

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Thunder Bay

Adult Demographics

The impacts of colonization and colonial policies, such as the Indian Act, residential schools, the Sixties 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 populations in Ontario.^{3,4}

Population-level Data Collection

Only **15%** of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay completed the 2016 Census.

OHC Thunder Bay study findings indicate that there are **23,080 – 42,641** Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay. This is **2 – 4 times** more than estimated by Statistics Canada. The **2016 Census** indicated **9,780** Indigenous adults (15 years+) live in Thunder Bay.⁵

Identity

98% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay identified as First Nations.

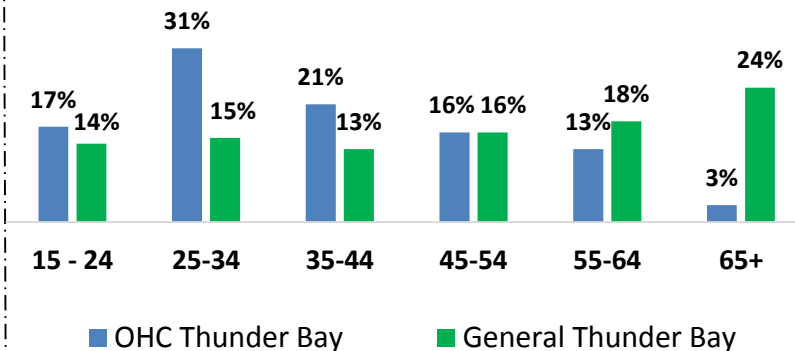
97% of First Nations adults had federal “Indian Status” and 3% were non-status.

1% identified as Métis.

1% identified as First Nations and Métis.

Age

The Indigenous adult population in Thunder Bay is much younger than the general Thunder Bay population.⁶

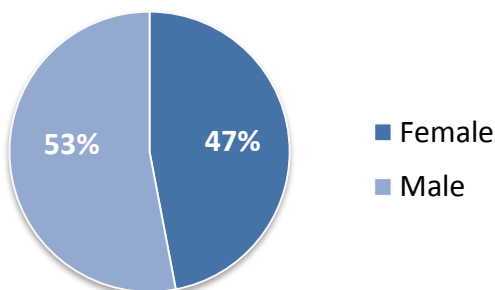


Two-Spirit

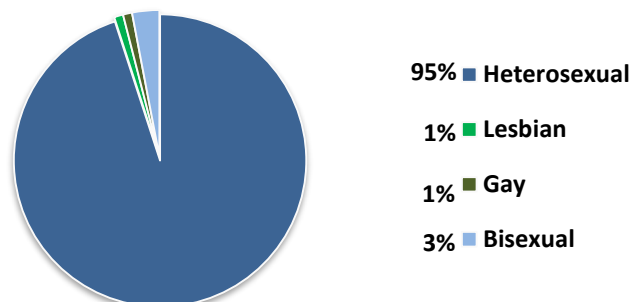
“The term two-spirit . . . originated in Northern Algonquin dialect and gained first currency at the third annual spiritual gathering of gay and lesbian Native people that took place near Winnipeg in 1990. What we who chose this designation understood is that *niizh manitoag* (two-spirits) indicates the presence of both a feminine and a masculine spirit in one person.”⁷

10% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay identified as Two-Spirit.

Gender



Sexual Orientation



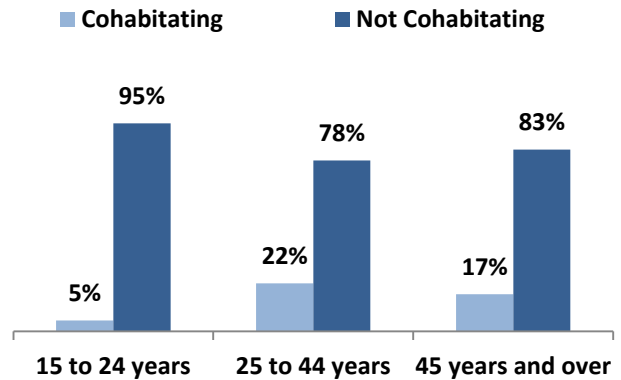
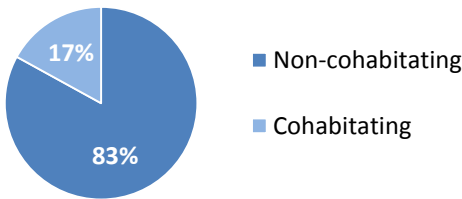
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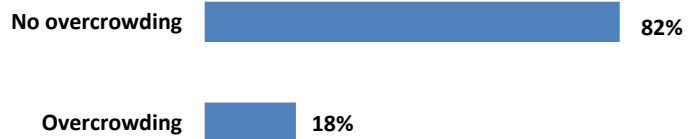
Relationship Status

83% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay are in a non-cohabitating household compared to **42.7%** of adults in Ontario (Adults were defined as age 15 years +)⁶.



