

Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

Adult Demographics

The impacts of colonization and colonial policies, such as the Indian Act, residential schools, the Sixes Scoop, and continued exclusion of Indigenous people from the Canadian economy are reflected in the higher rates of unemployment and lower socioeconomic status.¹ Research has shown that Indigenous people are undercounted by the national census^{2,3,4} and that Statistics Canada has significantly underestimated the prevalence of poverty among urban Indigenous population in Ontario.^{3,4}

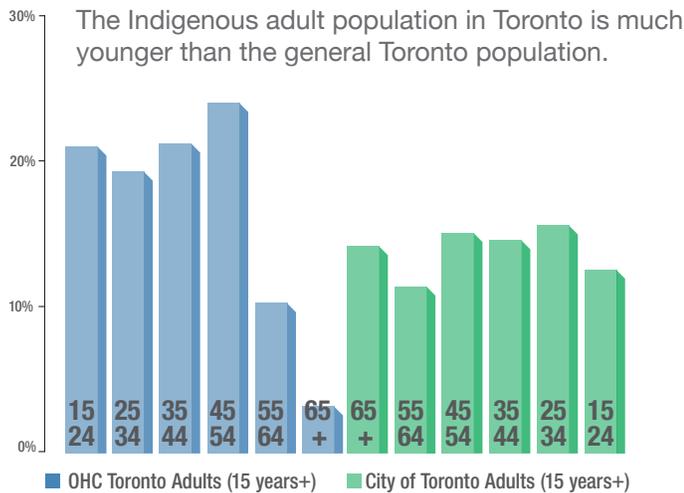
Population-level Data Collection

Only 14% of Indigenous adults in Toronto completed the 2011 Census. To obtain a representative sample, 70% of households should have completed the Census.

Only 16% completed the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS).

OHC Toronto study findings indicate that there are **45,000-60,000** Indigenous adults in Toronto. This is 3-4 times more than estimated by Statistics Canada. (The 2011 NHS estimates that 15,650 Indigenous adults live in Toronto)

Identity Age



86% of Indigenous adults in Toronto identified as First Nations.

81% of First Nations adults had federal “Indian Status” and **19%** were non-status.

14% identified as Métis.

19% were non-status.

0.4% identified as Inuit.

0.5% identified as First Nations and Métis.

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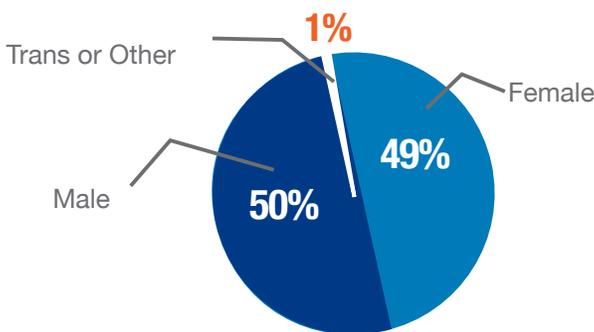
Relationship Status

Two-Spirit

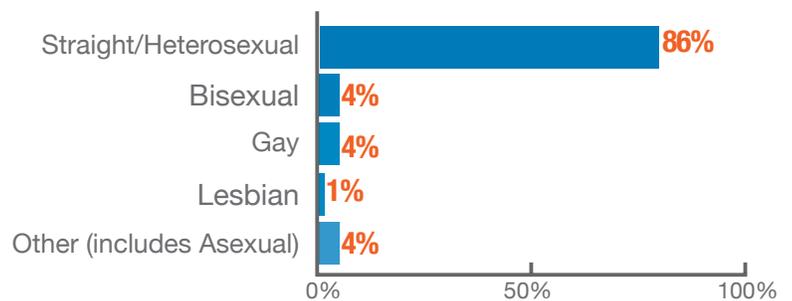
“The term two-spirit . . . originated in Northern Algonquin dialect and gained first currency at the third annual spiritual gathering of gay and lesbian Native people that took place near Winnipeg in 1990. What we who chose this designation understood is that niizh manitoag (two-spirits) indicates the presence of both a feminine and a masculine spirit in one person.”⁶

23% of Indigenous adults in Toronto identified as Two-Spirit.

