



Strategic Research  
La recherche stratégique

# Indigenous Education and Employment Trends in Selected Cities, 2011

## Key Findings:

- Indigenous residents (30%) of Canadian cities surpassed Non-Indigenous residents (27%) with regard to non-university post-secondary education.
- The level of Indigenous post-secondary certification is generally higher in cities located in eastern and central Canada.
- The difference in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous employment rates is largest for those without certification (14%) and diminishes for those with high school or post-secondary educational certification. There is no difference for those with university certification.
- The difference in employment rates between Indigenous women and men also diminishes with higher levels of educational certification.

## Introduction

Education is an important tool used by individuals and communities to make social and economic progress. Educational attainment is associated with higher levels of employment and income. It often shapes an individual's occupational and career choices. Employment and income differences between individuals and groups tend to decrease as education increases in the form of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Past research has shown that educational attainment is related to where people live. Those living in cities, in particular, tend to have higher levels of education than those in small towns or rural areas. Cities offer greater opportunities for employment but such opportunities are uneven, depending in part on educational attainment. Given the increasing Indigenous population in Canadian cities, it is important to understand the relationships between education, employment, and other factors affecting this population.

A detailed study of post-secondary attainment among the Indigenous population of Canada was completed for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. The study includes information on educational attainment of the Indigenous population living in Canadian cities. This summary highlights a few of the findings from that study, that uses the 2006 Census and the 2011 National Household Survey.

## Main Findings

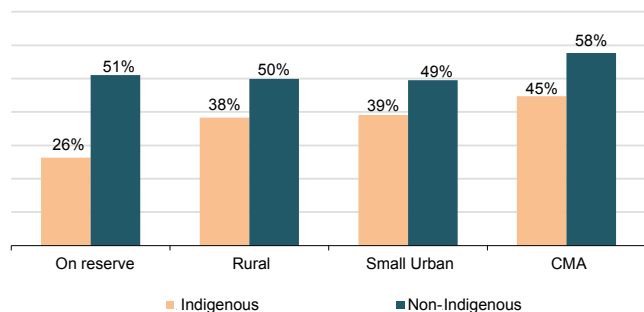
### Canada's urban Indigenous population

There were 25 Canadian cities in 2011 with Indigenous adult populations of 5,000 or more, 15 years old or older. Most of these cities are located in western Canada. Seven cities had Indigenous adult populations more than 20,000 strong. They are: Winnipeg (55,890), Edmonton (44,235), Vancouver (40,230), Toronto (28,880), Calgary (24,670), Ottawa-Gatineau (24,445), and Montreal (21,620).

Collectively, about 2% of the adult population of Canada's large cities and 6% of the adult population of Canada's smaller cities and urban areas were Indigenous. The cities with the highest proportions of Indigenous adults are Prince Albert (49%), Prince George (12%), Winnipeg (10%), Sault St-Marie (10%), and Thunder Bay (9%).

The Indigenous adult population is increasing in Canada's cities. Based on a comparison of 2006 Census data and 2011 National Household Survey data, the Registered Indian adult

**Figure 1: Population Aged 15+ with Post-Secondary Certification by Area of Residence, Canada 2011**



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

population (15 years of age or older) in the 10 cities with the largest Indigenous populations increased by 17%. During the same period, the total adult Indigenous adult population increased by 28%.

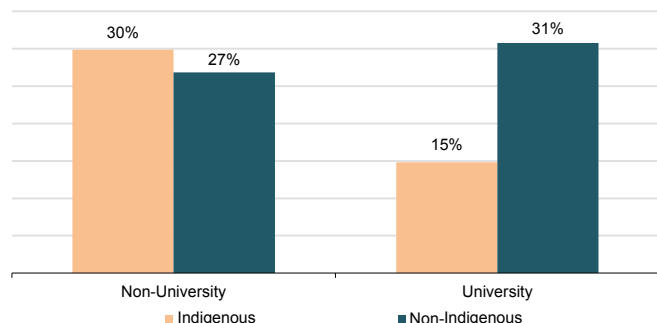
### Post-secondary attainment rates are higher in large cities

Overall, in 2011, 45% of the Indigenous population living in large cities (known as Census Metropolitan Areas or CMAs) had some type of post-secondary qualification, compared to 58% of the Non-Indigenous population. In smaller towns and cities, 39% of the Indigenous population had some type of post-secondary qualification, compared to 49% of the Non-Indigenous population (Figure 1).