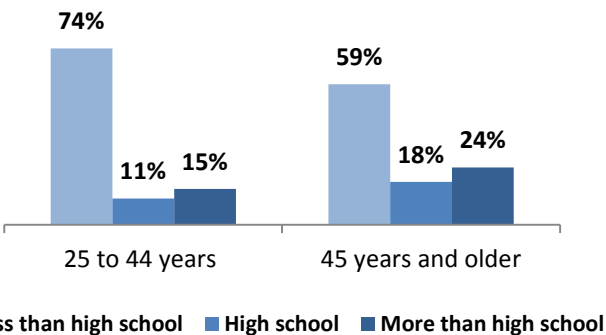
Household Composition

Indigenous households in Thunder Bay had a **19 times** higher rate of multiple families living together compared to households in Thunder Bay⁶. Indigenous households were also less likely to contain couple-families, with or without children compared to households in Thunder Bay⁶.



Highest Level of Education

Education



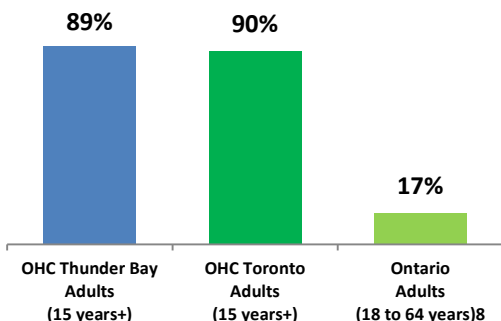
OHC Thunder Bay found that the education levels were lower among the younger (25-44 years) generation compared to the older generation (45 years+).

Indigenous adults aged 25-64 years in Thunder Bay had a lower rate of high school completion (**33%**) compared to the Our Health Counts Toronto population (**56%**).

Among Indigenous adults who did complete high school half completed at least some college or university (**51%**).

Fell Below Before-Tax LICO

Poverty



89% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay fell below the before-tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO).

Leading sources of income for Indigenous adults were:

- Provincial/Municipal Social Assistance or Welfare
- Disability (Ontario Disability Support Program)
- Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)

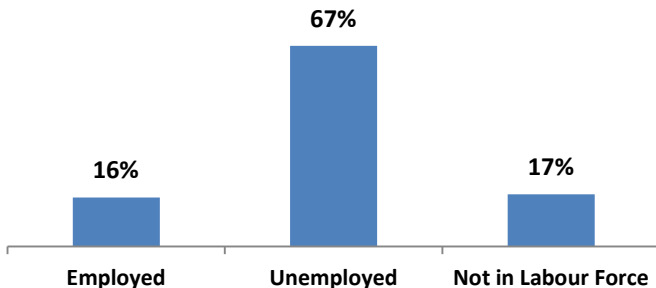
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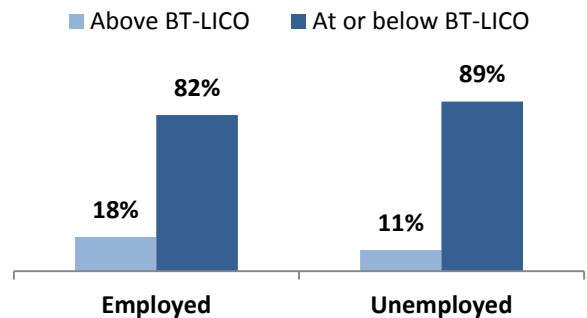
Adult Demographics

Employment

67% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay were unemployed compared to **11%** of adults (15 years+) in Ontario.⁵



4 in 5 employed Indigenous adults lived at or below the before-tax Low-Income Cut-Off.



Policy Implications

TRC Call to Action⁹ 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.

MMIWG Report Calls to Justice¹⁰ 4.1: We call upon all governments to uphold the social and economic rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people by ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have services and infrastructure that meet their social and economic needs. All governments must immediately ensure that Indigenous Peoples have access to safe housing, clean drinking water, and adequate food.

MMIWG Report Calls to Justice 4.5: We call upon all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians, including Indigenous Peoples, to meet all their social and economic needs. This income must take into account diverse needs, realities, and geographic locations.

Additional Recommendations: City of Thunder Bay, 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 Thunder Bay; 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.

