Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people

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Filling gaps in gender diversity data in Canada

Prior to the 2021 Census, some individuals indicated that they were not able to see themselves in the two responses of male or female on the existing sex question in the census.

Following extensive consultation and countrywide engagement with the Canadian population, the census evolved—as it has for more than a century—to reflect societal changes, adding new content on gender in 2021.

Beginning in 2021, the precision of "at birth" was added to the sex question on the census questionnaire, and a new question on gender was included. As a result, the historical continuity of information on sex was maintained while allowing all cisgender, transgender and non-binary individuals to report their gender. This addressed an important information gap on gender diversity (see *Filling the gaps: Information on gender in the 2021 Census* and 2021 Census: Sex at birth and gender—the whole picture).

For many people, their gender corresponds to their sex at birth (cisgender men and cisgender women). For some, these do not align (transgender men and transgender women) or their gender is not exclusively "man" or "woman" (non-binary people).

The strength of the census is to provide reliable data for local communities throughout the country and for smaller populations such as the transgender and non-binary populations. Statistics Canada always protects privacy and confidentiality of respondents when disseminating detailed data.

These modifications reflect today's reality in terms of the evolving acceptance and understanding of gender and sexual diversity and an emerging social and legislative recognition of transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ2+ people in general, that is, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, or who use other terms related to gender or sexual diversity. In 2017, the Canadian government amended the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the Canadian *Criminal Code* to protect individuals from discrimination and hate crimes based on gender identity and expression.

These data can be used by public decision makers, employers, and providers of health care, education, justice, and other services to better meet the needs of all men and women—including transgender men and women—and non-binary people in their communities.





Highlights

The 2021 Census of Population included for the first time a question on gender and the precision of "at birth" on the sex question, allowing all cisgender, transgender and non-binary individuals to report their gender.

Canada is the first country to collect and publish data on gender diversity from a national census.

Of the nearly 30.5 million people in Canada aged 15 and older living in a private household in May 2021, 100,815 were transgender (59,460) or non-binary (41,355), accounting for 0.33% of the population in this age group.

The proportions of transgender and non-binary people were three to seven times higher for Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2006, 0.79%) and millennials (born between 1981 and 1996, 0.51%) than for Generation X (born between 1966 and 1980, 0.19%), baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1965, 0.15%) and the Interwar and Greatest Generations (born in 1945 or earlier, 0.12%).

Over time, the acceptance and understanding of gender and sexual diversity has evolved. Further, there has been social and legislative recognition of transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ2+ people in general. Younger generations may be more comfortable reporting their gender identity than older generations.

In May 2021, the Canadian population aged 15 and older had an average age of 48.0 years. In comparison, the transgender population had an average age of 39.4 years, while the non-binary population had an average age of 30.4 years.

Just under 1 in 100 young adults aged 20 to 24 were non-binary or transgender (0.85%).

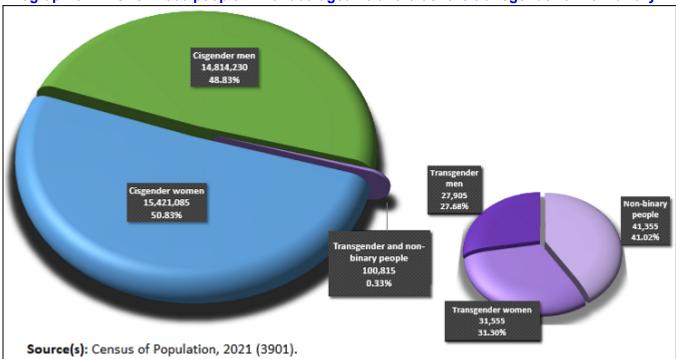
Nova Scotia (0.48%), Yukon (0.47%) and British Columbia (0.44%) had the highest proportions of transgender and non-binary people aged 15 and older among provinces and territories.

