



RURAL WELLBEING

Migration & Immigration Factsheet



HIGHLIGHTS

- 6% of migrants to rural areas moved from other Canadian provinces or territories.
- Urban areas have a higher proportion of migrants from other countries.
- Approximately 60% of immigrants in rural areas were born in Europe, while 55% of immigrants in urban areas were born in Asia.
- 50% of immigrants in rural areas arrived prior to 1980.

Overview – What do demographic statistics tell us?

Census data helps us understand population changes. We can examine how many people moved to a different location within Canada, and how many immigrants moved to Canada from other countries. This factsheet presents migration and immigration statistics for rural and urban municipalities in Ontario. Summary statistics for census divisions and economic regions are presented in the appendices.

For interactive maps and data visualizations, please see the [Society page of the Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#).



Date source:

Statistics Canada. 2022. Census Profile. 2021 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. [98-316-X2021001](#).

Table 1. Overview of migration and immigration statistics.

Geography	Number of migrants	Proportion of migrant population	Number of immigrants	Proportion of immigrant population
Rural	142,815	6%	198,080	8%
Urban	552,000	5%	4,007,835	34%
Ontario	694,815	5%	4,205,915	30%

Definitions:

Rural: any municipality outside of census metropolitan areas.

Urban: any municipality within a [census metropolitan area](#).

Municipality: Census subdivisions, municipalities, and areas treated as municipal for statistical purposes, including unorganized territories and Indigenous reserves and settlements.

Migrants: people who moved to a different census subdivision between May 21, 2020, and May 21, 2021. Internal migrants moved from elsewhere within Canada. External migrants moved from outside of Canada.

Immigrants: landed immigrants or permanent residents who have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities on or prior to May 11, 2021. This also includes immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization.

Canadian citizen: people who are citizens of Canada.

First generation: people who were born outside of Canada.

Second generation: people born in Canada with at least one parent born outside of Canada.

Third generation: people born in Canada with both parents born in Canada.



Migration

Urban and rural areas have a similar proportion of migrants (Table 1). Almost all of the migrants in rural areas came from elsewhere within Ontario (Table 2). Only 6% of migrants to rural areas moved from other Canadian provinces or territories. Urban areas have a higher proportion of migrants from other countries.

Table 2. Proportion of migrants by category.

Geography	Migrants from within Ontario	Migrants from other provinces/territories	Migrants from other countries
Rural	90%	6%	4%
Urban	70%	8%	22%
Ontario	74%	8%	18%

Immigration

Urban areas have a much higher proportion of immigrants than rural areas (Table 1). About half of the immigrants in rural areas arrived prior to 1980 (Table 3). In contrast, almost half of immigrants in urban areas arrived in Canada between 2001-2021. One quarter of urban immigrants arrived in the last 10 years, compared to only 13% in rural areas.

Almost 60% of immigrants in rural areas were born in Europe, while 55% of immigrants in urban areas were born in Asia (Table 4). Rural and urban areas have a similar proportion of immigrants who were born in the Americas.

Rural areas have more third generation Canadians, which makes sense since many rural immigrants arrived more than 40 years ago (Table 5). Most urban immigrants are recent arrivals, so urban areas are home to more first generation and second generation Canadians than rural areas.

Table 3. Time period of immigration.

Geography	Before 1980	1980 to 1990	1991 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2021
Rural	50%	13%	11%	13%	13%
Urban	19%	12%	21%	23%	25%
Ontario	20%	12%	20%	22%	25%

Table 4. Place of birth for the immigrant population.

Geography	Asia	Europe	Americas	Africa	Oceania and other
Rural	17%	59%	20%	3%	1%
Urban	55%	23%	15%	7%	0%
Ontario	53%	25%	15%	7%	0%

Table 5. Canadian citizenship summary.

Geography	2021 Population	Canadian citizens	First generation Canadians	Second generation Canadians	Third generation Canadians
Rural	2,481,753	2,334,045	9%	13%	75%
Urban	11,742,189	10,244,745	38%	24%	36%
Ontario	14,223,942	12,578,790	33%	22%	43%

Summary

Population change can be both beneficial and challenging for a community. For example, population increases may help address labour shortages, but could also result in higher housing prices and a greater demand for municipal services. Both migration from within Canada and immigration from outside of Canada are important for maintaining a productive workforce. Rural areas are aging and have a smaller proportion of recent immigrants, which may affect the labour market. Understanding population change is important for municipal planning and workforce development. Businesses, community organizations, and governments can use the information provided in this factsheet and in the dashboard to help develop strategies for attracting people to move to rural communities.

Appendix 1. Summary statistics for Census Divisions.

