

Alberta Official Statistics

Population Change, Rural and Small Town Alberta

- Rural and small town (RST) Alberta's population increased by 4.1% in the most recent inter-censal period from 2006 to 2011. Since 1986, the RST population has grown in each period. In most periods, the RST population has grown at a lower rate than larger urban centres (LUC). From 1991 to 1996, the RST population grew faster (7.8%) than the LUC population (an increase of 5.3%).
- Within RST areas in every inter-censal period, the Strong MIZ (Metropolitan Influenced Zones) population grew faster (7.5% from 2006 to 2011) than the Moderate MIZ population (up 4.2% from 2006 to 2011) which in turn grew faster than the Weak MIZ population (up 2.7% from 2006 to 2011). Change in the No MIZ population (less than 0.5% of Alberta's total population which is associated with Indian Reserves and remote locations) has varied widely. The No MIZ population declined in the 2006 to 2011 period and in the 1986 to 1991 period but grew strongly from 1991 to 2006. Part of this variability of growth patterns is due to the change in the areas classified as "No MIZ" in each census period.
- Due to a faster growth in LUC areas (and due to the reclassification of some areas from RST to the LUC category), the RST share of Alberta's population has declined from 26.0% in 1986 to 19.0% in 2011.
- Compared to the RST areas in other provinces, Alberta's RST population growth of 4.1% from 2006 to 2011 was second to Manitoba's RST growth of 4.7%. However, Alberta's growth from 1996 to 2006 was the fastest RST population growth rate among provinces.

Notes: Population change (%) is the rate of change in population over time. An increase in population over time can also be referred to as positive population growth and a decrease in population can also be referred to as negative population growth.

Rural and small town areas includes incorporated towns and incorporated municipalities with a population of less than 10,000 in the built-up core and where less than 50% of the resident employed workforce commute to a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or a Census Agglomeration (CA). CMAs have 50,000 or more in the built-up core (100,000 or more prior to 2006) and includes all neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50% or more of the workforce commutes to the built-up core.

CAs in 2006 and 2011 have a built-up core of 10,000 or more with a total population of less than 1000,000 and includes all neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50% of the workforce commutes to the built-up core.

Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZ) are assigned on the basis of the share of the workforce that commutes to any CMA or CA (Strong MIZ: 30% to 49%; Moderate MIZ: 5% to 29%; Weak MIZ: 1% to 5%; No MIZ: no commuters)

Population Change

Rural and Small Town Alberta

	Population Change (%)				
	1986 to 1991	1991 to 1996	1996 to 2001	2001 to 2006	2006 to 2011
Alberta	7.6	5.9	10.3	10.6	10.8
Larger Urban Centres (LUC)	9.2	5.3	12.0	12.6	12.5
Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA)	10.3	5.6	12.2	11.9	12.3
Census Agglomerations (CA)	3.9	4.0	10.8	15.7	13.4
Rural and Small Town (RST) areas	3.1	7.8	5.5	3.8	4.1
Strong MIZ	7.8	12.6	12.7	12.9	7.5
Moderate MIZ	4.0	7.0	5.9	3.4	4.2
Weak MIZ	1.9	5.8	1.8	1.6	2.7
No MIZ	-3.5	19.7	17.9	14.1	-0.1

Sources: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population (1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011)