

Census in Brief

Municipalities in Canada with population decreases between 2011 and 2016

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 <i>Statistics Act</i> |
| ^E | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |
| * | significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) |

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Municipalities in Canada with population decreases between 2011 and 2016

Highlights

Municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants

- One in four municipalities (23%) showed a population decrease between 2011 and 2016.
- The population of only 11% (29 of 262) of the municipalities located inside census metropolitan areas (CMAs) decreased between 2011 and 2016.
- In comparison, the population decreased in 45% of municipalities that were located farther away from a census metropolitan area or census agglomeration.
- Many municipalities located on the island of Montréal or close to it experienced a decrease in their population between 2011 and 2016.
- Among the top 25 municipalities located outside CMAs and whose population decreased, 17 were located in the Atlantic provinces or Quebec.

Introduction

Over the last 15 years, the population in Canada grew the most among the G7 countries. The national growth rate, however, can often hide major regional differences. While population growth was high in many municipalities, especially those found in [census metropolitan areas \(CMAs\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm>), the population of many other municipalities of the country decreased during the period from 2011 to 2016.

This document highlights the municipalities in Canada, also called [census subdivisions](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo012-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo012-eng.cfm>), that decreased in population between 2011 and 2016 (an area that has decreased in total population size has a negative rate of population growth). Population decreases can have important implications for people living in these municipalities. They can also be challenging for municipal policy makers responsible for delivering many of the direct services in the daily lives of Canadians, for example a decreasing population can have an impact on the tax revenues available to a municipality.

One of the goals of the Census of Population is to provide municipal policy makers and administrators with reliable data at the local level to help them plan and decide on the infrastructure and services needed for their municipality. Another document in the Census in Brief series entitled [Municipalities in Canada with the largest and fastest-growing populations between 2011 and 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016001/98-200-x2016001-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016001/98-200-x2016001-eng.cfm>) highlights the municipalities that experienced high rates of population growth over the last intercensal period. For trends at the national, provincial and territorial, and regional (census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations) levels, readers are encouraged to consult *The Daily* article entitled [Population growth in Canada from 2011 to 2016: Key results from the 2016 Census](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170208/dq170208a-eng.htm) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170208/dq170208a-eng.htm>).

Few municipalities located in census metropolitan areas show population decreases

According to the 2016 Census geographic boundaries there were 5,162 municipalities in Canada.

Of these, 723 had at least 5,000 inhabitants (either in 2011, 2016 or both years). Only municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants were included in this analysis in order to avoid interpreting rates of population growth that are based on small populations.

Municipalities in Canada with population decreases between 2011 and 2016

About one in four municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants (23%) decreased in population between 2011 and 2016. However, this proportion was much lower among the 264 municipalities of at least 5,000 inhabitants that are located in CMAs; only 29 of these (11%) decreased in population between 2011 and 2016 (Table 1).

A small proportion (12.1%) of the municipalities that were located close to a CMA or CA¹ decreased in population between 2011 and 2016. These municipalities together also had a low rate of population decrease, at 1.9%.

A higher proportion of municipalities located in CAs (25%) or located farther away from a CMA or CA (45%) showed a population decrease. Their rates of population decrease, at 2.1% and 2.9%, were also higher than the rate in CMAs and in areas located close to a CMA or CA.

Table 1

Number, share and growth of municipalities (census subdivisions) of at least 5,000 inhabitants¹ that decreased in population, by census metropolitan influenced zone type, Canada, 2011 to 2016

Region	Municipalities that decreased in population ²			
	Municipalities ²	Number	Share	Growth from 2011 to 2016
	number			percent
In a census metropolitan area (CMA)	264	29	11.0	-1.5
In a census agglomeration (CA)	163	41	25.2	-2.1
In a metropolitan influenced zone ³	296	95	32.1	-2.8
Located close to a CMA or CA	116	14	12.1	-1.9
Located farther away from a CMA or CA	180	81	45.0	-2.9
Total	723	165	22.8	-2.1

1. Only municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants (either in 2011, 2016 or both years) were included in this table to avoid interpreting rates of population growth that are based on small populations.

2. Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements in 2011 and 2016 were excluded from this table.