Victoria (0.75%), Halifax (0.66%) and Fredericton (0.60%) had the most gender diversity among Canadian large urban centres.

Just over half of non-binary people aged 15 and older (52.7%) lived in one of Canada's six largest urban centres: Toronto (15.3%), Montréal (11.0%), Vancouver (10.8%), Ottawa–Gatineau (5.6%), Edmonton (5.4%) and Calgary (4.5%).

Nearly 1 in 6 non-binary people aged 15 and older (15.5%) lived in the downtown core of a large urban centre. This share was more than twice that of transgender people (7.0%) and over three times higher than that of cisgender people (4.7%).

One in 300 people in Canada aged 15 and older are transgender or non-binary



Infographic 1 - One in 300 people in Canada aged 15 and older are transgender or non-binary

In May 2021, there were 59,460 people in Canada aged 15 and older living in a private household who were transgender (0.19%) and 41,355 who were non-binary (0.14%). Together, they represented 1 in 300 people, or 0.33% of the population aged 15 and older.

Counting transgender people in the 2021 Census and data comparability

Canada is the first country to collect and publish data on gender diversity from a national census. While Canada's census data and surveys from other countries are not strictly comparable, they provide valuable insight into gender diversity globally.

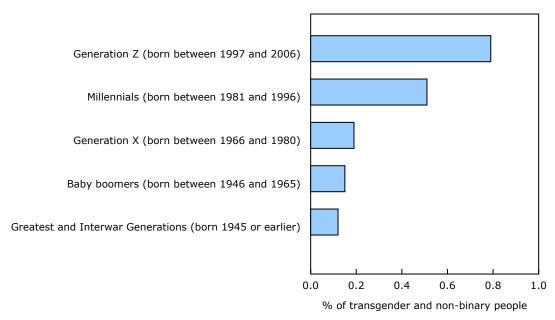
In Canada, 0.2% of the population aged 18 and older was transgender in 2021. Belgium (0.5% among people aged 18 to 75 in 2021) and New Zealand (0.5% among people aged 18 and older in 2020) have also published representative survey-based data on their transgender populations.

Other countries have published 2021 data on transgender people using crowdsourcing and non-representative surveys, including Ireland (0.6% among people aged 18 and older), England and Wales (0.6% among people aged 16 and older), and the United States (0.8% among people aged 18 and older).

Among the 59,460 transgender people, there were more transgender women (31,555) than transgender men (27,905).

The transgender and non-binary generation gap

Chart 1
The transgender and non-binary generation gap



Source(s): Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Over time, the acceptance and understanding of gender and sexual diversity has evolved. Further, there has been social and legislative recognition of transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ2+ people in general. Younger generations may be more comfortable reporting their gender identity than older generations.

The Canadian population aged 15 and older can be divided into six generations, each born in a different period. The following generations (and their age groups in May 2021) are based on work from the Pew Research Center and existing literature, and are consistent with the Census in Brief: A generational portrait of Canada's aging population from the 2021 Census:

Greatest Generation: people aged 94 or older (born before 1928)

Interwar Generation: people aged 76 to 93 (born between 1928 and 1945)

Baby boomers: people aged 56 to 75 (born between 1946 and 1965)

Generation X: people aged 41 to 55 (born between 1966 and 1980)

Generation Y (millennials): people aged 25 to 40 (born between 1981 and 1996)

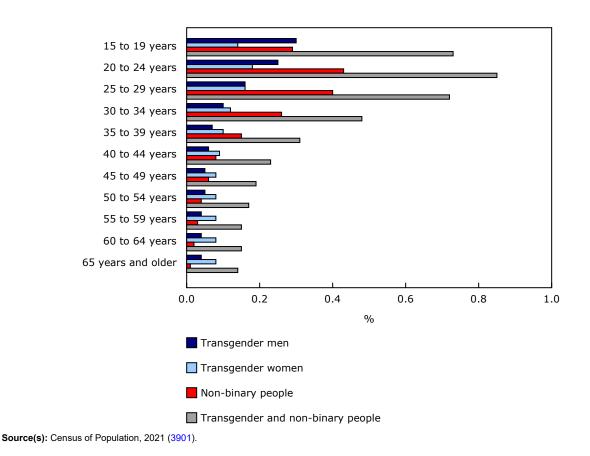
Generation Z: people aged 15 to 24 (born between 1997 and 2006)

