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ALBERTA 2006 Population and Dwelling Release Quick Facts

- Alberta's population passed the 3 million mark and 3,290,350 persons were enumerated in the 2006 Census.
- Alberta's population has almost tripled in the past 50 years – from 1.1 million in 1956 to almost 3.3 million
- The number of Albertans increased by 10.6% between 2001 and 2006, double the national growth rate (+5.4%).
- Alberta's growth rate was similar to the rate for the 1996 to 2001 period (+10.3%). If the province continues to grow by 10% every five years in the future, its population will likely double between 2006 and the mid-2030s.
- Close to 95% of the Prairie provinces' population growth between 2001 and 2006 took place in Alberta, which was the fastest-growing Canadian province during the period.
- During the same period, Alberta's share of Canada's total population topped 10% for the first time.
- While gains through migration exchanges with the rest of the country are still the main factor in Alberta's population growth, international immigration has been contributing increasing numbers of people over the last few years. Alberta is also the only Canadian province whose natural increase did not decline between 2001 and 2006.
- In Alberta, growth rates above the national average were observed in a north-south corridor running from Edmonton to Medicine Hat, including Red Deer and Calgary.

Census Metropolitan Areas/urban centres

- 2.1 million people, or 64% of Alberta's population, lived in the province's two CMAs in 2006.



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- Alberta's two CMAs, Calgary and Edmonton, experienced vigorous growth since 2001.
 - Calgary's population grew by 13.4% between 2001 and 2006, (1,079,310) the second-highest growth rate among CMAs in Canada during this period.
 - Edmonton was the fourth fastest-growing CMA in the country with a 10.4% growth rate (2006 population of 1,034,945).
 - The rapid population growth in Alberta's two CMAs is attributable to the economic boom that the province has enjoyed for a number of years. The buoyancy of the province's job market has attracted many workers from the rest of Canada, and large numbers of them have settled in the two major metropolitan areas. Immigration and relatively high fertility have also been significant factors in Calgary's and Edmonton's population boom.
 - The bulk of Canada's population growth is concentrated in the larger metropolitan areas, a pattern generally found in most countries. Usually, this sustained growth in city populations leads to urban spread, that is, rapid development of the areas surrounding the core cities¹, which turns them into suburbs. This urban spread presents many challenges for metropolitan centres, especially in the areas of transportation, public services and the environment.
 - Between 2001 and 2006, the growth rate of cities surrounding the core cities of Canada's 33 census metropolitan areas was double the national average for population growth (+11.1% versus +5.4%). During the same period, the core cities grew more slowly (+4.2%) than the Canadian population and less than half as fast as the surrounding cities. (*NOTE: The core city is defined as the city for which the CMA is named*)
 - Calgary was the fifth largest CMA in the country in 2006, with a population of 1,079,310.
 - Calgary's population increased rapidly between 2001 and 2006 (+12.4%). It spread out along the McLeod Trail to the south and the Crowchild Trail to the north, skirting such obstacles as the Nose Hill Natural Environment Park and the Foothills Industrial Park.
 - The population of the municipalities around Calgary (for example, Cochrane, Chestermere, Airdrie and Crossfield) also grew at a rapid pace (+29.2%) in the 2001 to 2006 period.
 - Edmonton was the sixth largest CMA in the country in 2006, with a population of 1,034,945.
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- In the Edmonton area , urban spread occurred mainly along the Calgary Trail to the south, around the West Edmonton Mall, and in the districts north of the city. Between 2001 and 2006, Edmonton’s population increased by 9.6%.
- Canada has 111 mid-size urban centres , regions that have an urban core with a population of more than 10,000 but are not CMAs.
- Alberta’s mid-size urban centres grew at a far higher rate than the national average growth of 4.0% between 2001 and 2006.
- Eight mid-size urban centres in Canada had a growth rate of more than 10%, twice the rate for the country as a whole.
- Seven of them were in Alberta: Okotoks, Wood Buffalo, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Lloydminster, Canmore and Medicine Hat.
- The top four had rates of growth twice to four times the Alberta provincial rate. A flourishing job market and rising incomes in Alberta continued to attract many workers, increasing the province’s population, and therefore the population of its regions, at a pace unmatched anywhere else in Canada.