### Most Indigenous post-secondary certification is non-university

The Indigenous population in Canada's cities surpassed the Non-Indigenous population in terms of non-university education. In Canada's CMAs, 30% of the Indigenous population had non-university (trades, college, apprenticeship

**Figure 2: Percentage of the Population Aged 15+ in Census Metropolitan Areas with Non-University and University Certification by Identity, Canada 2011**



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

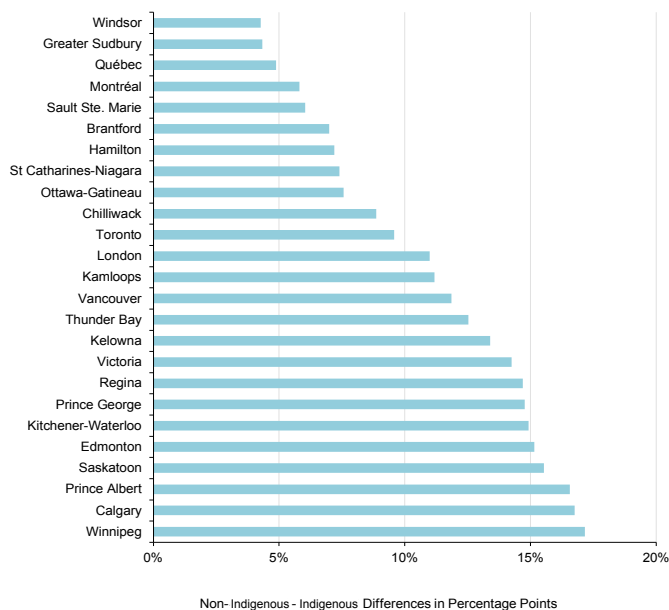
or CEGEP) certification compared to 27% of the Non-Indigenous population. In contrast, only 15% of the Indigenous population had university certification compared to 31% of the Non-Indigenous population (Figure 2).

### Variations in Indigenous/Non-Indigenous post-secondary attainment gap

There was considerable variation in the proportions of the population with post-secondary certification, both from city to city and between identity groups. Indigenous post-secondary certification was highest in Québec City (59%), Ottawa-Gatineau (54%), Montreal (53%), Sudbury (50%), and Toronto (48%). Indigenous post-secondary certification was generally higher in cities located in eastern and central Canada than in western cities.

The differences in the proportion of Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous persons with post-secondary certification were smallest in such cities as Windsor, Sudbury, and Québec where the differences are less than 5%. The gaps were greatest in prairie cities such as Winnipeg, Calgary, and Prince Albert where the differences were greater than 15% (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Differences between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Populations Aged 15+ in the Proportion with Post-Secondary Certification in Selected Cities, Canada 2011**

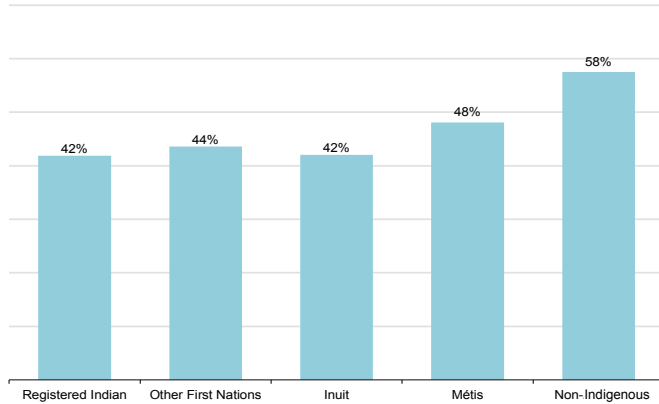


Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### Variations among identity groups

There are also differences in post-secondary attainment among the different Indigenous identity groups. Among those living in cities in 2011, the Registered Indian and Inuit populations had the lowest rates of post-secondary certification and the Métis population had the highest (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Proportion of the Population Aged 15+ with Post-Secondary Certification in Census Metropolitan Areas by Identity Group, Canada 2011**



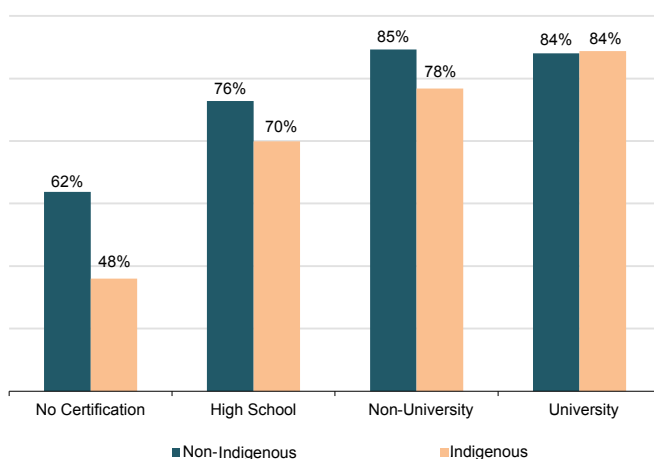
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### Higher education is associated with greater equality in employment rates

As was found in other studies, the differences between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous populations in employment rates decreased as educational levels increased. (The employment rate is the percentage of the total population that is employed.) The difference in employment rates for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous populations was largest for those without certification (14%). The difference was smaller for those with high school certification (6%) and non-university certification (7%). There was no difference between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous employment rates for those with university certification (Figure 5).