Younger generations had larger shares of those who were transgender or non-binary. The proportions of transgender and non-binary people were three to seven times higher for Generation Z (0.79%) and millennials (0.51%) than for Generation X (0.19%), baby boomers (0.15%) and the Interwar and Greatest Generations (0.12%).

Each generation holds attitudes and demonstrates behaviours informed by the historical context in which its members were raised. Generation Z was born in the Internet age, and millennials came of age during a time when the Internet was changing the way we gather and process information. The Internet, along with social media and web-connected personal devices, may have contributed to the increasing awareness of gender diversity—especially among younger generations—by providing transgender and non-binary individuals with virtual support communities and answers to questions that were less accessible to older generations.

Non-binary and transgender people are younger on average than cisgender people

Chart 2
Gender diversity is highest among 20- to 24-year-olds



In May 2021, the Canadian population aged 15 and older had an average age of 48.0 years. In comparison, the transgender population had an average age of 39.4 years, while the non-binary population had an average age of 30.4 years.

Transgender men (34.9 years) were almost a decade younger on average than transgender women (43.3 years).

Close to two-thirds (62.0%) of the 100,815 individuals who were transgender or non-binary were younger than 35.

Gender diversity was highest among those aged 20 to 24, almost 1 in 100 (0.85%) of whom were transgender or non-binary. In comparison, 1 in 700 were transgender or non-binary among people aged 65 and older.

Diversity within gender diversity: Most common terms to describe non-binary gender

In this release, the term "non-binary" is used to describe all genders that are neither exclusively man nor woman, although individuals might self-identify with other terms.

Gender is experienced in different ways. The 2021 Census asked people to describe their gender via a write-in response so that they could indicate what term was most relevant to them. Terminology related to gender diversity continues to evolve, and the ways to report gender will also continue to evolve. Statistics Canada thanks the Canadian population for contributing to this ongoing discussion.

Over two-thirds (70.5%) of people aged 15 and older who provided answers to the write-in option used the term "non-binary" when specifying their gender.

Together, over 1 in 6 non-binary people described their gender as "fluid" (7.3%), "agender" (5.1%) or "queer" (4.1%).

Other responses included "gender neutral" (2.9%), "Two-Spirit" (2.2%), "neither man nor woman" (1.3%) and "gender-nonconforming" (1.1%).

The term "Two-Spirit," which is specific to some Indigenous peoples of North America, was provided in greater proportion by non-binary people living in Western Canada, especially in Manitoba (4.8%) where a large Indigenous population (First Nations people, Métis and Inuit) resides.

Infographic 2 – Almost one-third of non-binary people describe their gender using terms other than "non-binary"

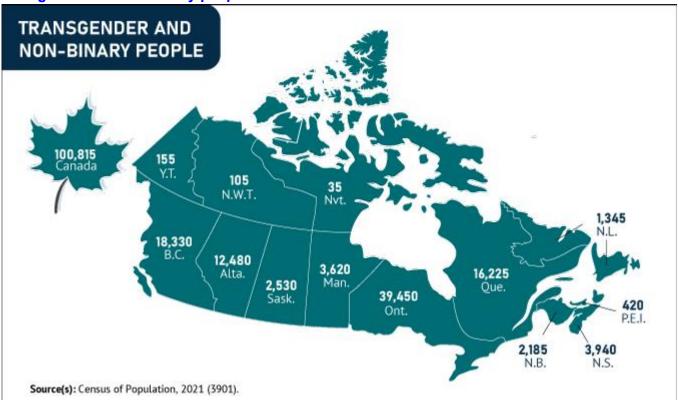


Source(s): Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Among provinces and territories, Nova Scotia, Yukon and British Columbia show the highest proportions of transgender and non-binary individuals