Census Division	2021 Population	Proportion of migrants	Migrants from within Ontario	Migrants from other provinces/territories	Migrants from other countries	Proportion of immigrants
Algoma	113,777	4%	3,320	375	390	7%
Brant	144,937	6%	8,620	335	430	14%
Bruce	73,396	6%	3,955	240	265	7%
Chatham-Kent	104,316	3%	3,050	245	255	9%
Cochrane	77,963	4%	2,795	220	85	3%
Dufferin	66,257	8%	4,900	60	175	16%
Durham	696,992	6%	39,045	1,020	3,000	27%
Elgin	94,752	5%	4,780	140	230	12%
Essex	422,860	4%	11,880	1,160	3,300	23%
Frontenac	161,780	6%	7,350	1,435	1,175	12%
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	166,128	3%	3,395	585	550	6%
Grey	100,905	7%	6,275	180	170	8%
Haldimand-Norfolk	116,706	5%	5,800	205	250	10%
Haliburton	20,571	8%	1,575	55	65	8%
Halton	596,637	6%	31,020	1,875	5,735	34%
Hamilton	569,353	4%	20,000	1,580	3,105	26%
Hastings	145,746	7%	8,385	960	260	8%
Huron	61,366	5%	2,910	85	100	7%
Kawartha Lakes	79,247	5%	3,725	175	165	8%
Kenora	66,000	3%	1,335	555	85	4%
Lambton	128,154	4%	4,465	335	490	9%
Lanark	75,760	7%	4,765	340	140	7%
Leeds and Grenville	104,070	6%	5,585	495	275	7%
Lennox and Addington	45,182	6%	2,390	195	65	6%

Census Division	2021 Population	Proportion of migrants	Migrants from within Ontario	Migrants from other provinces/territories	Migrants from other countries	Proportion of immigrants
Manitoulin	13,935	7%	825	10	20	4%
Middlesex	500,563	5%	17,910	2,320	4,870	22%
Muskoka	66,674	7%	4,135	195	130	8%
Niagara	477,941	6%	26,140	1,080	2,245	17%
Nipissing	84,716	5%	3,510	330	200	4%
Northumberland	89,365	7%	6,105	175	100	10%
Ottawa	1,017,449	4%	15,845	10,335	10,885	25%
Oxford	121,781	7%	7,910	305	225	11%
Parry Sound	46,909	7%	3,020	55	35	6%
Peel	1,451,022	4%	37,325	4,295	21,770	51%
Perth	81,565	6%	4,045	275	255	9%
Peterborough	147,681	5%	7,220	385	310	8%
Prescott and Russell	95,639	7%	5,295	990	120	6%
Prince Edward	25,704	7%	1,545	130	60	10%
Rainy River	19,437	3%	385	110	30	5%
Renfrew	106,365	7%	5,665	1,170	145	5%
Simcoe	533,169	8%	38,210	1,455	1,415	15%
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	114,637	5%	4,520	795	255	7%
Sudbury	22,368	6%	1,230	55	20	4%
Thunder Bay	146,862	3%	3,220	680	590	8%
Timiskaming	31,424	6%	1,590	125	35	3%
Toronto	2,794,356	3%	42,095	10,070	40,675	46%
Waterloo	587,165	6%	28,865	2,030	5,725	25%
Wellington	241,026	6%	12,960	700	1,240	19%
York	1,173,334	5%	45,320	2,560	12,040	47%

Appendix 2. Summary statistics for Economic Regions.

Economic Region	2021 Population	Proportion of migrants	Migrants from within Ontario	Migrants from other provinces/territories	Migrants from other countries	Proportion of immigrants
Hamilton--Niagara Peninsula	1,495,885	5%	69,400	3,760	6,910	21%
Kingston--Pembroke	484,777	6%	25,335	3,890	1,705	9%
Kitchener--Waterloo--Barrie	1,427,617	7%	84,935	4,245	8,555	20%
London	717,096	5%	30,600	2,765	5,325	19%
Muskoka--Kawartha	403,538	6%	22,760	985	770	9%
Northeast / Nord-est	557,220	4%	19,685	1,755	1,335	5%
Northwest / Nord-ouest	232,299	3%	4,940	1,345	705	6%
Ottawa	1,407,555	4%	36,010	12,955	11,675	20%
Stratford--Bruce Peninsula	317,232	6%	17,185	780	790	8%
Toronto	6,525,393	4%	185,965	19,260	82,340	45%
Windsor--Sarnia	655,330	4%	19,395	1,740	4,045	18%



This factsheet was prepared by Danielle Letang, Manager of Data Strategy for the Rural Ontario Institute. Questions about data sources and comments or feedback can be directed to facts@ruralontarioinstitute.ca.

This factsheet complements ROI's [Community Wellbeing Dashboard](#). Factsheets provide insight and analysis of rural facts and trends featured in the dashboard.

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