

2016 Census of Canada

Alberta Housing

Introduction

Housing is the sixth release from the Census of Canada taken on May 10, 2016. This release explores housing characteristics of Alberta's households¹ such as tenure, dwelling condition and suitability. Of the provinces, Alberta saw the largest growth in households, increasing by 9.9% since the last census. Furthermore, dwellings in Alberta were newer, of better condition and more affordable, compared to the nation as a whole.

Household and Dwelling Characteristics

Alberta had the highest proportion of new dwellings

In 2016, 22.5% of Alberta's dwellings were very new (built after 2006), greater than the national figure of 14.6% and the largest among the provinces. Of Canada's top ten Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) and Census Agglomerations

(CA) with the highest proportion of new dwellings (built after 1991), eight were from Alberta. At Alberta's CMA/CA level, Okotoks had the highest proportion of new dwellings at 79.8% (Figure 1), followed by Sylvan lake (76.2%) and Strathmore (72.9%). In contrast, Wetaskiwin had the highest proportion of old dwellings, with 72.3% built before 1991.

Okotoks had the highest rate of home ownership among CAs and CMAs

Of Alberta's CMAs and CAs, Okotoks had the highest home ownership rate (84.0%) in 2016, followed by Strathmore (78.6%) and High River (77.8%). Conversely, Wetaskiwin had the lowest home ownership rate at 63.8%. Overall, 72.4% of households in Alberta owned their home—a number which has remained fairly constant since 2006. This is about 5 percentage points higher than the Canadian home ownership rate (67.8%) and the third highest among the provinces, behind Newfoundland and Labrador (76.7%) and New Brunswick (74.4%). Within Alberta, households in rural Census Divisions (CDs) tended to have higher rates of ownership, with the highest rates found in CD 4 (Hanna) at 82.7%, and CD 7 (Stettler) at 81.6%. CD 15 (Banff) had the lowest rate of ownership (62.4%), which can be attributed to its tourism industry and strict property ownership rules², such as requiring employment in the park. CD 16 (Wood Buffalo) had the second lowest rate (66.2%), which is largely due to the oil industry in Fort McMurray which relies heavily on temporary migration from other parts of the province.

Figure 1: Top 5 Alberta CAs and CMAs by percentage of dwellings built before and after 1991.

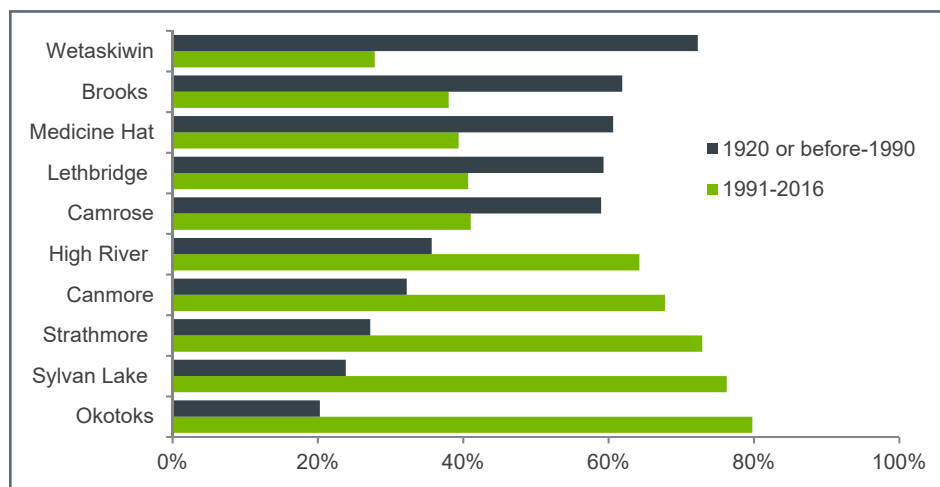
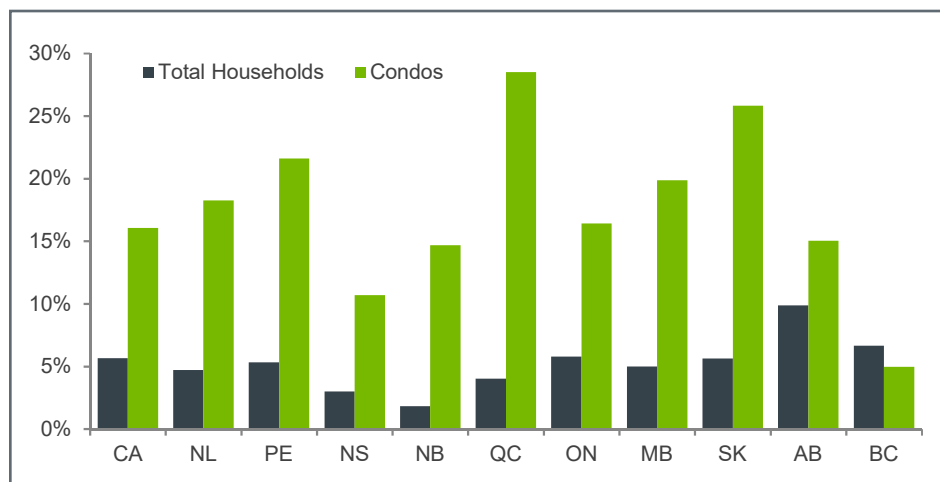