Although transgender and non-binary people lived in every province and territory in Canada, they were concentrated in certain areas. Almost 2 in 5 transgender or non-binary people (39.1%) called Ontario home in 2021 (39,450), and this corresponds to Ontario's share of Canada's population aged 15 and older (38.8%).

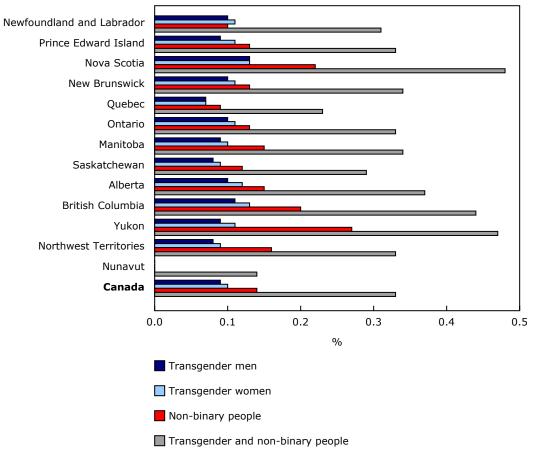
Map 1 – Canada's most populous province, Ontario, is home to the highest number of transgender and non-binary people



Gender diversity varies by region. Provincially, almost 1 in 200 people living in Nova Scotia (0.48%) and British Columbia (0.44%) were transgender or non-binary, proportions above the national average of 0.33%. Although counts were lower, Yukon (0.47%) also had one of the highest proportions in Canada.

Among the provinces, Quebec had the smallest proportions of transgender (0.14%) and non-binary (0.09%) people, followed by Saskatchewan (0.16% and 0.12%, respectively).

Chart 3
Approximately 1 in 200 people living in Nova Scotia, Yukon or British Columbia are transgender or non-binary, the highest proportions among provinces and territories



... not available

Note(s): Additional confidentiality measures have been taken to ensure that non-binary and transgender people cannot be identified through released information. They include grouping counts of transgender and non-binary people in Nunavut. **Source(s)**: Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

About 1 in 100 people aged 15 to 34 in Nova Scotia and British Columbia are transgender or non-binary

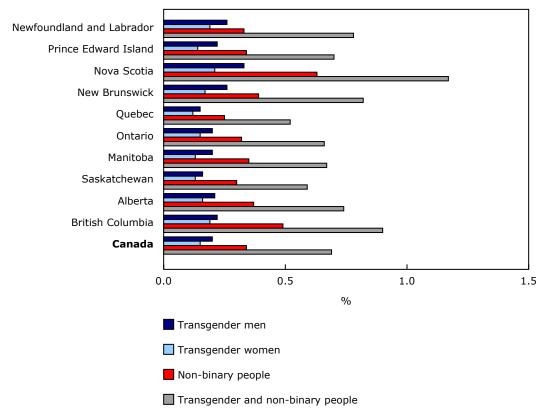
Gender diversity was more common among people aged 15 to 34 than those aged 35 and older. Approximately 1 in 150 people aged 15 to 34 in Canada were transgender or non-binary (0.69%), compared with 1 in 550 people aged 35 and older (0.18%).

Nova Scotia (1.17%) and British Columbia (0.90%) had the largest proportions of transgender and non-binary people aged 15 to 34 among provinces, while Quebec (0.52%) and Saskatchewan (0.59%) had the lowest proportions.

