

STATUS FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN CANADA:

A snapshot from the 2021 Census



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INTRODUCTION

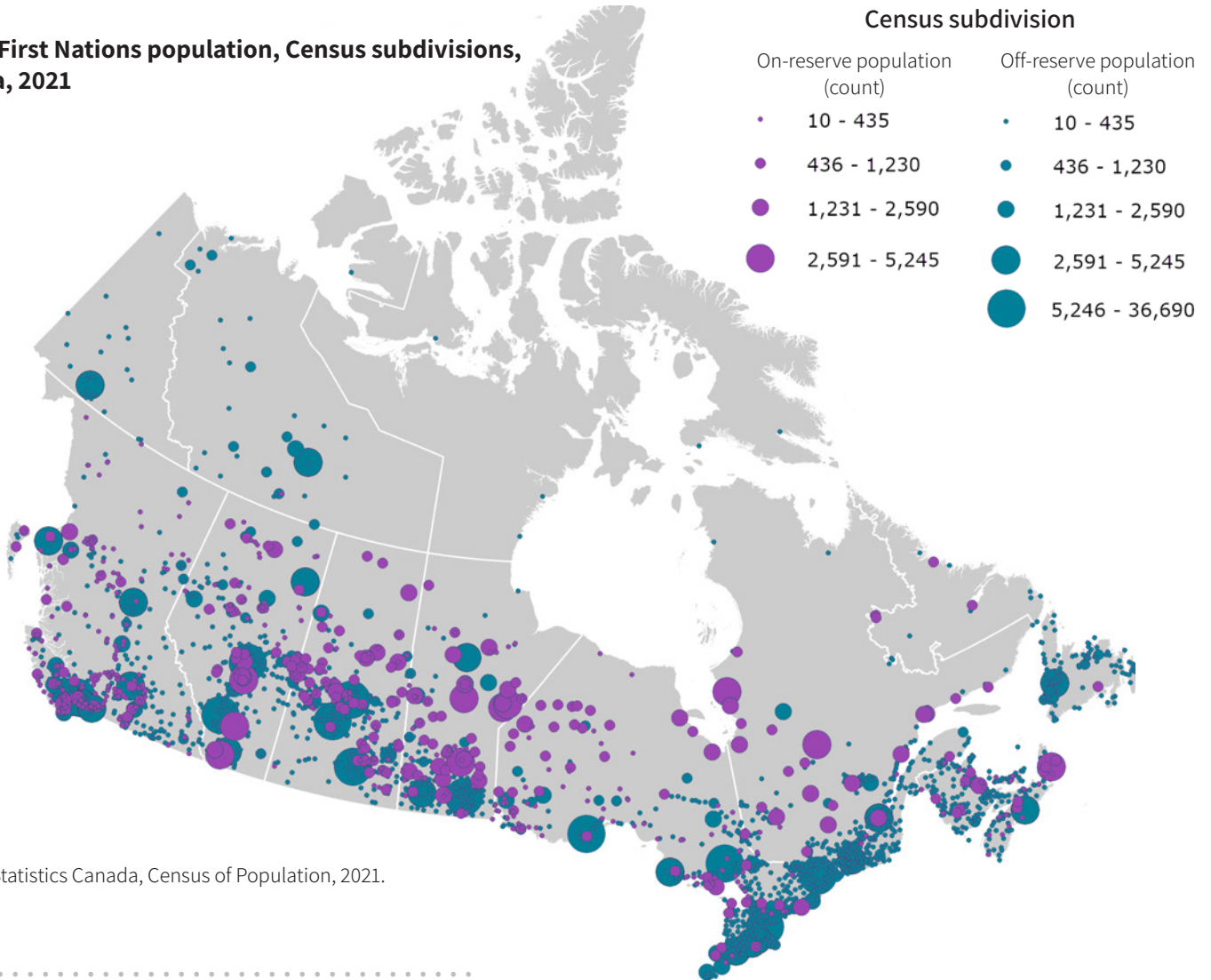
This is a custom report produced by **Statistics Canada** in collaboration with the **Assembly of First Nations**. It includes key social and economic statistics regarding Status First Nations people living on and off reserve and includes comparisons with the non-Indigenous population.

The term “**Status First Nations**” refers to anyone who reported being a “**Status Indian**”.

When making comparisons between 2016 and 2021, the figures for the on-reserve population are adjusted to account for incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements. Only those reserves and settlements that participated in both census years (2016 and 2021) are included.

