CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

Where they live

The majority of Canada's Aboriginal population reside in the Western provinces. As per the 2006 Census, 59.8% of the total Aboriginal population in Canada resided in the western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, down from 62.1% in 2001 and 62.9% in 1996.

Nunavut has the highest concentration of Aboriginal population (85.0%) of all territories and provinces. Manitoba has the highest percentage of Aboriginal population of all provinces with 15.5% identifying as Aboriginal, followed by Saskatchewan (14.9%) and Alberta (5.8%).

TABLE 1: Top seven cities with highest proportion of Aboriginal population, 2006

Winnipeg	Regina	Saskatoon	Edmonton	Calgary	Vancouver	Ottawa/Gatineau
10.0%	8.9%	9.3%	5.1%	2.5%	1.9%	1.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

In 2006, 53.2% of Aboriginal people resided in urban areas compared to 81.0% of non-Aboriginal people. One in 10 people who live in Winnipeg are Aboriginal (Table 1).

According to the 2006 Census, about half (48.1%) of Registered Indians live on-reserve.

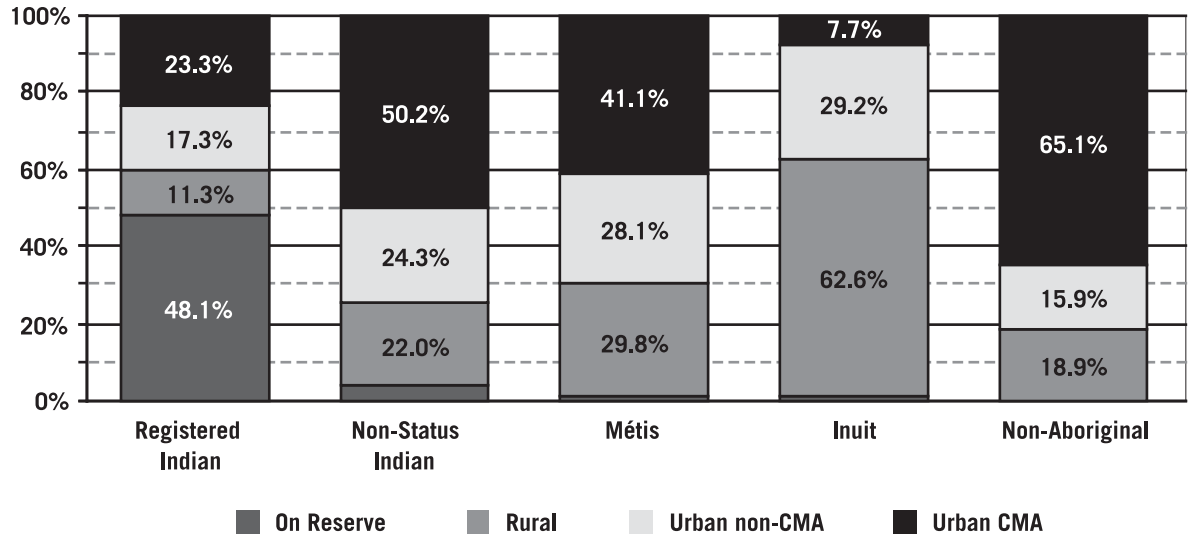
There are 615 First Nations/Bands in Canada and an estimated 3,003 reserves where about 38% are inhabited, or potentially inhabited (Indian Lands Registry system as of Dec. 31, 2008).

Approximately 7 out of 10 Non-Status Indians and Métis live in urban areas (Figure 1). The Inuit live predominantly in northern rural communities (62.6%).

Between 2001 and 2006 some urban centres experienced a net in-migration of Aboriginal peoples while others experienced a net out-migration. Overall, reserves experienced net in-migration for the same time period. This trend has been consistent over the last four to five census cycles.

Jeanette Steffler *and* ***Andrea Street***
Socio-Economic and Demographic Statistics Section Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

FIGURE 1: Population by Area of Residence, Canada, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation.