

## Census in Brief

# The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada

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<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- <sup>P</sup> preliminary
- <sup>r</sup> revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- <sup>E</sup> use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- \* significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )

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# The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada

## Highlights

- One in five (19.4%) [Aboriginal people](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm) lived in a dwelling that was in need of major repairs in 2016.
- The proportion living in a dwelling that needed major repairs decreased for each of the three Aboriginal groups (First Nations people, Métis and Inuit) from 2011 to 2016. The lone exception was on reserve, where the proportion of First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status living in a dwelling that needed major repairs went up by 0.8 percentage points.
- In 2016, 18.3% of Aboriginal people lived in housing that was crowded.

## Introduction

Housing is an issue of particular significance for the Aboriginal population in Canada. Many Aboriginal communities are located in northern and remote communities, where winter conditions are harsher and building supplies are more difficult to access and more expensive. Furthermore, the growth of the Aboriginal population—as highlighted in the infographic [The Aboriginal population in Canada](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017027-eng.htm)—has outpaced the rest of Canada. As a result, the housing conditions of Aboriginal peoples affect an increasingly large share of the population.

This article uses new data from the 2016 Census of Population to analyze the housing conditions of the Aboriginal population in Canada.

## One in five Aboriginal people live in a dwelling that is in need of major repairs

Of the 1,673,785 people who reported an [Aboriginal identity](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm) on the 2016 Census of Population, 324,900 lived in a dwelling that was in [need of major repairs](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements003-eng.cfm).

This group accounted for one-fifth (19.4%) of the total Aboriginal population in Canada. In comparison, 6.0% of the non-Aboriginal population reported living in a dwelling in need of major repairs.

One-quarter (26.2%) of Inuit, 24.2% of First Nations people and 11.3% of Métis lived in a dwelling that was in need of major repairs in 2016. These proportions are down from 2011 by 3.6 percentage points for Inuit, 2.0 percentage points for First Nations people and 1.9 percentage points for Métis. Table 1 shows the percentage of First Nations people with and without registered or treaty Indian status, Métis and Inuit by condition of dwelling in 2016.

**Table 1**  
**Condition of dwelling for First Nations people with and without Registered or Treaty Indian status, Métis and Inuit, Canada, 2016**

	Total – Condition of dwelling	Regular maintenance only	Minor repairs needed	Major repairs needed
<b>Aboriginal identity</b>		percent		
First Nations	100.0	44.0	31.8	24.2
With Registered or Treaty Indian status	100.0	41.6	31.0	27.4
Without Registered or Treaty Indian status	100.0	51.8	34.5	13.6
Métis	100.0	54.3	34.5	11.3
Inuit	100.0	42.0	31.8	26.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

### The proportion of Inuit living in a dwelling that needs major repairs is highest in Nunavut

The majority (72.8%) of the Inuit population lived in [Inuit Nunangat](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop168-eng.cfm) in 2016. The proportion who lived in Inuit Nunangat were significantly more likely to live in a dwelling that was in need of major repairs than those who lived outside Inuit Nunangat (31.5% versus 12.2%).

The proportion of Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat who lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs declined by 4.1 percentage points from 2011 to 2016. This decline brought the proportion back to the level it had been in 2006.

Within Inuit Nunangat, the proportion living in a dwelling in need of major repairs was highest in Nunavut (34.3%), followed by Nunatsiavut (32.6%), the Inuvialuit region (31.8%) and Nunavik (23.9%).

### The on-reserve population is more likely to live in a dwelling in need of major repairs

Of the 977,230 First Nations people who lived in Canada in 2016, about one-quarter (24.2%) lived in a dwelling in need of major repairs.

First Nations people with [registered Indian status](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop116-eng.cfm) were more likely to live in a dwelling in need of major repairs than those without registered Indian status (27.4% versus 13.6%).

Among the 744,855 First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status, 44.2% lived on reserve while 55.8% lived off reserve. There was a pronounced difference in the dwelling conditions of those who lived on reserve and those who did not. The proportion of First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status who lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs was more than three times higher on reserve (44.2%) than off reserve (14.2%).

While the proportion of First Nations people who lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs was lower in 2016 than in 2011, among those living on reserve the proportion went up. The proportion of First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status living on reserve who lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs rose by 0.8 percentage points. Five years earlier, in 2006, the proportion was roughly the same as the 2016 level.