Figure 2: Percentage growth in households and condos (2011-2016), CAs & Provinces



Alberta condo growth lags behind the nation

The 2016 census showed that Alberta added 33,455 condos since 2011, a 15.0% increase (Figure 2), below the national increase of 16.1%. Alberta's condo growth ranked seventh among the provinces while Quebec ranked first (28.5%), followed by

Saskatchewan (25.8%). British Columbia experienced the lowest condo growth, increasing only by 5.0% since 2011. Canadians are increasingly living in condos, which comprised 13.3% of households in 2016 compared to 12.1% in 2011. Condo growth in Alberta was focused in the Calgary and Edmonton CMAs, which combined, added 30,535 new condos from 2011 to 2016, accounting for 91.3% of the net increase in condos in Alberta since 2011. Of Alberta's CAs and CMAs, Cold Lake saw the fastest growth in condos, increasing by 47.2% since 2011, followed by Lloydminster (46.9%). Brooks saw the largest drop in condo growth at -27.5%.

Okotoks and Wood Buffalo CAs have best housing conditions

In general, Albertan households need fewer repairs than Canadian households. In 2016, 24.7% of Alberta's households needed minor repairs and 5.7% needed major repairs, compared with 25.5% and 6.5% of households in Canada,

respectively. Of Alberta's CAs and CMAs, Okotoks' households had the best conditions, with only 22.3% requiring repair (20.4% minor, 1.9% major) (Table 1), followed by Wood Buffalo at 23.1% (18.0% minor, 5.1% major). The good condition of dwellings in these CAs can be attributed to their more recent construction. Wetaskiwin had the highest percentage of dwellings requiring minor and major repairs (29.4% and 7.3%), followed by Cold Lake (27.3% and 7.0%).

Table 1: Dwelling conditions of Alberta households, CMAs and CAs

		Regular Maintenance	Minor Repairs	Major Repairs
Okotoks	CA	77.6%	20.4%	1.9%
Wood Buffalo ³	CA	76.9%	18.0%	5.1%
High River	CA	75.0%	20.7%	4.2%
Calgary	CMA	73.9%	21.9%	4.2%
Canmore	CA	72.5%	23.5%	3.9%
Strathmore	CA	72.3%	23.5%	4.3%
Lloydminster	CA	72.3%	22.6%	5.2%
Sylvan Lake	CA	72.2%	23.9%	4.0%
Red Deer	CA	71.7%	23.9%	4.5%
Grande Prairie	CA	70.7%	24.6%	4.6%
Edmonton	CMA	70.3%	24.3%	5.4%
Lethbridge	CMA	69.6%	24.7%	5.7%
Medicine Hat	CA	69.3%	24.9%	5.7%
Camrose	CA	67.3%	27.0%	5.6%
Brooks	CA	66.4%	27.7%	5.9%
Lacombe	CA	66.1%	28.9%	4.9%
Cold Lake	CA	65.8%	27.3%	7.0%
Wetaskiwin	CA	63.3%	29.4%	7.3%