Sources

1. Allan & Smylie (2015); 2. Smylie & Firestone (2015); 3. Smylie et al. (In press); 4. Rotondi et al. (2018); 5. Statistics Canada (2016); 6. Statistics Canada (2017); 7. Anguksuar/Richard LaFortune (1997); 8. Statistics Canada (2015); 9. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 10. MMIWG Calls to Justice (2019).

Population based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling

Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people



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Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Adult Demographics Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay 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 2016 Census Canada questionnaire?	
Yes	14.50% (9.80, 19.20)
No	69.0% (63.10, 74.90)
Don't know	16.50% (12.00, 21.00)
How do you self-identify? (Can be included in more than one group)	
First Nations	97.90% (95.80, 100)
Métis	1.50% (0.30, 3.30)
Inuit	0% (0.00, 0.00)
Multiple	0.50% (0.50, 1.60)
Are you status (for individuals identifying as First Nations only)?	
Yes	96.60% (94.20, 99.00)
No	3.10% (0.80, 5.30)
Age Group	
15 to 24 years	17.11% (12.20, 22.10)
25 to 34 years	30.80% (24.90, 36.60)
35 to 44 years	20.70% (15.50, 25.90)
45 to 54 years	15.80% (10.90, 20.70)
55 to 64 years	13.00% (8.80, 17.20)
65 years and older	2.60% (0.60, 4.50)
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	9.60% (6.10, 13.10)
No	88.70% (85.10, 92.40)
What is your gender?	
Female	46.90% (40.50, 53.30)
Male	53.10% (46.70, 59.50)
How do you identify your sexual orientation?	
Straight/heterosexual	95.20% (92.60, 97.80)
Lesbian	0.90% (0.70, 2.50)
Gay	0.80% (0.30, 1.30)
Bisexual	2.50% (0.60, 4.30)
Pansexual	0.40% (0.30, 1.10)
Other/You do not have a category that applies to me/Asexual	0.00% (0.20, 0.40)



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Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Adult Demographics Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
What is your relationship status?	
Cohabiting	17.40% (12.60, 22.30)
Not cohabiting	82.50% (77.70, 87.40)
Don't know	0.00% (0.00, 0.10)
What is your relationship status (age 15 to 24 years)?	
Cohabiting	5.10% (0.30, 10.50)
Not Cohabiting	94.90% (89.50, 100)
What is your relationship status (age 25 to 44 years)?	
Cohabiting	21.70% (14.10, 29.30)
Not Cohabiting	78.30% (70.70, 85.90)
What is your relationship status (age 45 years and over)?	
Cohabiting	17.10% (9.30, 24.90)
Not Cohabiting	82.70% (74.90, 90.60)
Don't Know	0.10% (0.00, 0.30)
Which of the following best describes your household	
One-person household	26.40% (20.40, 32.40)
Lone-parent household	16.10% (11.00, 21.20)
Couple-family households with children	11.60% (7.50, 15.70)
Couple-family households without children	10.70% (7.00, 14.40)
Multiple family households	18.80% (14.00, 23.60)
Other	16.40% (11.10, 21.70)
What is the highest level of schooling you have ever completed? (for Indigenous adults aged 25 to 64)	
Less than high school	67.50% (60.90, 74.10)
High school	13.90% (8.90, 19.00)
More than high school	18.60% (13.40, 23.80)
What is the highest level of schooling you have ever completed? (for Indigenous adults aged 25 to 44)	
Less than high school	73.80% (66.10, 81.40)
High school	11.00% (5.10, 16.90)
More than high school	15.20% (9.40, 21.00)
What is the highest level of schooling you have ever completed? (for Indigenous adults aged 45 and older)	
Less than high school	58.60% (47.60, 69.70)
High school	17.60% (9.20, 26.00)
More than high school	23.70% (14.60, 32.90)
What of the following best describes your current employment status?	
Employed	16.20% (11.30, 21.10)
Unemployed	66.50% (60.50, 72.50)
Not in labour force	17.30% (12.80, 21.80)



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Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Income for Indigenous adults who are employed	
Above the before-tax low-income cut-off (LICO)	17.50% (5.20, 29.90)
At or below the before-tax LICO	82.50% (70.10, 94.90)
Income for Indigenous adults who are unemployed	
Above the before-tax LICO	11.00% (5.20, 16.80)
At or below the before-tax LICO	89.00% (83.20, 94.80)
Income for Indigenous adults who are not in the labour force	
Above the before-tax LICO	14.80% (6.70, 22.90)
At or below the before-tax LICO	85.20% (77.10, 93.40)
Income: LICO	
Above before-tax LICO	10.80% (6.50, 15.10)
At or below the before-tax LICO	89.20% (84.90, 93.50)



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