3. The categories in this table are based on Statistics Canada's Statistical Area Classification of Metropolitan Influenced Zone. Census subdivisions (CSDs) "located close to a CMA or CA" refers to CSDs classified as a Strong MIZ and CSDs "located farther away from a CMA or CA" refers to CSDs classified as Moderate, Weak, Not, or Territory.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011 and 2016.

Population decrease in many municipalities located on or close to the island of Montréal

Sixteen of the 29 municipalities that are located within a CMA and that showed the highest rates of population decrease were located in the Montréal CMA (Table 2).

Among these, six were located mostly on the west side of the island of Montréal: Kirkland (-5.2%), Hampstead (-2.5%), Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue (-2.3%), Dollard-Des Ormeaux (-1.5%), Beaconsfield (-0.9%) and Montréal-Ouest (-0.7%).

1. This document uses the concept of [census metropolitan influenced zone \(MIZ\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo010-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo010-eng.cfm>), which geographically differentiates municipalities located outside of CMAs and CAs, as a proxy for distance from a CMA or CA. Municipalities (census subdivisions) that are not components of any CMA or CA are assigned to one of five MIZ categories (strong, moderate, weak, no metropolitan influenced zones, and territories outside CAs) based on the percentage of resident employed labour force that commute to work in the core(s) of any CMA or CA. Generally, progress through the categories from 'strong' to 'no' influence is correlated with distance from a CMA or CA. For the purpose of this document, all municipalities (CSDs) assigned to the 'strong' MIZ category are defined as municipalities 'located close to a CMA or CA' and all CSDs assigned to the 'moderate', 'weak', 'no', and 'territories' MIZ categories are defined as municipalities 'located farther away from a CMA or CA.'

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An additional five municipalities were located either on the south or north shore, but close to the island of Montréal or the Île Jésus: Rosemère (-2.4%), Lorraine (-1.3%), Saint-Eustache (-0.3%), Deux-Montagnes (-0.3%) and Delson (-0.1%).

Because the fastest-growing municipalities in the Montréal CMA were often located on the edge of the CMA (see Census in Brief article entitled *Municipalities in Canada with the largest and fastest-growing populations between 2011 and 2016* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016001/98-200-x2016001-eng.cfm>), recent trends in the population growth of the Montréal CMA show evidence of urban spread.

The other five municipalities with a population decrease in the Montréal CMA were Richelieu (-4.2%), Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines (-0.8%), Sainte-Julie (-0.5%), Otterburn Park (-0.3%) and Sainte-Thérèse (-0.1%).

The municipality within a CMA that showed the strongest population decrease between 2011 and 2016 was Mount Pearl (-5.5%), located in the CMA of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Two municipalities located in CMAs that experienced a population decrease between 2011 and 2016 were central municipalities²: Saint John, New Brunswick (-3.6%), and Thunder Bay, Ontario (-0.4%).

A few of the municipalities that showed a population decrease between 2011 and 2016 were located in Ontario: Central Elgin (-1.1%) and Strathroy-Caradoc (-0.5%) in the London CMA; Tecumseh (-1.6%) in the Windsor CMA; Douro-Dummer (-1.4%) in the Peterborough CMA; Thunder Bay in the Thunder Bay CMA (-0.4%); and Port Colborne (-0.6%) in the St. Catharines–Niagara CMA.

No municipalities within CMAs located in the Prairie provinces or in Nova Scotia showed a population decrease from 2011 to 2016.

Table 2

Population and growth of municipalities (census subdivisions) of at least 5,000 inhabitants¹ located within census metropolitan areas and showing a population decrease, Canada, 2011 and 2016

Rank	Municipality name	Province	CMA in which the municipality is located	Population		
				2011 number	2016	Growth from 2011 to 2016 percent
1	Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's	24,284	22,957	-5.5
2	Kirkland	Quebec	Montréal	21,253	20,151	-5.2
3	Richelieu	Quebec	Montréal	5,467	5,236	-4.2
4	Saint John	New Brunswick	Saint John	70,063	67,575	-3.6
5	Grand Bay-Westfield	New Brunswick	Saint John	5,117	4,964	-3.0
6	Hampstead	Quebec	Montréal	7,153	6,973	-2.5
7	Rosemère	Quebec	Montréal	14,294	13,958	-2.4
8	Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	Quebec	Montréal	5,073	4,958	-2.3
9	Rothsay	New Brunswick	Saint John	11,892	11,659	-2.0

2. The central municipality in a CMA is the one after which the CMA or [census agglomeration \(CA\)](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm>) is named.