Mid-size urban centre	2006 population	2001-2006 population growth
Okotoks	17,145	46.7%
Wood Buffalo	52,643	23.6%
Grande Prairie	71,868	22.3%
Red Deer	82,772	22.0%
Lloydminster (Sask/Alberta)	27,023	12.8%
Canmore	12,039	11.6%
Medicine Hat	68,822	11.5%

- Sylvan Lake, near Red Deer, Alberta, is the fastest-growing rural census subdivision since 2001, at 36.1%. It also grew by 44.5% between 1996 and 2001. Another small town in the region that experienced a rapid increase in population in the 2001 to 2006 period is Lacombe, north of Red Deer (+14.5%).
- Strathmore (+34.2%) and Foothills No. 31 (+18.9%), towns to the east and south of Calgary, also experienced rapid population growth over the last five years. Strathmore had a very high growth rate in the previous intercensal period as well (+43.4%).

Alberta’s Cities

- 2,185,805, or 66% of Alberta’s population lived in the province’s 16 cities in 2006.

- Over the past five years, Alberta's cities grew an average of 12.2%.
- Airdrie was the fastest growing city in Alberta between 2001 and 2006, with a population growth rate of 41.8% , to 28,927. During this same period, the number of private dwellings in Airdrie increased by 55.9%
- Grande Prairie had the second highest growth rate, at 27.3%, to 47,076.
- The total number of private dwellings in Alberta's cities was 904,908 in 2006 – an increase of 16.2% over 2001.

Towns

- 421,890 people, or almost 13% of Alberta's population, lived in the province's towns in 2006.
- The average growth in population in Alberta's 110 towns between 2001 and 2006 was 10.3%
- During this same period, the total number of private dwellings in Alberta's towns increased by 12.2%
- Chestemere, a relatively new bedroom community which is part of the CMA of Calgary, had a population growth rate of 148% between 2001 and 2006, at 148%, to 9,564. During this same period, the number of private dwellings increased by 130%.
- The town of Okotoks, also near Calgary, was tied with Blackfalds for the second highest population growth rate of Alberta's towns, at 46.7% - their 2006 populations were 17,145 and 4,571.
- The average population density (number of people per square kilometre) for Alberta's towns in 2006 was 280 in 2006, compared to the provincial figure of 5.14.

Villages

- 40,429 people, or 1.2% of Alberta's population, lived in the province's villages in 2006.
- The average growth in population in Alberta's 101 villages between 2001 and 2006 was 2.8%
- During this same period, the total number of private dwellings in Alberta's villages increased by less than 1% (0.8%).

- The average population density (number of people per square kilometre) for Alberta's villages was 259 in 2006.

Summer Villages

- Summer villages recorded the highest population growth rate of all geographic types in Alberta between 2001 and 2006 at 50.6%.
- The total population of Alberta's 51 summer villages was 6,164 in 2006.
- During this same period, the total number of private dwellings in summer villages declined by 3.0%, suggesting that more Albertans are declaring a summer village home as a usual, rather than secondary, place of residence.

RGM of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray)

- Wood Buffalo, Alberta's sole regional municipality, experienced a high level of population growth between 2001 and 2006, at 24.3%.
- During this same period, the number of private dwellings in Wood Buffalo increased by 38.7%.
- In 2006 Wood Buffalo's population was 51,496; the number of private dwellings was 20,505.

Indian Reserves

- 41,307 people, or 1.2% of Alberta's population, lived on an Indian Reserve in 2006.
- The average growth in population in Alberta's 93 Reserves between 2001 and 2006 was 5.5%, compared to the total provincial growth rate of 10.6% for the same period.
- 14 Reserves in Alberta recorded 2006 populations of 1,000 or more.
- The largest Reserve in Alberta in was the Blood Reserve, with a 2006 population of 4,177, up 8.4% from 2001.
- During the intercensal period, the total number of private dwellings in Alberta's Reserves increased by 6.7%, to 11,415.
- The average population density (number of people per square kilometre) for Alberta's Reserves was 5.85 in 2006.

On-line Census completion

- Nationally, 18.5% of Canadian households took advantage of the first-ever opportunity to complete their census questionnaire on the Internet.
- The rate was highest in Alberta, where 21.4% of households filled out their questionnaire online.