Housing Affordability

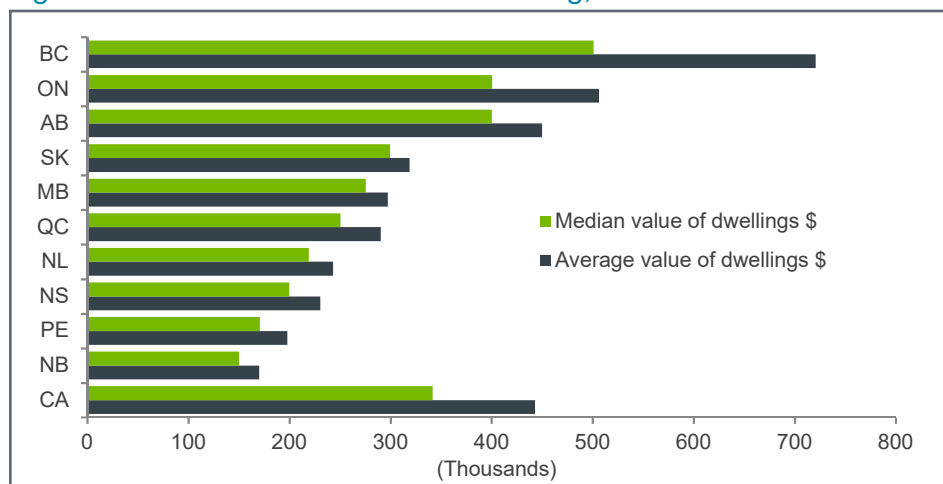
Alberta dwellings rank third in owner-estimated value

The median owner-estimated value of dwellings in Alberta was \$400,104 in 2016—about \$59,000 more than the national median and ranking third out of the provinces, trailing slightly behind Ontario (\$400,496). British Columbia's median (\$500,874) and mean (\$720,689) estimated values were both the highest among the provinces (Figure 3). The large difference between British Columbia and other provinces is driven by a much larger proportion of expensive and very expensive dwellings. For example, 43.2% of B.C.'s dwellings had estimated values over \$600,000 and 10.7% were over \$1,500,000, compared with just 18.4% and 1.3% of Alberta's dwellings. Of Alberta's CAs and CMAs, Canmore (\$696,817) and Wood Buffalo (\$601,859) had the highest median estimated dwelling values.

Alberta residents spend less of their income on shelter than Canada overall

In Alberta, about one in five households⁴ had unaffordable shelter costs (i.e. 30% or more of income is spent on shelter costs⁵)—less than the national figure of 24.1% and the fifth highest of the provinces. British Columbia (27.9%) and Ontario (27.6%) had the highest proportion of households with unaffordable shelter costs, which can be attributed to higher dwelling costs in those provinces. Provinces with the most affordable shelter costs tended to have lower dwelling costs. New Brunswick and Newfoundland had some of the lowest median estimated

Figure 3: Owner-estimated value of dwelling, CAs and Provinces

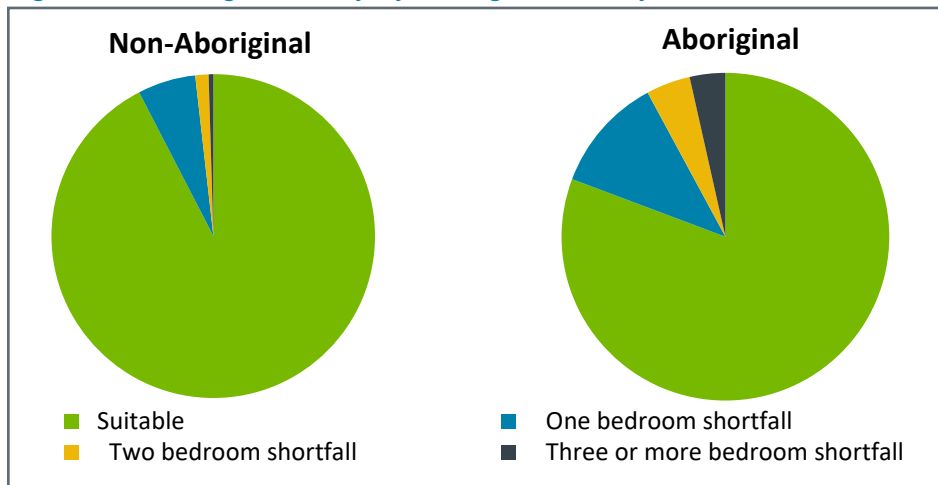


dwelling values (Figure 3), as well as the highest percentage of households with affordable shelter costs.