Among people aged 15 to 34, about 1 in 500 (0.20%) in Canada were transgender men and 1 in 650 (0.15%) were transgender women. The largest proportions of transgender men aged 15 to 34 were found in Nova Scotia (0.33%), New Brunswick (0.26%), and Newfoundland and Labrador (0.26%), while Nova Scotia (0.21%), Newfoundland and Labrador (0.19%), and British Columbia (0.19%) had the largest proportions of transgender women.

Moreover, approximately 1 in 300 (0.34%) people aged 15 to 34 in Canada were non-binary. The largest proportion of non-binary people aged 15 to 34 was in Nova Scotia, at 0.63%, followed by British Columbia (0.49%) and New Brunswick (0.39%). Quebec had the lowest proportion in this age group, at 0.25%.

Chart 4
Nova Scotia has the highest gender diversity among people aged 15 to 34 among the provinces

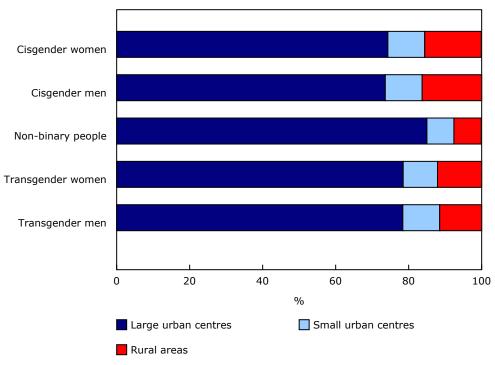


Note(s): Additional confidentiality measures have been taken to ensure that non-binary and transgender people cannot be identified through released information. Thus, transgender and non-binary population counts by age group are not provided for the territories. **Source(s):** Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

The vast majority of non-binary individuals in Canada live in an urban setting

Urban living was more popular among non-binary individuals than among transgender and cisgender individuals. In 2021, over 9 in 10 non-binary people aged 15 and older in Canada (92.5%) lived in an urban centre of over 100,000 people, also called a census metropolitan area (CMA), or a mid-sized urban centre of over 10,000 people called a census agglomeration. This proportion was higher than for the Canadian population as a whole (84.1%).

Chart 5
Higher proportion of non-binary people in Canada living in urban areas than transgender and cisgender people



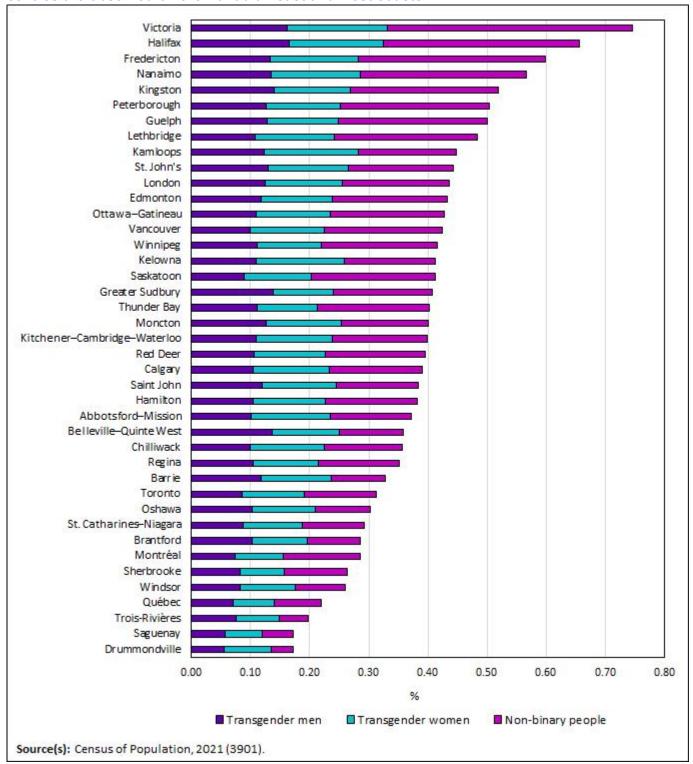
Source(s): Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Among all CMAs, the largest proportions of transgender and non-binary people aged 15 and older were found in Victoria (0.75%), Halifax (0.66%) and Fredericton (0.60%), on the west and the east coasts of Canada.

