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Census of Population Reference Guide

Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide

Census of Population, 2016

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Definitions and concepts

There are various ways to define the Aboriginal population using data from the 2016 Census of Population, depending on the focus and the requirements of the data user. The following variables, which are used to define the Aboriginal population, are available from the survey and are defined in the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-301-X:

- [Aboriginal identity](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm>)
- [Aboriginal group](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm>)
- [Registered or Treaty Indian status](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm>)
- [Membership in a First Nation or Indian band](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm>)
- [Aboriginal ancestry](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop145-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop145-eng.cfm>)

The population estimates for Canada from the 2016 Census using the different definitions are shown below.

Table 1
Estimates for Aboriginal identity, Aboriginal group, Registered or Treaty Indian status, Membership in a First Nation or Indian band and Aboriginal ancestry, 2016 Census

Concept	2016 Census of Population estimate ¹
Aboriginal identity ²	1,673,785
Aboriginal group	1,651,115
Registered or Treaty Indian status	820,115
Membership in a First Nation or Indian band	792,140
Aboriginal ancestry ³	2,130,520

1. Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2016 Census of Population while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, estimates and percentages may vary slightly between different 2016 Census products, such as the analytical documents and various data tables.

2. "Aboriginal identity" refers to whether the person reported identifying with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who reported Registered or Treaty Indian status that is registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada, and/or those who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the *Constitution Act, 1982*, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

3. "Aboriginal ancestry" includes at least one response in Question 17 to an origin that can be classified in one of First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuit ancestry, either with or without also reporting a non-Aboriginal ancestry.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

Specific legally defined geographic regions are often important to users of Aboriginal data. The following variables, as defined in the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-301-X are available from the survey:

- [Residence on or off reserve](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop167-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop167-eng.cfm>)
- [Residence inside or outside Inuit Nunangat](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm>)

The data collected in the Census of Population are used by governments, including Aboriginal governments and organizations, to develop programs and services for Aboriginal peoples.

Classifications

Data collected from answers reported in the Aboriginal questions in the 2016 Census of Population are used to derive summary and detailed variables which provide a portrait of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The 2016 Census uses standard Statistics Canada classifications for [Aboriginal identity](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm>), [Aboriginal group](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm>), [Registered or Treaty Indian status](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm>), [Membership in a First Nation or Indian band](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm>), [Aboriginal ancestry](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop145-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop145-eng.cfm>), [Residence on or off reserve](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop167-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop167-eng.cfm>) and [Residence inside or outside Inuit Nunangat](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm>). Tables accessible from the [Census of Population](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>) page on the Statistics Canada website also show the specific Aboriginal variables used in data products for the 2016 Census.

Data for Aboriginal languages are disseminated using the standard Statistics Canada classifications for [Knowledge of non-official languages](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop054-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop054-eng.cfm>).

Questions

The 2016 Census of Population data on Aboriginal identity, Aboriginal group, Registered or Treaty Indian status, Membership in a First Nation or Indian band and Aboriginal ancestry variables were collected from answers reported in questions 18, 20, 21 and 17:

- Aboriginal identity: Derived data from questions 18, 20 and 21
- Aboriginal group: Question 18
- Registered or Treaty Indian status: Question 20
- Membership in a First Nation or Indian band: Question 21
- Aboriginal ancestry: Question 17 (Ethnic origin)

For the 2016 Census, the [2A-L questionnaire](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295122&UL=1V&) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295122&UL=1V&) was used to enumerate a 25% sample of all private households in Canada, except for private households on Indian reserves, Indian settlements and other remote areas, which all received the [2A-R questionnaire](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295299&UL=1V&) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295299&UL=1V&). On both questionnaires, questions 18, 20 and 21 were identical.

In Question 17 (Ethnic origin), the examples were different on the 2A-L and 2A-R questionnaires. The 2A-L examples were: Canadian, English, Chinese, French, East Indian, Italian, German, Scottish, Cree, Mi'kmaq, Salish, Métis, Inuit, Filipino, Irish, Dutch, Ukrainian, Polish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Korean, Jamaican, Greek, Iranian, Lebanese, Mexican, Somali and Colombian.

In comparison, the 2A-R questionnaire examples were more specific to the Aboriginal population: Cree, Ojibway, Mi'kmaq, Salish, Dene, Blackfoot, Inuit, Métis, Canadian, French, English and German.

