status.<sup>4</sup>
- In 1996, one direct question was developed to collect data on band/First Nation membership.<sup>4</sup>
- Many Indian bands choose to be referred to as a First Nation and have changed their band name to reflect this. With the 1985 amendment to the *Indian Act* of Canada (commonly referred to as Bill C-31), many Indian bands exercised the right to establish their own membership code, whereby it was not always necessary for a band member to be a Registered Indian according to the *Indian act*.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Registered Indian or Treaty Indian*

- Registered Indian or Treaty Indian refers to those persons who reported they were registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada. Registered Indians are persons who are registered under the *Indian Act*. Treaty Indians are persons who belong to a First Nation or Indian band that signed a treaty with the Crown. Registered or Treaty Indians are sometimes also called Status Indians.<sup>1</sup>
- Although the 1991 Census included a question on registration status, the layout of the question in the 1996 Census included two components: one asking about registration status and the other about band membership. The wording in the 1996 census includes the term 'treaty', while in prior Census, 'treaty' was not included in the question.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Aboriginal Identity (derived)*

- The derived Aboriginal identity concept refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. The Aboriginal identity population is derived from 3 questions (Questions 18, 20 and 21).<sup>1,2,4</sup>
- Caution should be exercised in analyzing trends in Aboriginal identity based on data from previous censuses. Although the data have not been affected by changes in the question, the growth in the census counts of the Aboriginal identity population has been affected by both demographic factors (birth, deaths and migration) and non-demographic factors such as reporting changes in those identifying as Aboriginal and by the relative number of incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and settlements.<sup>1</sup>

#### *On-reserve*

- The 'on reserve' population is a derived census variable that is captured by using the census subdivision (CSD) type according to criteria established by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).<sup>1,2</sup>
- The 'on reserve' population includes all people living in any of six CSD types legally affiliated with First Nations or Indian bands.<sup>1,2</sup>

- 'On Reserve' includes legally defined Indian reserves, Indian settlements, other land types created by the ratification of Self-Government Agreements and other northern communities affiliated with First Nations, according to the criteria established by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (previously named Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).<sup>1,2</sup>

### *General*

- The 2011 National Household Survey questions and definitions (i.e., Aboriginal group, Member of an Indian band or First Nation, Aboriginal identity, and on reserve) are the same as the one used in the 2006, 2001 and 1996 Census.<sup>1,2,4</sup> Users should be aware that the estimates associated with this variable are more affected than most by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the National Household Survey (NHS).<sup>1,2</sup>
- The National Household Survey is voluntary while the 2016 Census gathered data from a 25% sample of the population, and 2011 Census and previous censuses gathered data on Aboriginal identity from a 20% sample of the population. To reduce non-response bias, Statistics Canada sent enumerators to ALL dwellings on Indian reserves to offer them the opportunity to respond. For differences between the NHS and the Census, see the National Household Survey User Guide.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2011, on some Indian reserves and Indian settlements, enumeration was not permitted, or was interrupted before it could be completed. For other Indian reserves and Indian settlements, the quality of the collected data was considered inadequate. Most of the people living on incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and settlements are Registered Indians. Consequently, the impact of incomplete enumeration will be greatest on data for First Nations people and for persons registered under the *Indian Act*. For lists of incompletely enumerated reserves, refer to previous Census and the National Household Survey documentation. The list of Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements is currently available from the Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide, 2011 National Household Survey.
- The comparison of data availability across the three census years should be done with caution. There have been changes in methodology over time which could affect the calculation of global non-response rates and would limit their comparability over time. Any comparison of Aboriginal data across census years must adjust for incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements.
- In 2011, a total of 36 Indian reserves and Indian settlements were incompletely enumerated (i.e., enumeration was either not permitted, or was interrupted before it could be completed).<sup>1</sup> For 13 reserves in Northern Ontario, enumeration was delayed because of natural events (i.e., forest fires), and estimates for these communities are not included in national or provincial estimates. The impact may be more significant for lower geographic areas, such as census subdivisions. Incomplete enumeration of reserves impacts estimates for First Nations populations living on reserve as well as the Registered or Treaty Indian population living on reserve, among other populations.<sup>1</sup> For lists of incompletely enumerated reserves as part of the Censuses, refer to the Aboriginal Peoples Technical Report, 2006 Census, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition produced by Statistics Canada.
- Aboriginal people living off-reserve were more likely to report poorer health outcomes (e.g., self-rated health, diagnosed with a chronic condition, smoking) compared non-Aboriginals.<sup>6</sup>
- Low income and education among Aboriginals living off-reserve is associated with poorer health outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Income and education levels do not fully explain the differences in health status between Aboriginal adults living off-reserve and non-Aboriginal adults.<sup>6</sup> Other indirect factors such as racism and social exclusion may play an important role in sustaining health inequalities.
- Differences in health outcomes may exist between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups because of factors that impact health.<sup>6</sup>

### **Cross-References to Other Indicators**

- None

## References

1. Statistics Canada. Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide, National Household Survey, 2011. Available from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/guides/99-011-x/99-011-x2011006-eng.pdf>
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3. Métis National Council. Citizenship. Available from: <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis/citizenship>
4. Statistics Canada. Aboriginal Peoples Technical Report, 2006 Census, Second Edition. Available from: [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/rp-guides/rp/ap-pa\\_2/pdf/92-569-X2006001-Part2-eng.pdf](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/rp-guides/rp/ap-pa_2/pdf/92-569-X2006001-Part2-eng.pdf)
5. Statistics Canada. National Household Survey User Guide, NHS, 2011. Available from: [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm\\_guide/99-001-x2011001-eng.pdf](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm_guide/99-001-x2011001-eng.pdf)
6. Statistics Canada. The Health of First Nations Living Off-Reserve, Inuit, and Métis in Canada: The Impact of Socio-economic Status on Inequalities in Health. Available from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-622-x/82-622-x2010004-eng.pdf>

## Acknowledgements

Date	Type of Review-Form Review or Ad Hoc?	Changes made by	Changes
February 2017	Ad Hoc	Social Determinants of Health Subgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added reference to 2016 Census and National Household Survey in 2011</li> <li>• Updated steps to access on- and off-reserve data</li> <li>• Updated questions from the RRFSS</li> </ul>
May 2014	Formal	Social Determinants of Health Subgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated description</li> <li>• Addition of Ontario Public Health Standards description</li> <li>• Addition of outcomes related to the indicator, assessment and/or surveillance requirements related to the indicator, and protocol requirements related to the indicator</li> <li>• Added the corresponding health indicator from Statistics Canada and CIHI</li> <li>• Added corresponding indicators from other sources</li> <li>• Updated the data sources</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the survey questions with accompanying instructions to interviewers</li> <li>• Added an alternative data source</li> <li>• Updated the method of calculation</li> <li>• Updated the basic categories</li> <li>• Revised the indicator comments</li> <li>• Updated the references</li> <li>• Added acknowledgements</li> <li>• Added changes made</li> </ul>
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**Changes made**

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