Similarly, the differences in the employment rates of Indigenous men and women were smaller when educational

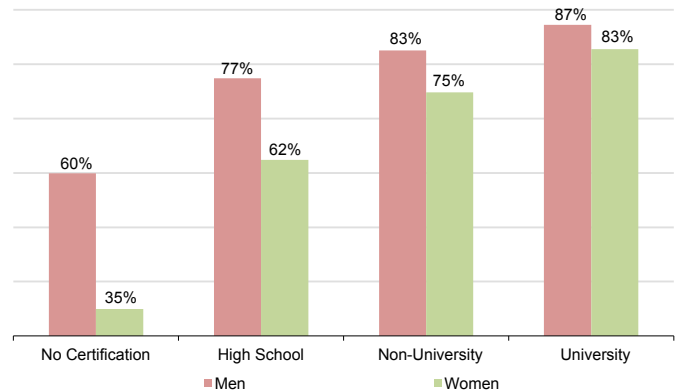
**Figure 5: Employment Rates of the Population 25-44 Years Old by Identity and Highest Level of Certification, Census Metropolitan Areas, Canada 2011**



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

levels were higher. Among the urban Indigenous population without certification, there was a difference of 25% in the employment rates of men and women (Figure 6). This difference becomes much smaller as educational certification increases. Among those with university certification, the employment rate of Indigenous women (83%) was only 4% lower than the employment rate of Indigenous men (87%).

**Figure 6: Employment Rates of the Indigenous Population 25-44 Years Old by Gender and Highest Level of Certification, Census Metropolitan Areas, Canada 2011**



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

## Conclusion

The urban Indigenous adult population is growing both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the total adult population. The proportion of the Indigenous population with post-secondary qualifications is higher in large cities than in other parts of Canada and has now reached 45% (Figure 1). Still, the percent of the urban Indigenous population with university certificates or degrees remains lower than the general population.

Indigenous educational levels are higher in cities in eastern and central Canada than in western cities. The gap in post-secondary education between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous populations is also smallest in cities in eastern and central Canada and largest in prairie cities. There are differences among Indigenous identity groups but these are not as large as the differences between the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous populations.

Higher levels of education, and especially university-level qualifications, are strongly associated with higher rates of employment, greater parity between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous populations, and between men and women.

## About the researcher

This research brief is based on a study completed in 2015 by Jeremy Hull, a Winnipeg-based research consultant. The study was commissioned in recognition of the importance of post-secondary education both to the well-being of Indigenous people and to the health of the Canadian economy. It is the fifth in a series of reports based on the 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006 Censuses and the 2011 National Household Survey. The full report, entitled “Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Labour Market Outcomes in Canada Based on Data from the 2011 National Household Survey,” is available at the Strategic Research Directorate’s GCpedia site and through the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada library.

---

## Notes on Methodology

The data used in this summary come from the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2006 Census of Population. Comparisons are made among ‘identity groups’ based on self-reported identity and Indian registration status or membership in a First Nation. Identity groups include the Registered Indian, Other First Nations (non-status Indian), Métis, Inuit, and non-Indigenous populations. The 2011 National Household Survey defines post-secondary educational attainment as including three main types of certification: 1) an apprenticeship or trades certificate; 2) a college, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma; or, 3) a university certificate or degree.

For more information contact: [Research-Recherche@Canada.gc.ca](mailto:Research-Recherche@Canada.gc.ca)

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada at:

[CommunicationsPublications@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](mailto:CommunicationsPublications@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)

[www.canada.ca/indigenous-northern-affairs](http://www.canada.ca/indigenous-northern-affairs)

1-800-567-9604 TTY only 1-866-553-0554

QS-7133-000-EE-A1 Catalogue: R3-178/2016E-PDF ISBN: 978-0-660-04236-7

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2015

This Publication is also available in French under the title:

Tendances en matière de scolarité et d’emploi chez les Autochtones dans des villes choisies en 2011