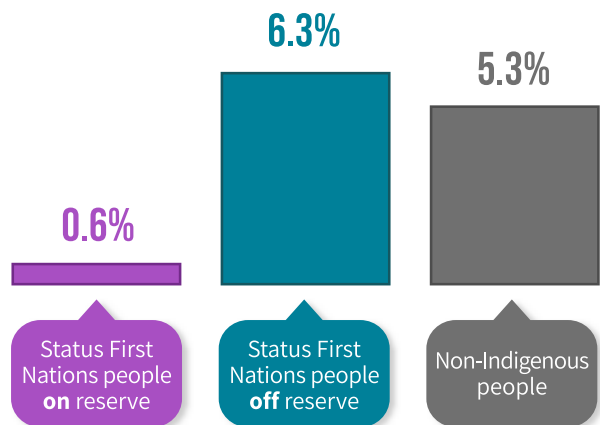
STATUS FIRST NATIONS POPULATION

Map 1
Status First Nations population, Census subdivisions, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Chart 1
Population growth rates, Canada, 2016 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

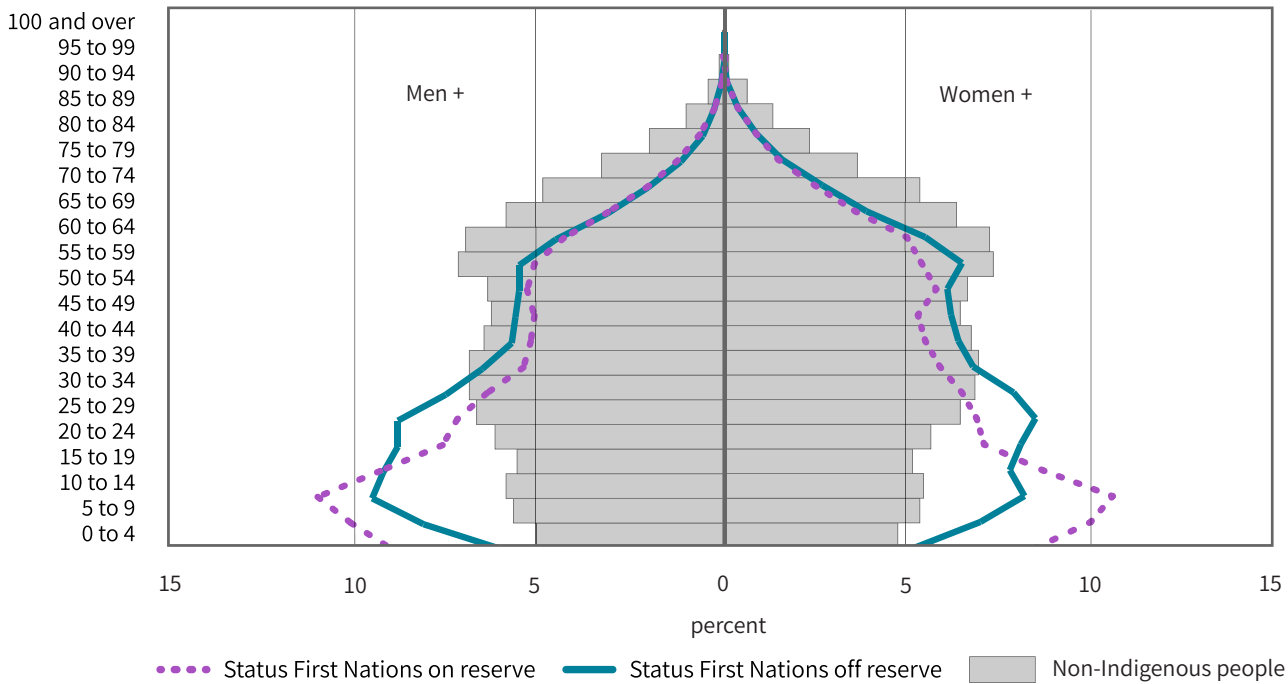
Chart 2
Population under 15 years of age, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Chart 3
Population pyramid, Canada, 2021

age groups (years)



Note: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category “non-binary persons” are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the “+” symbol. The category “Men+” includes men (and boys), as well as some non-binary persons. The category “Women+” includes women (and girls), as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

GENDER DIVERSITY AND 2SLGBTQ+ POPULATION

For many people, 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). Gender diversity is also reflected in the term “Two-Spirit”.