Alberta is affordable considering its relatively high dwelling costs. For example, Alberta had nearly the same percentage of households with unaffordable shelter costs as Quebec, but a much higher median dwelling value (\$400,104 vs. \$250,302). On the other hand, Alberta's estimated median dwelling value was almost identical to Ontario's, but the percentage of households with unaffordable shelter costs was much lower (20.8% vs 27.6%), which can be attributed to high incomes in Alberta.

At Alberta's sub-provincial level, CDs with the largest populations tended to have the highest proportion of households with unaffordable shelter costs, such as CD 6 (Calgary) at 21.7% and CD 11 (Edmonton) at 21.8% (Map 1). CD 16 (Wood Buffalo) was an oddity here, given its relatively large population and high estimated median dwelling cost (about \$600,000), with only 12.2% of households having unaffordable shelter costs. This can be explained by the prevalence of lucrative oil and gas jobs in Wood Buffalo, allowing residents to buy or rent expensive dwellings at a smaller fraction of their incomes, compared to other

Figure 4: Housing suitability by Aboriginal identity, AB



CDs. This is indicated by their median total household income of \$192,979 in 2015—the highest of all CDs among the provinces and 71.1% higher than the next contender.

Aboriginal Peoples and Housing Aboriginal people lived in more crowded housing

In 2016, people in Alberta who identified themselves as Aboriginal⁶ were more than twice as likely to live in unsuitable housing (i.e. short at least one room), compared to those with a non-Aboriginal identity (19.3% vs. 7.6%) (Figure 4). There has been some improvement; the proportion of Aboriginal persons living in suitable conditions increased from 79.2% in 2011 to 80.7% in 2016. There was also considerable variation between different Aboriginal identity groups, with 28.0% of First Nations living in unsuitable dwellings compared to 9.5% of Metis and 11.2% of Inuit. Aboriginal people were more likely to have more people per room compared to non-Aboriginal people, with 10.4% living in households with more than one room per room and 4.0% with 1.5 persons or more, compared to 4.4% and 1.4% respectively for non-Aboriginal people.

On average, Aboriginal people lived in dwellings that required more repairs than non-Aboriginal people. Among the Aboriginal people in Alberta, 31.4% resided in dwellings requiring minor repairs, and 18.2% lived in dwellings requiring major repairs, compared with 24.9% and 4.9%, respectively for non-Aboriginal people. First Nations people were also disproportionately affected, with 25.2% living in dwellings requiring major repairs.

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1. 'Household' in this highlight refers to the non-institutional population i.e. excludes people living in an institutional collective dwelling, like a hospital, nursing home or a jail. All data in this publication is from the Censuses of Canada, conducted by Statistics Canada.
2. See <http://banffnationalpark.com/realstate/eligible-resident-requirements/> for a complete list of property ownership rules in Banff.
3. Following the Fort McMurray wildfires, Statistics Canada took steps to make sure residents of Wood Buffalo were included in the 2016 Census. Many residents responded over the usual collection period. Statistics Canada returned to Wood Buffalo in August 2016 to follow up with households that had not yet responded. If direct responses could not be obtained, administrative data was used. For more information see: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/app-ann1-4-eng.cfm>
4. This figure excludes households living in band housing, located on a reserve or on an agricultural operation that is operated by a member of the household.
5. Shelter costs include mortgage payments, rent, the cost of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services, property taxes, and condo fees.
6. The term Aboriginal is used here instead of Indigenous in order to be consistent with Statistics Canada's terminology used in the 2016 Census.

Map 1: Percentage of households with unaffordable shelter costs, CDs