Gender

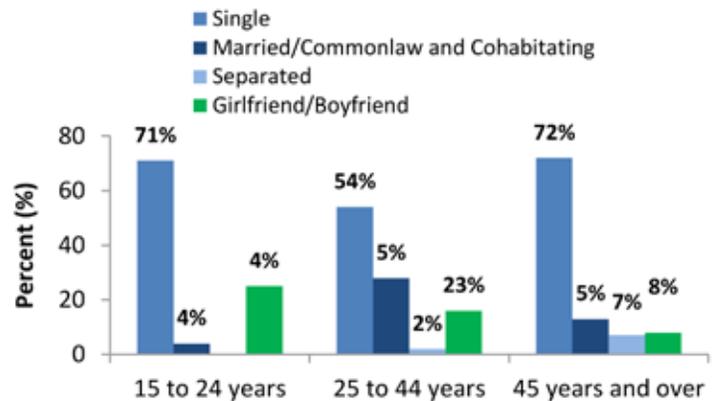
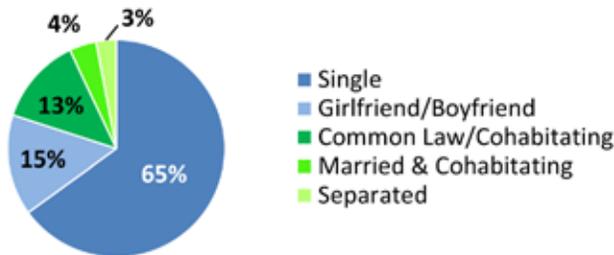


Sexual Orientation



Relationship Status

64% of Indigenous adults in Toronto were single compared to **28%** of adults in Ontario (Adults were defined as age 15 years +).⁷



Household Composition

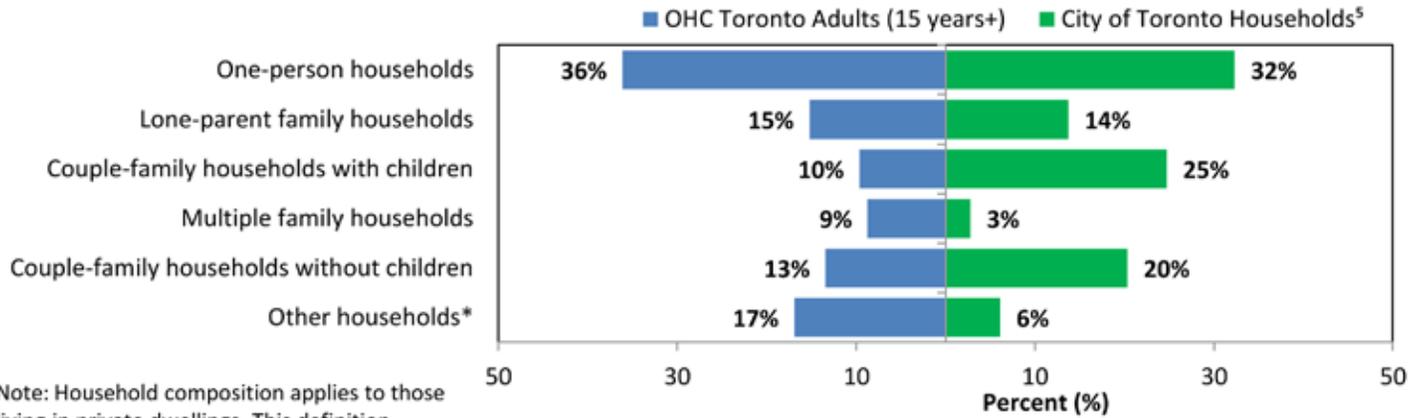


Indigenous households in Toronto had higher rates of multiple families living together compared to households in Toronto.⁸ Multiple family households included parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, and/or uncles. Indigenous households were also less likely to contain couple-families, with or without children compared to households in Toronto.⁸

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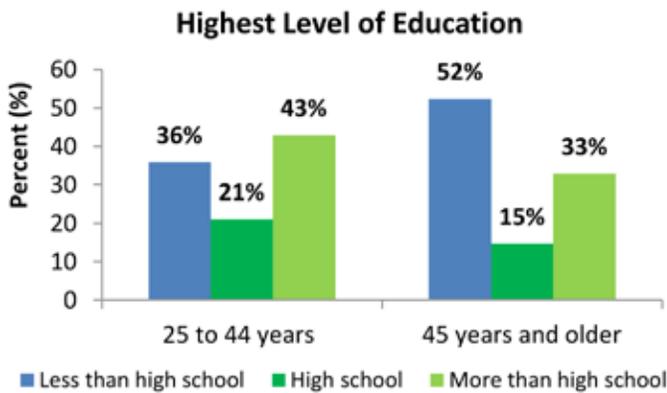
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Household Composition



Note: Household composition applies to those living in private dwellings. This definition includes those who were stably housed only.