In 2021, among Status First Nations people aged 15 and over:

- On reserve, 218,775 were cisgender, 175 were transgender and 115 were non-binary.
- Off reserve, 402,830 were cisgender, 1,425 were transgender and 1,240 were non-binary.

A higher percentage of Status First Nations people were transgender or non-binary compared to non-Indigenous people (0.5% versus 0.3%).

In the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (2018), 6.4% of Status First Nations people were 2SLGBTQ+.

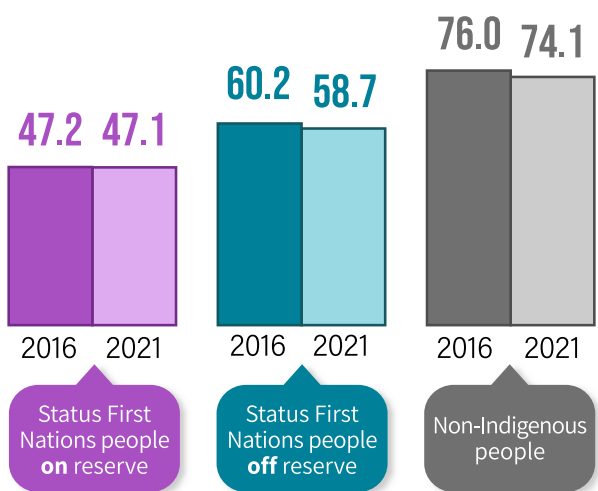
Note: 2SLGBTQ+ refers to people who are Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and people who use other terms related to gender or sexual diversity.



LABOUR FORCE

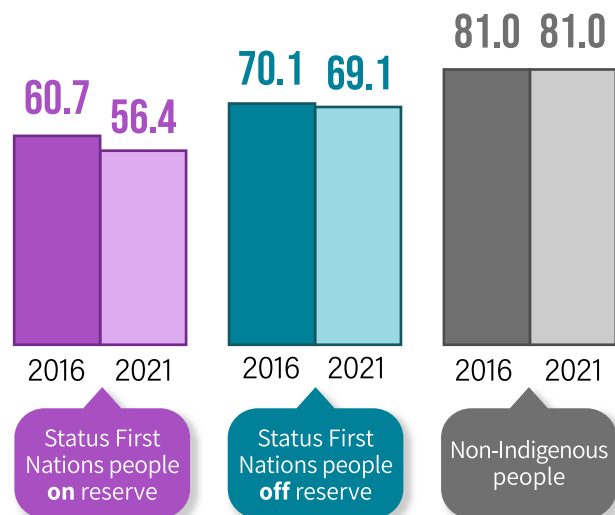
Lower employment rates were observed on reserve compared to those living off reserve. Employment rates were lower in 2021 compared to 2016 across the comparison groups. Labour force participation rates for Status First Nations people living both on and off reserve decreased from 2016 to 2021, however, larger decreases were seen for those living on reserve (from 60.7% in 2016 to 56.4% in 2021). Data from the 2021 Census reflect labour market conditions as of May 2021, when many provincial health measures were in effect. While the labour market had rebounded following the first months of the pandemic that began in March 2020, employment remained below pre-pandemic levels across Canada in May 2021.

Chart 4
Employment rate among individuals aged 25 to 64, Canada, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Chart 5
Labour force participation rate among individuals aged 25 to 64, Canada, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.



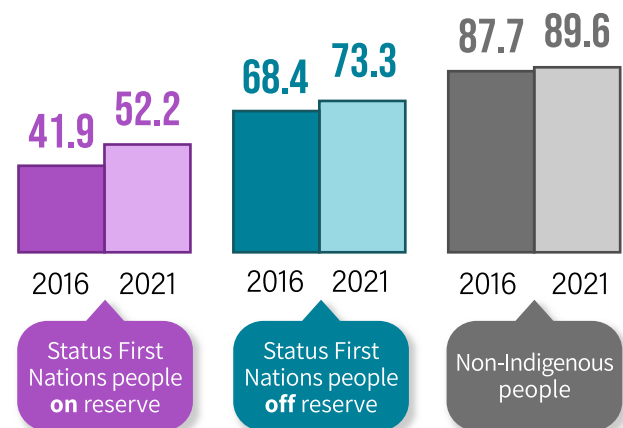
EDUCATION

The high school completion rate has increased for Status First Nations people aged 18 to 24 living on and off reserve since 2016.