For the most part, the 2A-L questionnaire examples were based on the most frequent single origins reported in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and were arranged in descending order of size as reported in 2011, beginning with the largest group. Examples were also included to reflect Aboriginal peoples living in Canada. Similarly, on the 2AR questionnaire, the most frequently reported Aboriginal origins were included as examples, with an effort being made to ensure that Aboriginal examples from different regions of Canada were included. Non-Aboriginal examples in the list included the most frequently reported origins in the 2011 NHS.

More information on the wording and format of the 2016 Census questions used to define the Aboriginal population and the instructions that were provided to respondents in order to assist them in answering those questions can be found in the [2A-L questionnaire](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295122&UL=1V&) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295122&UL=1V&); the [2A-R questionnaire](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295299&UL=1V&); (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=295299&UL=1V&); the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304-X; as well as the entries in the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for [Aboriginal group](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop144-eng.cfm>), [Registered or Treaty Indian status](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm>), [Membership in a First Nation or Indian band](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop070-eng.cfm>) and [Ethnic origin](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop030-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop030-eng.cfm>).

Data quality

The 2016 long-form census questionnaire underwent a thorough data quality assessment, similar to what was done for the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and past censuses. A number of data quality indicators (briefly described below) were produced and used to evaluate the quality of the data.

The data quality assessment was done in addition to the regular quality checks completed at key stages of the survey. For example, during data collection and processing, the consistency of the responses provided was checked and the non-response rates for each question were analysed. As well, the quality of imputed responses was examined as part of the data editing and imputation steps. Finally, long-form census questionnaire estimates were compared with other data sources, and certified for final release.

For information about data quality for the census subdivision of Wood Buffalo, the data collection methodology and the use of administrative data sources, please refer to [Appendix 1.4](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-4-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-4-eng.cfm>) of the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The main highlights of this assessment for the Aboriginal data are presented below.

Variability due to sampling and total non-response

The objective of the long-form census questionnaire is to produce estimates on various topics for a wide variety of geographies, ranging from very large areas (such as provinces and census metropolitan areas) to very small areas (such as neighbourhoods and municipalities), and for various subpopulations (such as Aboriginal peoples and immigrants) that are generally referred to as “domains of interest.” In order to reduce response burden, the long-form census questionnaire is administered to a random sample of households.

This sampling approach and the total non-response introduce variability in the estimates that needs to be accounted for. This variability also depends on the population size and the variability of the characteristics being measured. Furthermore, the precision of estimates may vary appreciably depending on the domain or geography of interest, in particular because of the variation in response rates. For more information on the variability due to sampling and total non-response in long-form census questionnaire estimates, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Non-response bias

Non-response bias is a potential source of error for all surveys, including the long-form census questionnaire. Non-response bias arises when the characteristics of those who participate in a survey are different from the characteristics of those who do not.

In general, the risk of non-response bias increases as the response rate declines. For the 2016 long-form census questionnaire, Statistics Canada adapted its collection and estimation procedures in order to mitigate, to the extent possible, the effect of non-response bias. For more information on these mitigation strategies, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Data quality indicators

A number of quality indicators were produced and analyzed during the data quality assessment of the long-form census questionnaire. Three of these are presented to users: the global non-response rate (GNR), the standard error, and the imputation rate by question.

The GNR combines non-response at the household level (or total non-response) and non-response at the question level (partial non-response). It is calculated and presented for each geographic area. The GNR is the key criterion that determines whether or not the long-form census questionnaire results are released for a given geographic area: data are suppressed for geographic areas with a GNR equal to or greater than 50%. More information on the GNR is available in the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The standard error is a measure of the precision of an estimate with respect to sampling and total non-response variability. A small standard error corresponds to a precise estimate. Standard errors are made available to users for certain long-form census questionnaire estimates, except in cases where confidentiality would be compromised. The standard error can be used to derive other indicators of precision such as the coefficient of variation. It can also be used for most types of population parameters of interest (e.g. a count, a proportion or an average) and, using an adequate methodology, to derive margins of errors or confidence intervals for a given confidence level or to perform statistical inference (hypothesis testing). For more information on the long-form census questionnaire standard error and its interpretability and use, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The imputation rate by question, excluding global non-response, is a measurement of quality specific to each question in the long-form census questionnaire. It measures the proportion of respondents ('respondents' being defined as those for whom a fully- or partially-completed questionnaire was returned) who did not answer the question, or whose response was invalid and for which a valid value was assigned. Imputation eliminates gaps in the data and, when done appropriately, reduces bias introduced by non-response. This is done by identifying persons or households that have characteristics similar to the incomplete record and by copying their values to fill in the missing or erroneous responses. The imputation rates by question are presented in [Table 2](#).