### Métis living in metropolitan areas are less likely to live in a dwelling in need of major repairs

One-tenth (11.3%) of the Métis population lived in a dwelling that was in need of major repairs in 2016.

More than six in ten (62.6%) Métis lived in a metropolitan area of at least 30,000 people. Within these areas, the proportion of Métis who lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs was 9.7%. This was lower than the proportion who did not live in a metropolitan area of this size (13.9%).

In the western provinces, where the majority (59.7%) of the Métis population lived, the proportion of Métis living in a dwelling in need of major repairs was 10.8%.

The proportion of Métis who lived in housing in need of major repairs was 11.8% in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Ontario.

Métis were most likely to live in housing that was in need of major repairs if they lived in the territories (18.7%).

## One in ten Aboriginal people live in housing with a one-bedroom shortfall

In 2016, close to one-fifth (18.3%) of the Aboriginal population lived in housing that was considered **not suitable** (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage029-eng.cfm>) for the number of people who lived there, according to the National Occupancy Standard.<sup>1</sup> Housing suitability, a measure of crowding, refers to whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household; households that are not in suitable housing are considered to be crowded.

Crowded housing is categorized into dwellings that have a one-bedroom shortfall, a two-bedroom shortfall or a shortfall of three or more bedrooms. Therefore a house with a one-bedroom shortfall would require a single extra bedroom in order to adequately house the number of people who live there.

Just over one in ten (11.5%) Aboriginal people lived in housing with a one-bedroom shortfall; 4.0% lived in housing with a two-bedroom shortfall; and 2.8% lived in a dwelling with a shortfall of three or more bedrooms. While a lower proportion of the non-Aboriginal population lived in housing that was crowded (8.5%), the distribution of the types of shortfalls was similar.

## Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat are more likely to live in crowded housing

Two-fifths (40.6%) of the Inuit population lived in crowded housing in 2016. While more than one-fifth (22.2%) of Inuit lived in housing with a one-bedroom shortfall, 11.1% had a shortfall of two bedrooms and 7.4% had a shortfall of three bedrooms or more.

The proportion of Inuit living in crowded housing declined by 2.0 percentage points from 2011 to 2016.

In 2016, Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat were more likely to live in crowded housing than those who lived elsewhere in Canada. Within Inuit Nunangat, half (51.7%) of the Inuit population lived in crowded housing. This was similar to the proportion in 2011 (51.6%). The proportion was 10.9% for Inuit living outside of Inuit Nunangat.

One-fifth (20.6%) of Inuit living in Nunatsiavut and 28.6% of those living in the Inuvialuit region lived in crowded housing in 2016, while the highest levels of Inuit living in crowded housing were in Nunavik (52.0%) and Nunavut (56.4%).

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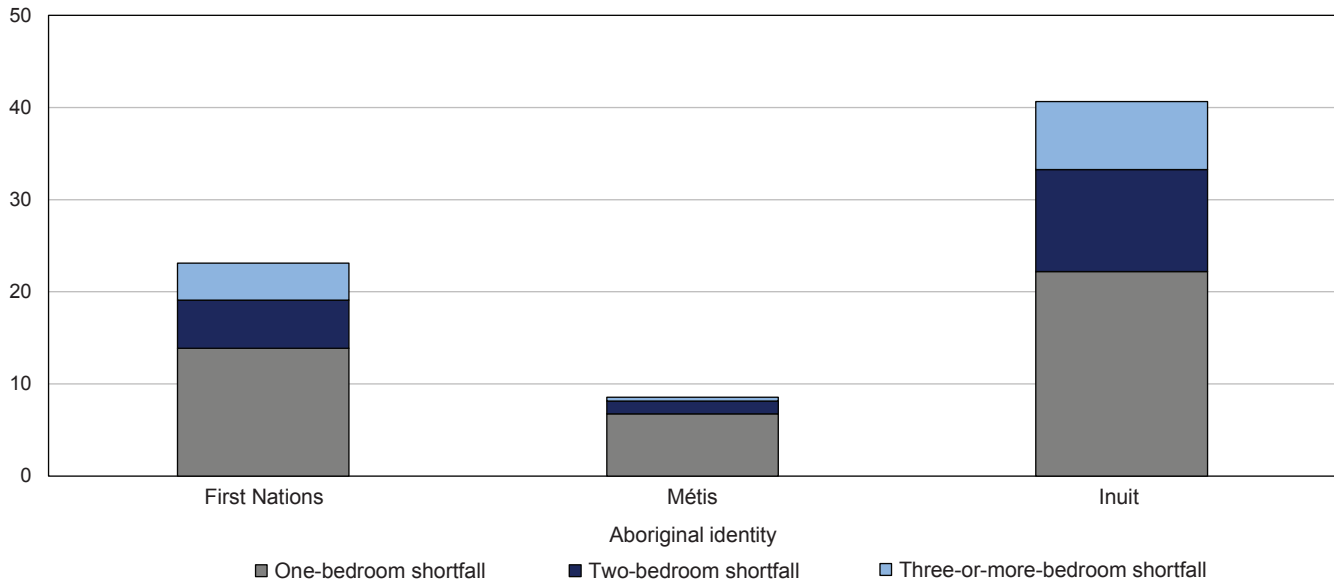
1. The National Occupancy Standard (NOS) was developed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) through consultations with provincial housing agencies.