The group who showed the greatest increase in high school completion rates was Status First Nations people living on reserve as it increased from 41.9% to 52.2%.

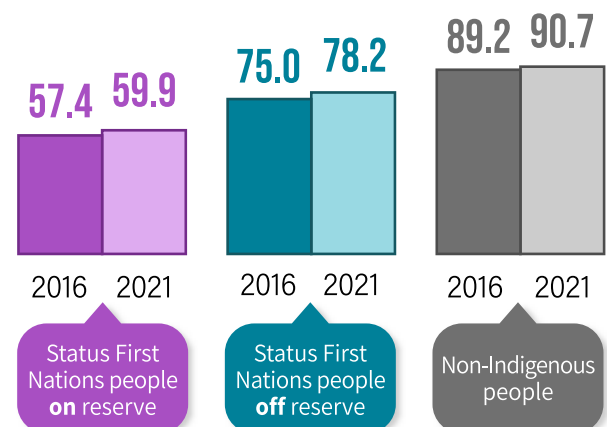
The proportion of the working-age population with a high school diploma or higher increased from 2016 to 2021.

Chart 7
Percentage of individuals aged 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or its equivalent, Canada, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Chart 8
Percentage of individuals aged 25 to 64 with a high school diploma or higher, Canada, 2016 and 2021

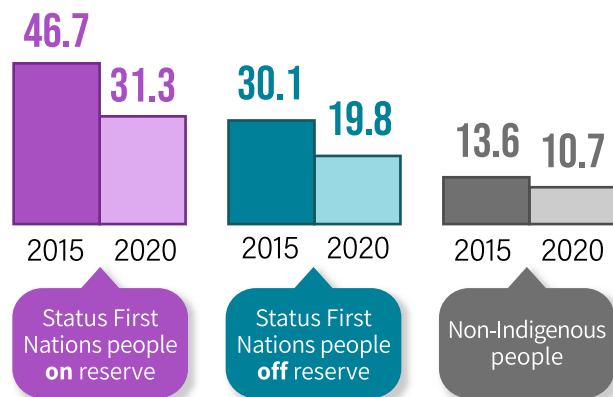


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

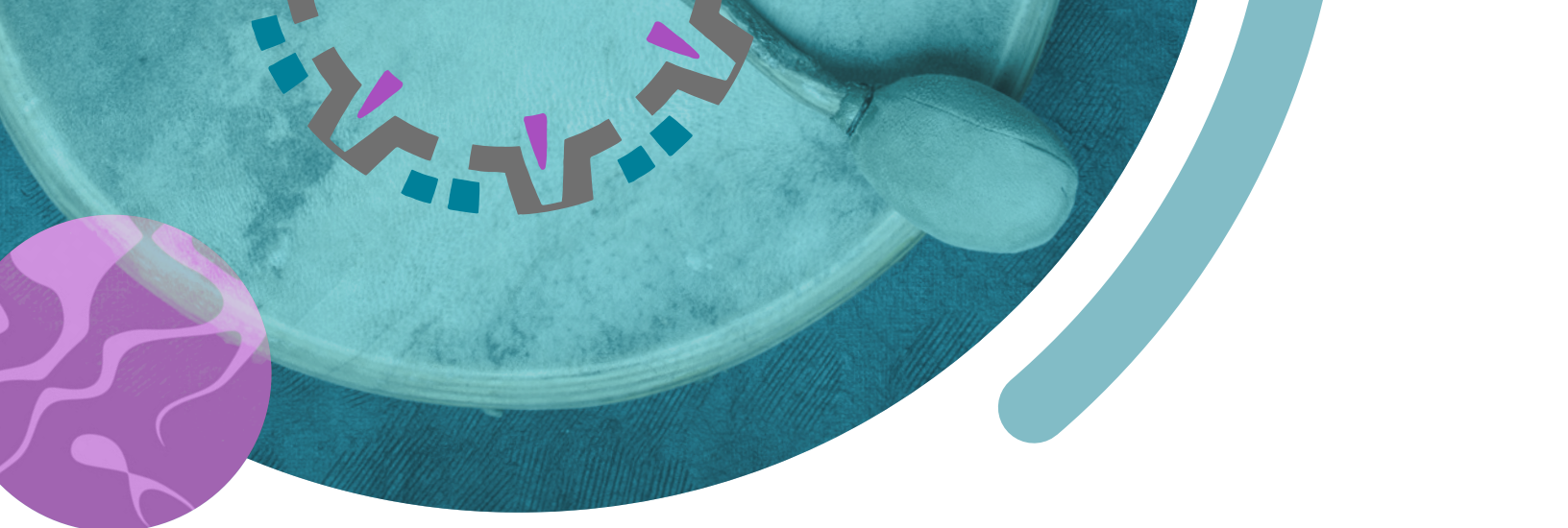
INCOME

There has been a clear decrease in the proportion of individuals living in a low-income household from 2015 to 2020 based on the low-income measure, after-tax (LIM-AT). Declines in low-income were driven by higher government transfers in 2020, including the enhanced Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and temporary pandemic relief benefits.