Municipalities in Canada with population decreases between 2011 and 2016

Table 2 (end)

Population and growth of municipalities (census subdivisions) of at least 5,000 inhabitants¹ located within census metropolitan areas and showing a population decrease, Canada, 2011 and 2016

Rank	Municipality name	Province	CMA in which the municipality is located	Population		
				2011	2016	Growth from 2011 to 2016
				number		percent
10	Tecumseh	Ontario	Windsor	23,610	23,229	-1.6
11	Dollard-Des Ormeaux	Quebec	Montréal	49,637	48,899	-1.5
12	Douro-Dummer	Ontario	Peterborough	6,805	6,709	-1.4
13	Lorraine	Quebec	Montréal	9,479	9,352	-1.3
14	L'Ancienne-Lorette	Quebec	Québec	16,745	16,543	-1.2
15	Central Elgin	Ontario	London	12,743	12,607	-1.1
16	Chelsea	Quebec	Ottawa-Gatineau	6,977	6,909	-1.0
17	Beaconsfield	Quebec	Montréal	19,505	19,324	-0.9
18	Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines	Quebec	Montréal	14,535	14,421	-0.8
19	Montréal-Ouest	Quebec	Montréal	5,085	5,050	-0.7
20	Port Colborne	Ontario	St. Catharines–Niagara	18,424	18,306	-0.6
21	Sainte-Julie	Quebec	Montréal	30,044	29,881	-0.5
22	Strathroy-Caradoc	Ontario	London	20,978	20,867	-0.5
23	West Vancouver	British Columbia	Vancouver	42,694	42,473	-0.5
24	Thunder Bay	Ontario	Thunder Bay	108,359	107,909	-0.4
25	Otterburn Park	Quebec	Montréal	8,450	8,421	-0.3
26	Saint-Eustache	Quebec	Montréal	44,154	44,008	-0.3
27	Deux-Montagnes	Quebec	Montréal	17,552	17,496	-0.3
28	Sainte-Thérèse	Quebec	Montréal	26,025	25,989	-0.1
29	Delson	Quebec	Montréal	7,462	7,457	-0.1

1. Only municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants (either in 2011, 2016 or both years) were included in this table to avoid interpreting rates of population growth that are based on small populations.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011 and 2016.

Readers can consult two sets of detailed [thematic maps](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/pd-pl/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/pd-pl/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm>) showing population growth rates between 2011 and 2016: the first set shows the growth of municipalities located in each province and territory and the second set shows the growth in the 35 CMAs by [census tract](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo013-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo013-eng.cfm>).

Among the top 25 municipalities located outside census metropolitan areas that show a population decrease, 17 are located in the Atlantic provinces or Quebec

Table 3 shows the 25 municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants located outside CMAs that experienced the highest rates of population decrease between 2011 and 2016. Twenty of them (four in five, or 80%) were municipalities located farther away from a CMA or CA. The other five were located either in CAs or were municipalities located close to a CMA or CA.

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Out of the 25 municipalities shown in Table 3, only 8 were located outside the Atlantic provinces and Quebec: Espanola (-6.9%), Kirkland Lake (-6.0%), Elliot Lake (-5.3%), and Temiskaming Shores (-4.6%) in Ontario; Flin Flon (Part) (-7.8%) in Manitoba; Bonnyville (-12.9%) and Westlock County (-5.5%) in Alberta; and Northern Rockies (-8.7%) in British Columbia.

Seven municipalities were in Quebec and all were located farther away from a CMA or CA, including Sainte-Anne-des-Monts (-7.2%), La Malbaie (-6.7%), Coaticook (-6.0%), Mont-Joli (-5.8%), La Sarre (-5.7%), Louiseville (-4.9%), and Lac-Mégantic (-4.7%).

Seven municipalities were in Nova Scotia, located in two different areas. The municipalities in the first area, north of the CMA of Halifax, were Cumberland, Subd. B (-7.9%); New Glasgow (-5.1%); Pictou, Subd. A (-5.0%); and Pictou, Subd. C (-4.8%). The second area was west of the CMA of Halifax and included the municipalities of Queens (-5.6%), Barrington (-5.0%) and Digby (-4.8%).