# The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada

**Chart 1**

**Proportion of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit living in crowded housing, Canada, 2016**

percent



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

## One-quarter of First Nations people live in crowded housing

One-quarter (23.1%) of First Nations people lived in crowded housing in 2016. This figure was 2.5 percentage points lower than in 2011.

A higher proportion of First Nations people with registered Indian status than First Nations people without registered Indian status lived in crowded housing (26.6% versus 11.9%).

The proportion of First Nations people with registered or treaty Indian status living in a crowded dwelling was higher on reserve (36.8%) than off reserve (18.5%). On reserve, the proportion living in crowded housing was virtually unchanged from 2011 to 2016. Off reserve, the proportion went down by 3.5 percentage points from 2011 to 2016.

## Métis in metropolitan areas are more likely to live in crowded housing

About one in ten (8.6%) Métis lived in housing that was crowded.

While Métis living in a rural area were the most likely to live in a dwelling that was in need of major repairs, those who lived in metropolitan areas of 30,000 or more people were most likely to be in housing that was crowded. In these metropolitan areas, 8.7% of Métis lived in crowded housing compared with 8.3% of those who did not live in such areas.

The lowest proportion of Métis living in crowded housing was in Quebec (4.8%). In the Atlantic provinces, 6.2% lived in crowded housing; while, in Ontario, this figure was 7.4%. In the western provinces, 9.9% of the Métis population lived in crowded housing, as did 11.4% of Métis in the territories.

## 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.

Additional information on census data quality and comparability for Aboriginal peoples can be found in the [Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/009/98-500-x2016009-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/009/98-500-x2016009-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-500-X2016009.

### Methods

Data in this document showing changes in percentages and proportions between the 2016 Census of Population and the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) have been adjusted to account for incompletely enumerated Indian reserves in 2011 and/or 2016.

When comparing estimates from the 2011 NHS and estimates from the 2016 Census long form, users should take into account differences in survey methodology. The NHS estimates are derived from a voluntary survey and are therefore subject to potentially higher non-response error than those derived from the 2016 Census long form.

When comparing data on Aboriginal peoples from the 2016 Census of Population to previous cycles, several factors should be taken into account. Among these are differences in methodology, changes to the wording and format of Aboriginal questions, legislative changes and differences in the list of incompletely enumerated reserves.

Along with these factors, some people, for a variety of reasons, report their Aboriginal identity differently from one data collection period to another.

**Random rounding and percentage distributions:** To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2016 Census, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. 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%.

Because of random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products such as the analytical documents, highlight tables and data tables.

### 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 analysis on Aboriginal peoples can be found in *The Daily* (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025c-eng.htm>) of October 25, 2017, and in the Census in Brief articles entitled *Diverse family characteristics of Aboriginal children aged 0 to 4* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016020/98-200-x2016020-eng.cfm>), catalogue no. 98-200-X2016020 and *The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm>), catalogue no. 98-200-X2016022.

Additional information on the Aboriginal population can be found in the *Highlight tables* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/abo-aut/index-eng.cfm>), Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016009; the *Data tables* (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Lp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=0&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2017&THEME=122&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF>), Catalogue nos. 98-400-X2016154 to 98-400-X2016180; the *Census Profile* (<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>), Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001.

An infographic entitled *The Aboriginal population in Canada* (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017027-eng.htm>) illustrates the demographic growth of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations, and touches on Aboriginal languages in Canada.

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>), 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>), 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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