Chart 6
Percentage of population living in a low-income situation, Canada, 2015 and 2020



Note: Low-income status is based on LIM-AT.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.



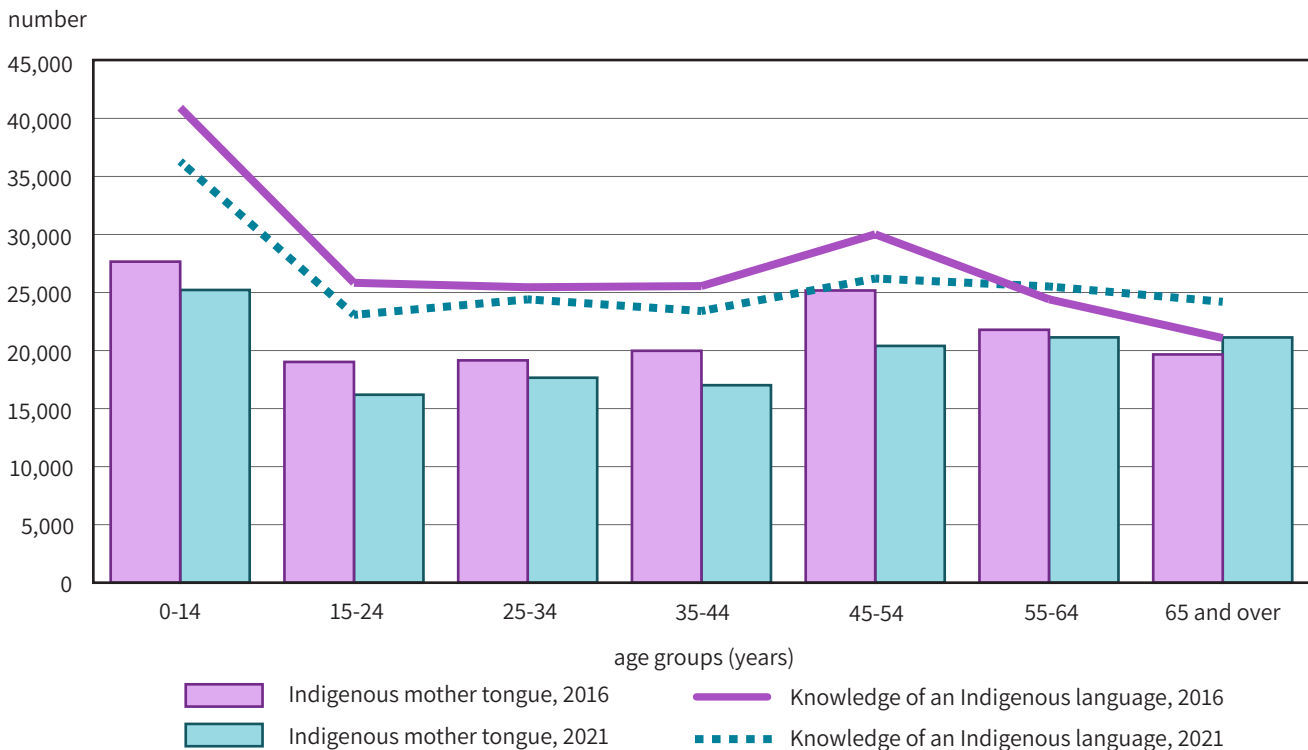
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

In 2021, there were 138,775 Status First Nations people who reported having an Indigenous mother tongue. A mother tongue refers to the language a person first learned in childhood and still understands.

Close to a third (31.8%) of those living on reserve reported an Indigenous mother tongue compared to 7.6% for those living off reserve.

The proportion of Status First Nations people reporting an Indigenous mother tongue decreased slightly since 2016.