A number of factors could explain the greater gender diversity in these urban centres. Victoria, Halifax and Fredericton experienced stronger population growth from 2016 to 2021 than the national average. Moreover, in 2021, Halifax (27.6%) and Fredericton (26.0%) had larger proportions of people aged 15 to 34 than the national average (25.0%). All three urban centres are home to several major colleges and universities, and, since students tend to be younger, this could explain the proportionally higher presence of transgender and non-binary people in these urban centres.

The three large urban centres with the lowest levels of gender diversity were all found in Quebec: Drummondville (0.17%), Saguenay (0.17%) and Trois-Rivières (0.20%). The populations of these urban centres are generally older (*Census in Brief: A portrait of Canada's growing population aged 85 and older from the 2021 Census*) than those of other Canadian CMAs. Drummondville (22.4%), Saguenay (21.4%) and Trois-Rivières (22.5%) had smaller proportions of people aged 15 to 34 than the national average (25.0%).

Infographic 3 – The largest proportions of transgender and non-binary people in large urban centres are observed on the Canadian east and west coasts



Over half of non-binary people live in Canada's six largest urban centres

For the majority of non-binary people in Canada aged 15 and older (52.7%), urban living meant residing in one of Canada's six largest urban centres: Toronto (15.3%), Montréal (11.0%), Vancouver (10.8%), Ottawa–Gatineau (5.6%), Edmonton (5.4%) and Calgary (4.5%).

Just under half of transgender women (49.1%) and transgender men (47.0%) aged 15 and older lived in 1 of these 6 largest urban centres, proportions similar to those of cisgender women (47.9%) and cisgender men (47.3%) living in these CMAs.

While Quebec had the lowest proportion of transgender and non-binary people among the provinces, almost three-quarters (71.5%) of the non-binary people and over half (54.7%) of the transgender people in Quebec lived in the CMA of Montréal. By way of comparison, half of all Quebec residents aged 15 and older lived in the Montréal CMA.

The proportion of non-binary people in Quebec living in the Montréal CMA (71.5%) was higher than the comparable proportions observed in the large urban areas of Vancouver (home to 53.1% of non-binary people in British Columbia) and Toronto (home to 41.3% of non-binary people in Ontario).

Nearly 1 in 6 non-binary people live downtown

Living in a downtown core was also more popular for non-binary people than for transgender and cisgender people. Nearly 1 in 6 non-binary people aged 15 and older in Canada (15.5%) were living in the downtown of one of the country's 41 CMAs, and 7.3% lived in the downtown of 1 of the 6 largest CMAs. The proportion of non-binary individuals living in one of the CMA downtowns was over twice that of transgender (7.0%) and cisgender (4.7%) individuals.

In Canada, approximately 1 in 200 people aged 15 and older living in a CMA downtown were non-binary (0.45%). Comparatively, 1 in 350 people were transgender men (0.13%) or transgender women (0.16%).

Fredericton (1.8%), Nanaimo (1.5%) and Halifax (1.5%) had the largest proportions of transgender and non-binary people aged 15 and older living downtown.

Several factors could explain the larger share of non-binary people living in downtown cores. First, over one-third of individuals living in a CMA downtown were aged 15 to 34 (37.4%), and gender diversity was more common among people in this age group than among older people. Second, the concentration of numerous postsecondary educational institutions within downtown cores, combined with a more cosmopolitan atmosphere and the greater availability of social spaces and specialized services for transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ2+ people more broadly, may also explain the higher presence of non-binary people in the heart of large urban centres.

Transgender or non-binary populations have reported poorer mental health outcomes

Starting in 2018, Statistics Canada began introducing the new question on gender and the modified question on sex at birth on most health and social surveys.