Certification of final estimates

Once data processing, editing and imputation were completed, the data were weighted in order for estimates to represent the total Canadian population living in private dwellings. Certification of the final weighted estimates was the last step in the validation process leading to recommendation for release of the data for each geography and domain of interest. Based on the analysis of data quality indicators and the comparison of the long-form census questionnaire estimates with other data sources, the recommendation is for unconditional release, conditional release or non-release for quality reasons. In the case of conditional release or non-release, appropriate notes and warnings are included in this guide. Several data sources were used to evaluate the long-form census questionnaire estimates. However, since the risk of error often increases for lower levels of geography and for smaller populations, and the data sources used to evaluate these results are less reliable (or not available) at these lower levels, it can be difficult to certify the estimates at these levels.

Long-form census questionnaire estimates are also subject to confidentiality rules that ensure non-disclosure of individual respondent identity and characteristics. For more information on confidentiality rules, please refer to the

Guide to the Census of Population, 2016 (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

For more information on data processing and the calculation of the estimates and their level of precision, please refer to the *Sampling and Weighting Technical Report, Census of Population, 2016* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-306/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-306-X.

Comparability

Comparability over time

When Census Program data are compared over time—for example, comparisons between the 2016 Census and the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) or the 2006 Census—changes in coverage and measurement need to be taken into account. Changes to coverage include the participation of some Indian reserves in one year but not another and changes to the definition of “on reserve.” Changes in measurement can include changes to the questionnaire and legal changes. In addition, other factors can have an impact on how individuals respond to the census questions. This section outlines various elements that could affect comparability over time for the Aboriginal variables in the 2016 Census.

Changes in coverage

Changes made to the definition of reserves

Statistics Canada uses the definition of “on reserve” provided by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). From time to time, changes are made to the geographies that define Indian reserves and Indian settlements (see the *Census subdivision (CSD)* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo012-eng.cfm>) definition in the Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016, Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for the definition of “on reserve”). In 2006, there were 1,174 on-reserve CSDs; in 2011, there were 997, and, in 2016, there were 984. Changes could be the result of additions, deletions, boundary changes or amalgamations. Data are adjusted for these changes to compare populations of the affected geographies (e.g., to compare the on- and off-reserve populations). These can be requested through custom tabulations. For more information about Indian reserves, consult the *INAC* (<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/>) website.

Differences in the list of incompletely enumerated reserves

In 2016, there were 14 Indian reserves and Indian settlements that were ‘incompletely enumerated’ in the census (see *Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dq-qd/iir-rii-eng.cfm>)). In 2011, there were a total of 36 Indian reserves and Indian settlements that were ‘incompletely enumerated’ in the NHS; 31 of these were also incompletely enumerated in the 2011 Census. The five additional reserves that were incompletely enumerated in the NHS were cases where only the census portion of the enumeration was completed and the NHS enumeration was either not permitted or was interrupted before it could be completed, or was not possible because of natural events. In 2006 there were 22 Indian reserves and Indian settlements that were ‘incompletely enumerated’ in the census.

The issue of incompletely enumerated reserves has an impact on census estimates for the First Nations population living 'on reserve' as well as the Registered or Treaty Indian population living 'on reserve'. Estimates for other populations could also be affected.¹

Estimates associated with other variables related to First Nations, such as language and band housing, may also be affected by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the Census of Population.

To compare two different points in time, the exclusions in each reference point have to be applied to both base estimates, which means only reserves present at both time points should be used in the comparison.

For more information on incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements, please refer to [Appendix 1.2](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-2-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-2-eng.cfm>) of the Guide to the Census of Population, 2016, Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Comparability of population and dwelling counts over time

In 2016 and 2006, dwellings on reserves for which the occupancy status could not be verified or determined during collection were mostly assumed to be unoccupied. In 2011, dwellings for which the occupancy status could not be verified or determined were mostly assumed to be occupied. Actual occupancy for these dwellings was unknown, and the assumptions made during collection may reflect the actual situation across reserves with different degrees of accuracy.

This difference in methodology does not affect the comparability of counts over different censuses for all reserves. It might have an impact when comparing counts for reserves that had a significant number of dwellings with unknown occupancy status at a given point.