Chart 9
Status First Nations population with an Indigenous mother tongue and with knowledge of an Indigenous language by age group, Canada, 2016 and 2021

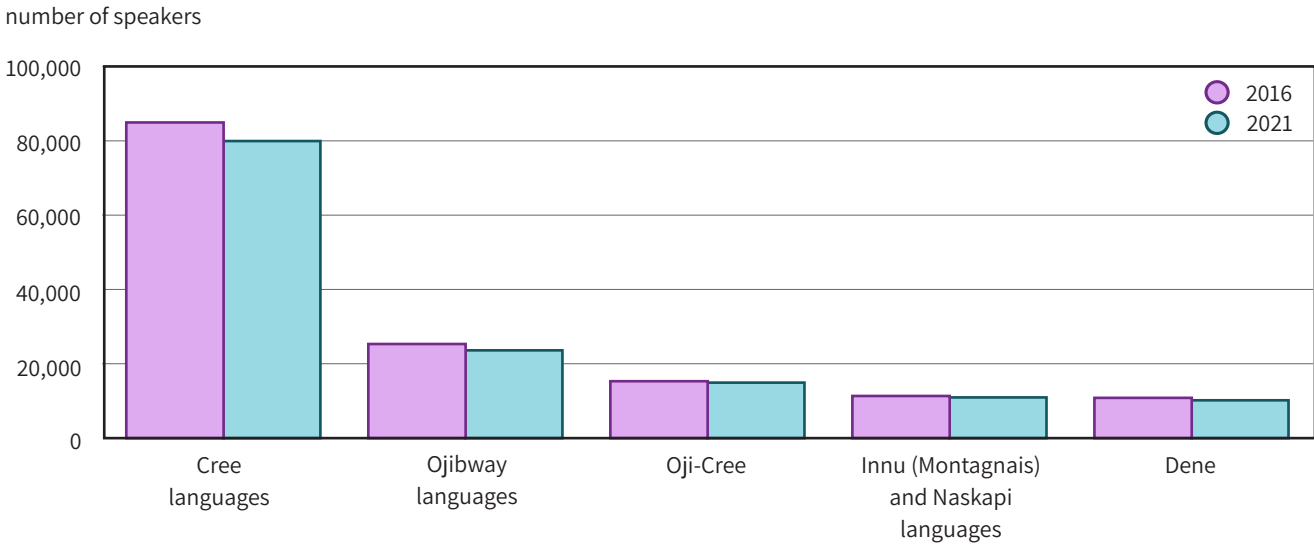


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Four in 10 (40.4%) Status First Nations people living on reserve reported knowledge of an Indigenous language which represented 125,960 individuals. For those living off reserve, there were 57,185 who reported the same, which represented 11.0% of the off-reserve Status First Nations population.

The most commonly spoken First Nations languages were Cree languages followed by Ojibway languages.

Chart 10
Most commonly spoken Indigenous languages by Status First Nations people, Canada, 2016 and 2021



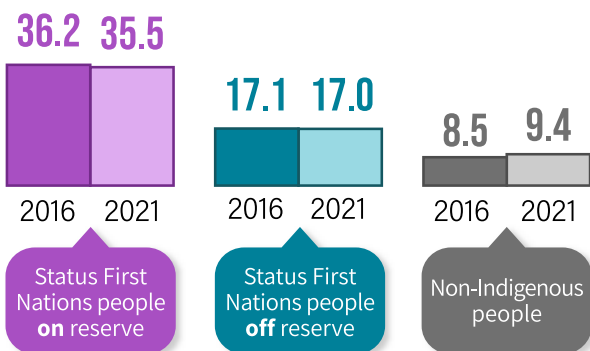
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

HOUSING

The proportion of Status First Nations people living in crowded housing remained relatively unchanged from 2016 to 2021. Crowded housing is defined as a dwelling considered not suitable for the number of people who lived there according to the National Occupancy Standard.

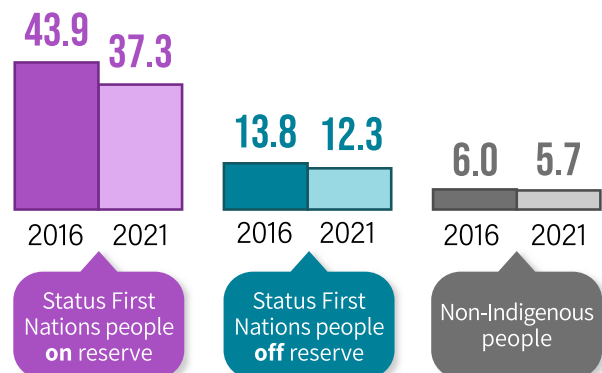
The proportion of Status First Nations people who lived in a dwelling in need of major repairs decreased in 2021.