The 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces was the first large-scale household survey conducted by Statistics Canada to collect information about sex at birth and gender of respondents. It found that 1 in 400 people in Canada aged 15 and older were transgender or non-binary (0.24%).

The survey also revealed important differences in victimization, discrimination and mental health by the gender diversity status of respondents. For example, almost two-thirds of transgender and non-binary individuals (65%) reported poor or fair mental health, five times the proportion of those who were cisgender (11%). Transgender and non-binary people were also more likely to have seriously contemplated suicide in their lifetimes than those who were cisgender (45% versus 16%).

The 2019 Survey of Postsecondary Faculty and Researchers, conducted among university and college faculty, postdoctoral fellows and PhD students, found that 1.2% of postdoctoral fellows were non-binary, as were 0.7% of PhD students. Approximately 0.2% of university and college faculty were non-binary.

Among postsecondary faculty and researchers in 2019, just over 1 in 10 men (11%) experienced unfair treatment or discrimination, compared with 20% of women and 41% of non-binary people.

A socioeconomic analysis of the LGBTQ2+ population suggests transgender and non-binary populations may not have had the resources to cope with unexpected financial stress. According to the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey, non-binary individuals were more likely to live in a dwelling requiring major repairs (29%) than men or women (7%).

In 2019, Trans PULSE Canada conducted a national community-based survey on the health and well-being of close to 3,000 transgender and non-binary people aged 14 and older, of whom around 800 respondents participated in a COVID-19 survey the following year. Results show that transgender and non-binary participants, who experienced greater levels of economic insecurity and social marginalization before the pandemic, may have been particularly affected. They found that a majority of transgender and non-binary people experienced both negative financial and social impacts from the pandemic.

Using crowdsourced data collection, Statistics Canada found important gender differences in the self-perceived mental health of individuals in Canada during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. About two-thirds (68%) of non-binary participants reported fair or poor mental health, compared with just over one-quarter (26%) of women and just over one-fifth (21%) of men who participated in the crowdsource initiative.

Looking ahead

The 2021 Census release on families, households and marital status, which will take place on July 13, 2022, will include analysis and data tables on couples. In particular, there will be analysis of same-gender and different-gender couples, as well as couples composed of at least one transgender person or at least one non-binary person.

Family and household characteristics and sociocultural and socioeconomic data from the 2021 Census released over the next months will continue to enrich the portrait of the transgender and non-binary populations in Canada.

Table 1
Distribution of the population aged 15 and older, in private households, by sex, from 1991 to 2016, and sex at birth, in 2021, Canada

	Male	Male	Female	Female	
	number	%	number	%	
1991	10,284,825	48.82	10,782,585	51.18	
1996	10,955,530	48.68	11,551,540	51.32	
2001	11,578,165	48.62	12,237,310	51.38	
2006	12,396,845	48.59	13,115,525	51.41	
2011	13,293,350	48.75	13,976,465	51.25	
2016	13,990,625	48.84	14,652,360	51.16	
2021	14,857,690	48.98	15,478,445	51.02	

Source(s): Census of Population, 1991 to 2021 (3901).

Table 2
Distribution of the population aged 15 and older, in private households, by gender, 2021, Canada

	Men	Men	Women	Women	Non-binary people	Non-binary people
	number	%	number	%	number	%
2021	14,842,140	48.93	15,452,645	50.94	41,350	0.14

Source(s): Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Note to readers

The Canadian population is encouraged to download the StatsCAN app to view the census results.

Definitions, concepts and geography

In April 2018, Statistics Canada published new metadata standards for sex at birth and gender to better reflect the way the Canadian population self-identifies. Throughout the winter of 2021, Statistics Canada held a public consultation on the update to the gender standard to ensure it remains relevant and meaningful for the communities of interest.

The standards on sex at birth and gender were modified to reflect feedback received during this consultation. The updated standards were published in October 2021, and a "What we heard" report summarizing comments received during the public consultation will be published in the coming months.