When changes in population and dwelling counts are analyzed over time, it is recommended that multiple reference years be included, especially for smaller geographic areas. Smaller population counts may be more affected by non-response. The methodology for the 2016 Census is comparable with that employed for the 2006 Census. Therefore, comparisons between the 2006 Census and the 2016 Census are not affected by this difference in methodology.

Differences in methodology for the 2011 National Household Survey

The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) employed a different methodology from that used for the 2016 Census, the 2006 Census and prior censuses. These differences can affect comparability between 2016 Census estimates and 2011 NHS estimates. For more information on the comparability between the 2016 Census and the 2011 NHS, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

1. Other affected populations include the total Aboriginal identity population, the First Nations (North American Indian) identity population, the total Aboriginal ancestry population, the First Nations (North American Indian) ancestry population, the Registered or Treaty Indian population, the population who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band, and the population living on Indian reserves and Indian settlements.

Changes in measurement and response

Differences in the wording and format of Aboriginal questions

There are various ways to define the Aboriginal population based on the four questions asked in the census. These questions are Aboriginal ancestry (Question 17 on ethnic origin), Aboriginal group (Question 18), Registered or Treaty Indian status (Question 20) and Membership in a First Nation or Indian band (Question 21).

Although measuring the same concepts, the four 2016 Census questions differ from the Aboriginal questions on the 2006 Census. The question wording was modified to reflect current terminology and ensure ongoing accuracy when measuring the Aboriginal population. The wording remained consistent between the 2011 NHS and the 2016 Census.

To see how these questions have changed between 2006 and 2011, please refer to the 2011 NHS forms [N1](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=114641&UL=1V) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=114641&UL=1V) and [N2](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=115113&UL=1V) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=115113&UL=1V) and the 2006 Census [2B](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=33518&UL=1V) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=33518&UL=1V) and [2D](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=45731&UL=1V) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=45731&UL=1V) questionnaires.

Legislative changes (for example, Bill C-31 in 1985 and Bill C-3 in 2011), which affect concepts such as Aboriginal identity and Registered or Treaty Indian status

Changes to Canada's laws as they pertain to Aboriginal peoples may affect how Canadians respond to the questions to identify Aboriginal peoples. For example, in September 2011, the Government of Canada, by order in council, recognized the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation in Newfoundland and Labrador under the Indian Act. The number of Registered or Treaty Indians living in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown from 6,600, according to the 2006 Census, to 21,155, according to the 2016 Census.

Other factors that affect responses to the Aboriginal questions

In addition to the factors listed above, some people report their Aboriginal identity or ancestry differently from one data collection period to another for a variety of reasons. While the pattern for the majority of people reporting an Aboriginal identity or ancestry has been stable over time, there can be changes in reporting patterns between Aboriginal groups and between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations. Changing attitudes about Aboriginal identity, judicial decisions or anticipated legal changes, the social climate and other factors may influence how people identify themselves.

In summary, population estimates for concepts such as Aboriginal identity and Registered or Treaty Indian status are influenced by numerous factors. Users should be aware that point estimates and changes over time are influenced by a combination of natural growth, changes to coverage and to measurement, and other factors affecting how people self-identify. It is not possible to quantify the impact these changes have in isolation from each other.

Comparability with other data sources

The Census of Population is Statistics Canada's main source of data on Aboriginal peoples. In addition to the Census of Population, Statistics Canada has other key data sources specific to the Aboriginal population—for example, the [2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=318572) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=318572>) – Economic Participation; the [2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=109115) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=109115>) – Education and Employment; the [1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=3600) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=3600>), [2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=4291) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=4291>) and [2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=4291) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=4291>)

(<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=28330>); and the [2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5108&Item_Id=22502) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5108&Item_Id=22502). Some of Statistics Canada's other household surveys (for example, the [Labour Force Survey](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3701&Item_Id=122649) (http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3701&Item_Id=122649)) can produce estimates on the Aboriginal population. Generally, the Aboriginal population living on reserve is not covered by these household surveys.

Statistics Canada has also produced projections, under specific scenarios, of the Aboriginal identity population in Canada (for example, [Projections of the Aboriginal Population and Households in Canada, 2011 to 2036](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/91-552-x2015001-eng.htm) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/91-552-x2015001-eng.htm>), Catalogue no. 91-552-X).

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) maintains the Indian Register (IR), which includes all individuals who have been registered under the Indian Act. The IR differs from the 2016 Census, which estimates the number of individuals who report being a Registered or Treaty Indian. For more information on differences between census estimates and counts from the IR, please refer to the [Aboriginal Peoples Technical Report, 2011 National Household Survey \(NHS\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/reports-rapports/ap-pa/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/reports-rapports/ap-pa/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 99-011-X.