Chart 11
Percentage of the population living in a crowded dwelling, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Chart 12
Percentage of the population living in a dwelling in need of major repairs, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.



INTERNET SERVICES

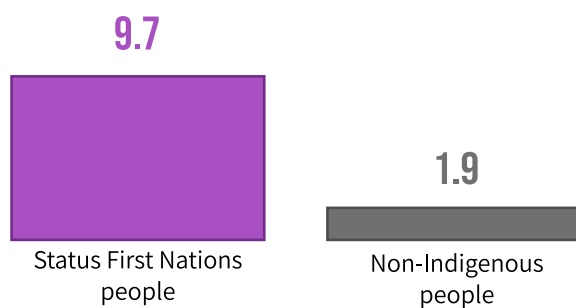
According to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), 46.5% of households on reserve had access to broadband Internet services at speeds of 50 Mbps and higher in 2019, up from 32.3% of households in 2018.

About one-third (34.8%) of households on reserve (excluding those in Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories) had access to 50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload and unlimited data transfer capacity compared to 87.4% of all Canadian households.

HOMELESSNESS

According to the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (2018), 1 in 10 (9.7%) Status First Nations people reported having had experiences with homelessness at some point in their life compared to 1.9% of the non-Indigenous population. Experiences with homelessness is defined as having to live in a shelter, on the street or in an abandoned building.

Chart 13
Percentage of population aged 15 years and older who reported experiences with homelessness, Canada, 2018

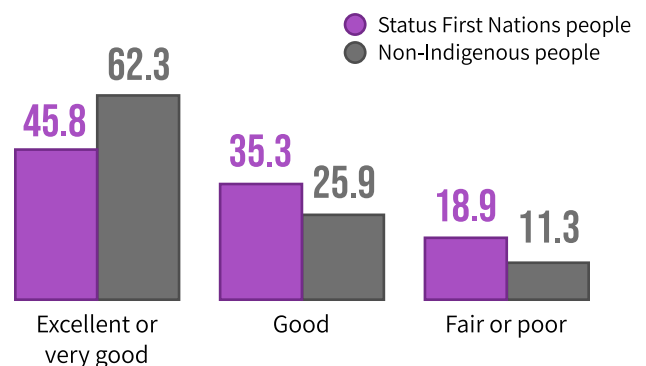


Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces, 2018.

MENTAL WELL-BEING

Status First Nations people aged 15 years or older were less likely to report positive mental health compared to the non-Indigenous population. According to the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (2018), less than half (45.8%) of the Status First Nations population reported excellent or very good mental health while almost two thirds (62.3%) of non-Indigenous people reported the same.

Chart 14
Self-rated general mental health, Canada, 2018



Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces, 2018.



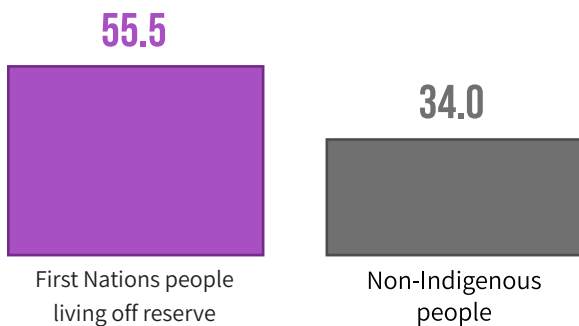
FOSTER CHILDREN

In 2021, there were 9,440 Status First Nations children younger than 15 years living in private households (excluding those living in private institutions and group homes) who were foster children. Over one in three (34.3%) foster children were Status First Nations, while Status First Nations children represented 3.5% of the total population of children under the age of 15 years.

DISCRIMINATION

According to the 2020 General Social Survey, First Nations people living off reserve were more likely to report having experienced discrimination in the previous five years (prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic) compared to the non-Indigenous population (55.5% versus 34.0%). Discrimination includes any instance where a person was treated differently, negatively, or adversely because of their ethnicity, race, age, religion, language, sex, sexual orientation, disability, etc.