Education



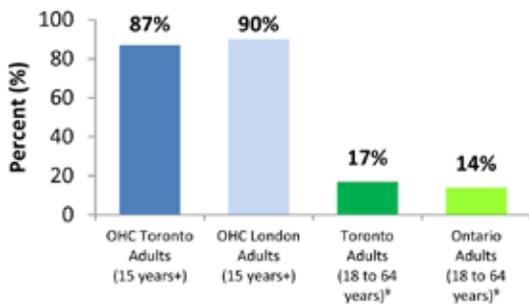
OHC Toronto found that the education levels were increased among the younger (25-44 years) generation compared to the older generation (45 years +).

Indigenous adults aged 25-64 years in Toronto had a lower rate of high school completion (57%) compared to the general Ontario population (90%).⁵

Among Indigenous adults who did complete high school there was a high rate of completion of at least some college or university (65%).

Poverty

87% of Indigenous adults in Toronto fell below the before tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO).



3 in 5 (61%) Indigenous adults in Toronto said their overall health/wellbeing had been affected by financial hardship in the past 12 months.

Over half of Indigenous adults in Toronto believed that their ability to engage in preventative health activities had been affected by financial hardship.

Leading sources of income for Indigenous adults were:

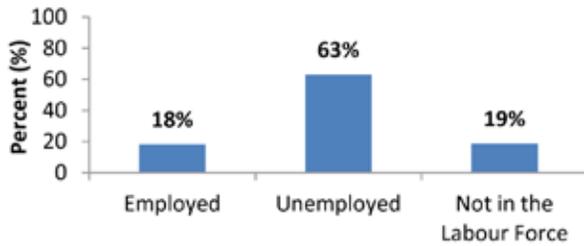
- Disability (Ontario Disability Support Program)
- Provincial/Municipal Social Assistance or Welfare
- Wages and Salaries from Employment

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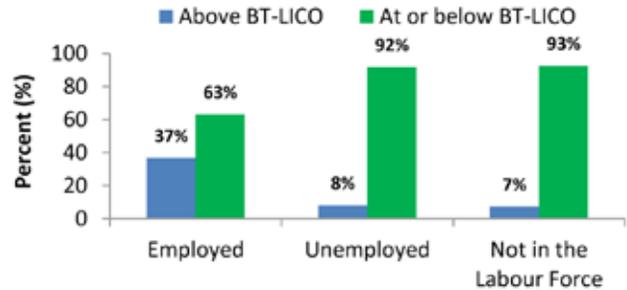
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Employment

63% of Indigenous adults in Toronto were unemployed compared to 7% of adults (15 years+) in Ontario (LFS 2016).¹⁰



Almost 2 in 3 employed Indigenous adults lived at or below the before-tax low-income cutoff.



Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 7:

We call upon the federal government to develop with Indigenous groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Additional Recommendations:

City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to:

- Address data collection methods and system limitations that systematically undercount Indigenous populations and under-represent Indigenous health and social inequities.
- Develop, implement and evaluate urban Indigenous poverty reduction and income security programming.
- Address Indigenous specific barriers to accessing employment and education programs, services, and supports.

Definitions	Indigenous adults: persons 15 years or older self-identifying as Indigenous, such as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit living or using services in the City of Toronto; CY: City of Toronto; Trans and Other: includes Transgender, Transsexual, or Gender Queer, "You do not have a category that applies to me"; Employed: includes part/full-time work, seasonal work, self-employed, homemaker, or any informal paid work (e.g. babysitting, housekeeping); Not in labour force: Student or retired.	Population based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet)
Sources	1. Allan & Smylie (2015); 2. Smylie & Firestone (2015); 3. Smylie et al. (In press); 4. Rotondi et al. (2018); 5. Statistics Canada (2013); 6. Anguksuar/Richard LaFortune (1997); 7. Statistics Canada (2016a); 8. Statistics Canada (2013); 9. Statistics Canada (2015); 10. Statistics Canada (2016b)	