Table 3
Population and growth of the top 25 municipalities (census subdivisions) of at least 5,000 inhabitants¹ located outside census metropolitan areas with the lowest rates of population growth, Canada, 2011 and 2016

Rank	Municipality name	Province	Census agglomeration name or type of metropolitan influenced zone	Population		
				2011 number	2016 number	Growth from 2011 to 2016 percent
1	Bonnyville	Alberta	Moderate	6,216	5,417	-12.9
2	Northern Rockies	British Columbia	Weak	5,290	4,831	-8.7
3	Cumberland, Subd. B	Nova Scotia	Weak	7,448	6,859	-7.9
4	Flin Flon (Part)	Manitoba	Weak	5,405	4,982	-7.8
5	Sainte-Anne-des-Monts	Quebec	Weak	6,933	6,437	-7.2
6	Espanola	Ontario	Moderate	5,364	4,996	-6.9
7	Campbellton	New Brunswick	CA of Campbellton	7,385	6,883	-6.8
8	La Malbaie	Quebec	Weak	8,862	8,271	-6.7
9	Grand Falls / Grand-Sault	New Brunswick	Weak	5,706	5,326	-6.7
10	Kirkland Lake	Ontario	Weak	8,493	7,981	-6.0
11	Coaticook	Quebec	Moderate	9,255	8,698	-6.0
12	Mont-Joli	Quebec	Moderate	6,665	6,281	-5.8
13	La Sarre	Quebec	Moderate	7,719	7,282	-5.7
14	Queens	Nova Scotia	Weak	10,917	10,307	-5.6
15	Burton	New Brunswick	Moderate	5,421	5,119	-5.6
16	Westlock County	Alberta	Moderate	7,644	7,220	-5.5
17	Elliot Lake	Ontario	CA of Elliot Lake	11,348	10,741	-5.3
18	New Glasgow	Nova Scotia	CA of New Glasgow	9,562	9,075	-5.1
19	Pictou, Subd. A	Nova Scotia	Strong	6,397	6,075	-5.0
20	Barrington	Nova Scotia	Weak	6,994	6,646	-5.0
21	Louiseville	Quebec	Moderate	7,517	7,152	-4.9
22	Pictou, Subd. C	Nova Scotia	CA of New Glasgow	8,867	8,443	-4.8

Municipalities in Canada with population decreases between 2011 and 2016

Table 3 (end)

Population and growth of the top 25 municipalities (census subdivisions) of at least 5,000 inhabitants¹ located outside census metropolitan areas with the lowest rates of population growth, Canada, 2011 and 2016

Rank	Municipality name	Province	Census agglomeration name or type of metropolitan influenced zone	Population		
				2011	2016	Growth from 2011 to 2016
				number		percent
23	Digby	Nova Scotia	Weak	7,463	7,107	-4.8
24	Lac-Mégantic	Quebec	Weak	5,932	5,654	-4.7
25	Temiskaming Shores	Ontario	Weak	10,400	9,920	-4.6

1. Only municipalities with at least 5,000 inhabitants (either in 2011, 2016 or both years) were included in this table to avoid interpreting rates of population growth that are based on small populations.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011 and 2016.

Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

The data in this analysis are from the 2016 Census of Population. Further information on the census can be found 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.

Methods

The rate of population growth reported in this document is computed as the difference in population size between two censuses, divided by the population of the earlier census, expressed as percentage change.

Definitions

Please refer to 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 additional information on the census variables.

Additional information

Additional information on population and dwelling counts can be found in the [Highlight tables](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016001; the [Census Profile](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>), Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001; and the [Focus on Geography Series](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001.

[Thematic maps](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/pd-pl/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/thematic-thematiques/pd-pl/thematic-thematiques-eng.cfm>) for this topic are also available for various levels of geography.

There are also two videos available from the [Video centre](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/video/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/video/index-eng.cfm>). They present an historical overview of the population of Canada and its largest metropolitan areas.

An infographic entitled [Population Growth in Canada, 2016 Census of Population](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017005-eng.htm) (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017005-eng.htm>) also illustrates some key findings, including population growth between 2011 and 2016 for Canada, provinces and territories and the six largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in the country.

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For details on the concepts, definitions, and variables used in the 2016 Census of Population, please consult 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.

In addition to response rates and other data-quality information, 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, provides an overview of the various phases of the census including content determination, sampling design, collection, data processing, data quality assessment, confidentiality guidelines and dissemination.

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