Many factors affect comparisons of Aboriginal data across these sources. Among other factors, comparability is affected by differences in survey target populations; reference period; sampling and collection methods; question wording, questionnaire format, examples and instructions; approaches to data processing; and the social and political climate at the time of data collection.

Data quality notes

2016 Census population and dwelling counts on reserve

Prior to the release of the population and dwelling counts from the 2016 Census, six reserve census subdivisions (CSDs) were identified as being potentially underestimated. For these CSDs, a formal review of the population and dwelling counts was initiated by Statistics Canada. For any changes made as a result of the formal review, please refer to the [Population and dwelling count amendments, 2016 Census](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/corr/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/corr/index-eng.cfm>). For more on formal reviews, please refer to Statistics Canada's [Policy on response to formal review requests of 2016 Census population and dwelling counts](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/policy-popdwell-politique-poploge-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/policy-popdwell-politique-poploge-eng.cfm>).

Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements

In 2016, there were 14 Indian reserves and Indian settlements that were 'incompletely enumerated' in the census. The issue of incompletely enumerated reserves has an impact on census estimates for the First Nations population living 'on reserve' as well as the Registered or Treaty Indian population living 'on reserve'. Estimates for other populations could also be affected.²

Estimates associated with other variables related to First Nations, such as language and band housing, may also be affected by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the Census of Population.

2. Other affected populations include the total Aboriginal identity population, the First Nations (North American Indian) identity population, the total Aboriginal ancestry population, the First Nations (North American Indian) ancestry population, the Registered or Treaty Indian population, the population who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band, and the population living on Indian reserves and Indian settlements.

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For more information on the incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements, please refer to [Appendix 1.2](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-2-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-2-eng.cfm>) of the Guide to the Census of Population, 2016, Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Aboriginal variables

At the national level, the 2016 Census imputation rate for the Aboriginal group question is 1.1% ([Table 2](#)). The questions on Registered or Treaty Indian status and Membership in a First Nation or Indian band have imputation rates of 1.4% and 1.8%, respectively.

At the provincial level, the imputation rate for the question on Aboriginal group ranges from 0.8% in Yukon to 2.2% in Newfoundland and Labrador. For the question on Registered or Treaty Indian status, the rate ranges from 1.3% in Quebec and Ontario to 2.6% in the Northwest Territories. For the question on Membership in a First Nation or Indian band, the imputation rate ranges from 1.6% in Quebec to 5.6% in the Northwest Territories.

The imputation rates for Ethnic origin (Question 17), which is used to derive Aboriginal ancestry, are available in Table 1 of the [Ethnic Origin Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016](#) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/008/98-500-x2016008-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-500-X2016008.

Table 2
Imputation rates for questions on Aboriginal group, Registered or Treaty Indian status and Membership in a First Nation or Indian band, for Canada, provinces and territories, 2016 Census

Region	Aboriginal group (Question 18)	Registered or Treaty Indian status (Question 20) percent	Membership in a First Nation or Indian band (Question 21)
Canada	1.1	1.4	1.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	2.2	2.3	3.3
Prince Edward Island	1.7	1.9	2.6
Nova Scotia	1.2	1.6	2.4
New Brunswick	1.3	1.5	2.0
Quebec	1.2	1.3	1.6
Ontario	0.9	1.3	1.7
Manitoba	1.1	1.6	2.1
Saskatchewan	1.2	1.7	2.3
Alberta	1.2	1.6	2.1
British Columbia	1.1	1.4	1.9
Yukon	0.8	1.4	2.6
Northwest Territories	1.9	2.6	5.6
Nunavut	1.2	1.5	2.1

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

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Responses to Question 21 on membership in a First Nation or Indian band can include general responses such as “Algonquin” or “Cree” rather than a specific First Nation or Indian band. As a result, census estimates of the number of members of a specific First Nation or Indian band may be underestimated. Users should also be aware that the estimates associated with this variable are affected by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the Census of Population. Finally, counts for specific First Nations and Indian bands reflect self-reported responses to the census question and may differ from the administrative records collected by the First Nations and Indian bands themselves.

As a result, users of the detailed First Nation and Indian band data from the 2016 Census should be aware that these data should not be used as official counts of First Nations and Indian bands in Canada. Users should refer to the individual First Nations or Indian bands for counts of their members.