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For the full OHC Toronto report visit:
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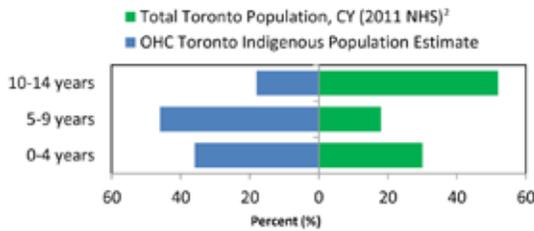
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Child Demographics Population-level Data Collection

OHC Toronto study findings indicate that there are **3 to 4x (10,000 to 14,000)** more Indigenous children in Toronto than estimated by Statistics Canada.

(The 2011 NHS estimates that 3,620 Indigenous children live in Toronto).

Age

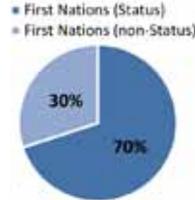


Identity

93% of Indigenous children in Toronto identified as First Nations.

A similar percent of children in Toronto had Status compared to Indigenous adults.

7% identified as Métis, Inuit, or other.



Income

92% of Indigenous children live in households that fell below or at the before tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO).



Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 7:

We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of Indigenous children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Indigenous peoples in Canada compared with non-Indigenous people.

Additional Recommendations:

- The City of Toronto, provincial, and federal governments work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to develop and fund sustainable income support and Indigenous specific education programming for Indigenous parents, families and communities.

Definitions

Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous by their parent or guardian, such as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit living or using services in the City of Toronto; CY: City of Toronto

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

Sources

1. Government of Canada (2010); 2. Statistics Canada (2013)

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Adult Demographics Reference

Our Health Counts Toronto is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada. Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Survey Question

RDS Prevalence Estimate
(95% Confidence Interval)

Did you complete the 2011 Census Canada questionnaire?

Yes	14.2% (10.6, 17.9)
No	81.0% (76.6, 85.5)
	4.8% (2.4, 7.1)

Did you complete the 2011 National Household Survey?

Yes	11.2% (7.8, 14.5)
No	83.6% (79.4, 87.8)
	5.3% (2.8, 7.7)

How do you self-identify? (Can be included in more than one group)

First Nations	86.0% (80.4, 91.6)
Métis	13.9% (8.3, 19.5)
Inuit	0.4% (0.1, 0.6)

Are you status (i.e. Registered Indian according to the Indian Act)?

Yes	69.3% (62.5, 76.0)
No	30.7% (24.0, 37.5)

Are you status (for individuals identifying as First Nations only)?

Yes	80.5% (75.2, 85.8)
No	19.5% (14.2, 24.8)

Age Group

15 to 24 years	21.2% (13.6, 28.9)
25 to 34 years	19.5% (14.6, 24.3)
35 to 44 years	21.4% (14.6, 28.2)
45 to 54 years	24.2% (17.3, 31.0)
55 to 64 years	10.4% (7.1, 13.7)
65 years and older	3.3% (1.8, 4.9)

Do you identify as Two-Spirit?

Note: Two-Spirit is a term some Indigenous people use to describe their identify and/or gender and/or sexual orientation.

Yes	22.6% (16.4, 28.8)
No	77.4% (71.2, 83.6)

What is your gender?

Female	48.6% (40.8, 56.4)
Male	50.0% (42.2, 57.7)
Trans (i.e. Transgender, Transsexual, Gender Queer)	1.0% (0.1, 1.9)
Other/You do not have a category that applies to me	0.5% (0.0, 1.1)

How do you identify your sexual orientation?

Straight/heterosexual	86.0% (80.6, 91.5)
Lesbian	1.3% (0.0, 2.9)
Gay	4.2% (0.0, 8.7)
Bisexual	4.4% (2.2, 6.5)
Other/You do not have a category that applies to me/ Asexual	4.1% (1.8, 6.4)

What is your relationship status?

Single	64.6% (57.3, 72.0)
Married and cohabitating	4.1% (2.1, 6.1)
Separated	3.6% (1.0, 6.1)
Common-law/cohabitating (i.e. living together)	13.1% (7.8, 18.4)
Girlfriend/boyfriend	14.7% (9.0, 20.3)

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