

Aboriginal Population, 2001



Just over 1.3 million people reported having at least some Aboriginal ancestry in 2001, representing 4.4 % of the total population. In 1996, people with Aboriginal ancestry represented 3.8 % of the total population. Aboriginal ancestry refers to those persons who reported at least one Aboriginal origin (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) on the ethnic origin question in the 2001 Census.

From 1901 to 2001, the Aboriginal ancestry population increased tenfold, while the total population of Canada rose by a factor of only six. However, the rate of growth was very different in the first half of the 20th Century compared with the second half. During the first 50 years, the Aboriginal population grew only 29%, whereas the total population far more than doubled (161%). This relatively slow rate of growth among the Aboriginal population occurred because high mortality rates more than offset high birth rates.

On the other hand, between 1951 and 2001, the Aboriginal ancestry population grew sevenfold, while the Canadian population as a whole only doubled. The Aboriginal population had low growth until the 1960s. Starting in the 1960s, the infant death rate began to decline rapidly, mainly as a result of improved access to health services. The fertility rate continued to be high throughout the 1960s. This Aboriginal baby boom peaked in 1967, about 10 years later than the Canadian post-war baby boom. Aboriginal fertility has remained above the overall Canadian birth rate, although the birth rate has declined from four times the Canadian rate in the 1960s to one-and-a-half times today.

The text was adapted from Statistics Canada, Aboriginal peoples of Canada : A demographic profile, Catalogue number 96F0030XIE2001007. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from the Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at: www.statcan.ca, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.