The sex at birth standard provides a classification variant with three categories (male, female and intersex). However, for reasons related to the small size of the intersex population and the challenges in identifying intersex people, Statistics Canada does not currently collect specific information on intersex people in Canada.

Tables 1 and 2 present distributions of the Canadian population aged 15 and older living in a private household by sex according to data from the 1991 to 2016 censuses and sex at birth and gender using 2021 Census data.

In 2021, the number of people whose sex was male was very similar to the number of men. The same was observed among people whose sex was female compared with women. These similarities can be explained by the relatively small size of the transgender and non-binary populations. Moreover, the distribution of the population aged 15 and older in private households by sex (from 1991 to 2016) and sex at birth (in 2021) was very similar between census years.

In this article, certain gender non-binary terms were grouped based on their similarities (e.g., "genderqueer," "queer man" and "queer woman" are all included in the estimate of "queer"). For more information on collection and processing methods of responses to the "specify" option for the gender question, please refer to the Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021.

The term "Two-Spirit" is specific to some Indigenous peoples of North America (see gender classification). However, the Indigenous identity of individuals was not taken into account when coding answers to the "specify" option for the gender question. The number of "Two-Spirit" answers may be smaller if only Indigenous individuals were included.

The definitions for terms describing non-binary gender are included in the Gender and Sexual Diversity Glossary, published by the Translation Bureau.

In this release, the analysis of gender diversity results is limited to the population aged 15 and older even though the question was asked regardless of age, as children aged 14 and younger may not be fully aware of their gender identity or may not have defined it yet.

In the Census in brief: A generational portrait of Canada's aging population from the 2021 Census, Generation Z is defined as people born between 1997 and 2012 and aged 9 to 24 in May 2021. In this article, since the analysis is focused on the population aged 15 and older, Generation Z is redefined as those born between 1997 and 2006 and aged 15 to 24 in May 2021.

To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2021 Census, a random rounding process is used to alter the values of released data. 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%.

2021 Census of Population products and releases

Today, Statistics Canada is releasing the second set of results from the 2021 Census of Population.

Several 2021 Census products are also available today on the 2021 Census Program web module. This web module has been designed to provide easy access to census data, free of charge.

Analytical products include two releases in The Daily and two articles in the Census in Brief series.

Data products include the sex at birth and gender, as well as age and type of dwelling results for a wide range of standard geographic areas, available through the Census Profile and data tables.

Focus on Geography provides data and highlights on key topics found in this Daily release and in the Census in Brief articles at various levels of geography.

Reference materials are designed to help users make the most of census data. They include the Guide to the Census of Population, 2021, the Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021, and the 2021 Census of Population questionnaires. Both the dictionary and the guide are updated with additional information throughout the release cycle. The Type of Dwelling Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021 and Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021 are also available. A fact sheet on gender concepts, Filling the gaps: Information on gender in the 2021 Census, is also available. The Balancing the Protection of Confidentiality with the Needs for Disaggregated Census Data report was previously released in reference materials.

Videos on census concepts can be found in the Census learning centre.

Geography-related 2021 Census Program products and services can be found under Geography. This includes GeoSearch, an interactive mapping tool, and thematic maps, which show data for various standard geographic areas, along with the Focus on Geography and Census Program Data Viewer, which are data visualization tools.

Over the coming months, Statistics Canada will continue to release results from the 2021 Census of Population, and provide an even more comprehensive picture of the Canadian population. Please see the 2021 Census release schedule to find out when data and analysis on the different topics will be released throughout 2022.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3901.

Available tables: 98-10-0020-01 to 98-10-0026-01, 98-10-0030-01 to 98-10-0033-01, 98-10-0036-01, 98-10-0037-01, 98-10-0042-01, 98-10-0043-01, 98-10-0045-01 and 98-10-0046-01.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).