Chart 17
Percentage of respondents aged 15 or older who reported having experienced discrimination in the previous 5 years, Canada, 2020

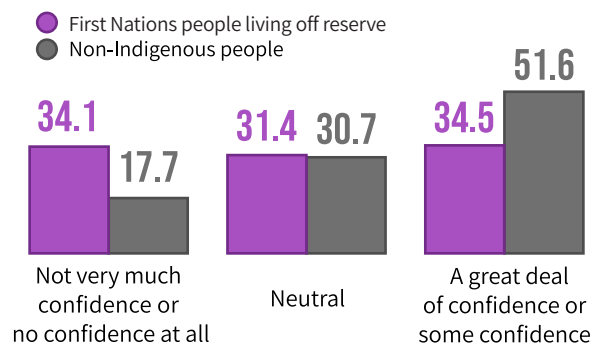


Note: 2020 GSS data are for individuals aged 15 and older living in Canada's 10 provinces, living off reserve. First Nations people include Status and non-Status.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey - Social Identity, 2020.

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

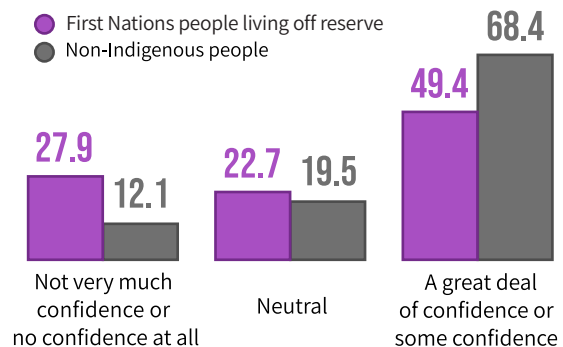
According to the General Social Survey on Social Identity (2020), First Nations people living off reserve were twice as likely to report having not very much confidence or no confidence at all in the justice system and courts compared to the non-Indigenous population (34.1% versus 17.7%). Similarly, First Nations people living off reserve were also more likely to report having not very much confidence or no confidence at all in police compared to the non-Indigenous population (27.9% versus 12.1%).

Chart 15
Percentage of respondents aged 15 and older who reported confidence in the justice system and courts, Canada, 2020



Note: 2020 GSS data are for individuals aged 15 and older living in Canada's 10 provinces, living off reserve. First Nations people include Status and non-Status.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey - Social Identity, 2020.

Chart 16
Percentage of respondents aged 15 and older who reported confidence in police, Canada, 2020



Note: 2020 GSS data are for individuals aged 15 and older living in Canada's 10 provinces, living off reserve. First Nations people include Status and non-Status.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey - Social Identity, 2020.

GLOSSARY

Cisgender persons refer to persons whose sex assigned at birth is the same as their current gender. **Transgender persons** refer to persons whose sex assigned at birth was reported as female and whose current gender was reported as other than female and to persons whose sex assigned at birth was reported as male and whose current gender was reported as other than male.

Non-binary persons refer to persons who were reported as being unsure of their gender or persons who were reported as both male and female, bi-gender, or neither male nor female.

The Government of Canada uses the acronym **2SLGBTQI+** to refer to people that are Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or who use other terms related to gender or sexual diversity. For the purposes of data analysis, the acronym 2SLGBTQ+ is used, which does not include intersex people, as Statistics Canada does not have data on this population.

Employment rate refers to the number of people employed during the week of Sunday, May 2, to Saturday, May 8, 2021 expressed as a percentage of the total population aged 15 and older.

The employment rate for a particular group (e.g., age, sex, marital status, geographic area) is the number of employed people in that group, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that group.

Participation rate refers to the number of labour force participants expressed as a percentage of the population during the week of Sunday, May 2, to Saturday, May 8, 2021.

The participation rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, etc.) is the number of labour force participants in that group expressed as a percentage of the population for that group.

Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data were collected. If the person no longer understands the first language learned, the mother tongue is the second language learned. For a person who learned two languages at the same time in early childhood, the mother tongue is the language this person spoke most often at home before starting school. The person has two mother tongues only if the two languages were used equally often and are still understood by the person. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, the mother tongue is the language spoken most often to this child at home. The child has two mother tongues only if both languages are spoken equally often such that the child learns both languages at the same time.

Knowledge of Indigenous languages refers to whether the person can hold a conversation in an Indigenous language. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, this includes languages that the child is learning to speak at home.

Crowded housing (also known as not suitable housing) refers to a private household that does not have enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household according to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS). A household is deemed to be living in suitable accommodations if its dwelling has enough bedrooms, as calculated using the NOS.

REFERENCES

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