

The AMSSA Info Sheet series has been created to inform and support our members and community partners. The Info Sheets cover a wide range of topics and highlight important facts and trends from across Canada and BC. Our goal is to assist organizations in navigating the rapidly changing landscape of the BC settlement sector.\*

## Language Census Data 2011 — Trends for Canada and BC

The 2011 census revealed an increase in language diversity in Canada since 2006. Especially in major metropolitan areas in Canada, languages spoken are undergoing rapid changes. AMSSA prepared this summary to draw out the highlights of the recent census data to demonstrate the increasing diversity in Canada and B.C. The National Household Survey data regarding immigration, place of birth and ethnic origin will be released on May 8, 2013.

### Highlights: Canada

- ⇒ In Canada, 17.5% of the population reported to speak at least two languages at home, up from 14.2% in 2006.<sup>1</sup>
- ⇒ The meaning of bilingualism is quickly changing. With 5.8 million people reporting speaking two languages at home, only 1.3 million of those reported speaking both English and French.<sup>2</sup>
- ⇒ Punjabi remains the most commonly spoken immigrant non-official language spoken in the country, followed by Cantonese (“Chinese” languages are broken up into Cantonese, Mandarin, and other local dialect subcategories).<sup>3</sup>
- ⇒ Tagalog was the fastest growing language between 2006 – 2011, which saw 64% growth to 279,000 speakers.<sup>4</sup>
- ⇒ Seven other language groups also saw their numbers grow by more than 30%: those speaking Mandarin (+51%), Arabic (+47%), Hindi (+44%), Creoles (+42%), Bengali (+40%), Persian (+33%) and Spanish (+32%).<sup>5</sup>
- ⇒ Over 200 languages were reported in the 2011 Census.<sup>6</sup>
- ⇒ 20.6% of Canadians reported speaking neither English nor French at home.<sup>7</sup>
- ⇒ Aboriginal languages are in outright decline, with usage shrinking by 1.7% to 213,400 speakers since 2006.<sup>8</sup>
- ⇒ 90% of Canadians who reported speaking a non-official language most often reside in a census metropolitan area.<sup>9</sup>

**Fig. 1— Top non-official languages spoken at home in Canada**

LANGUAGE	2011 POPULATION	% CHANGE FROM 2006
Punjabi	394,495	25.2
Chinese*	338,795	-6.6
Cantonese	328,855	3.0
Spanish	325,260	32.4
Tagalog	278,640	64.1
Arabic	270,155	46.8
Mandarin	226,065	50.4
Italian	184,175	-5.2
Urdu	164,650	28.8
German	158,035	12.6
Persian	144,010	32.5
Russian	128,675	27.3

Data source: CBC News<sup>11</sup>

**Fig. 2— Top mother-tongue by Province**

	POPULATION	PER CENT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	OTHER
CANADA	33,121,175	57.8	21.7	20.6	
N.L.	509,950	97.7	0.5	1.8	
P.E.I.	138,435	92.5	3.9	3.6	
N.S.	910,615	92.1	3.6	4.3	
N.B.	739,900	65.4	32.0	2.6	
QUE.	7,815,955	8.3	78.9	12.8	
ONT.	12,722,065	69.3	4.1	26.6	
MAN.	1,193,095	73.9	3.8	22.4	
SASK.	1,018,310	85.1	1.7	13.2	
ALTA.	3,610,180	77.8	2.1	20.1	
B.C.	4,356,210	71.2	1.5	27.3	
YUKON	33,655	84.1	4.6	11.3	
N.W.T.	41,035	77.1	2.7	20.2	
NUNAVUT	31,765	28.6	1.4	70.0	

Data source: CBC News<sup>12</sup>

Note: Recent changes to the short-form census have raised concerns that time-series consistency has been lost, making it difficult to accurately measure language trends in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the National Household Survey response rate is expected to decline significantly, and may also have English/French participation biases due to their optional nature and technical language.

1. Stats Canada, 'Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians', Oct. 2012. Available at: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011001-eng.cfm>.

2. CBC News, 'Bilingualism Growing, but not in French and English', from Oct. 24, 2012. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/10/24/census-language.html>.

3. Globe and Mail, 'New Bilingualism taking hold in Canada', Oct. 24, 2012. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/new-bilingualism-taking-hold-in-canada/article4650408>.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. See above: Footnote 1.

10. CBC News, 'Long form census cancellation taking toll on StatsCan data', Oct. 27, 2012. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/10/27/pol-long-form-census-cancellation-problems-stats-can-data.html>.

11. CBC News, 'Census Trends: A linguistic portrait of Canada', Oct. 24, 2012. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/interactives/cp-census/index-oct-highlights.html>.

12. See above: Footnote 11.

**Highlights: British Columbia and Cross Province Comparison**

- ⇒ British Columbia has the highest percentage of language diversity of any Canadian province when looking at mother tongue.<sup>13</sup>
- ⇒ 26.5% of British Columbians speak a non-official language only, followed by Ontario (25.7%), Alberta (19.4%), and Quebec (12.3%).<sup>14</sup>

**Top non-official language by province**

- ⇒ 6.1% of British Columbians speak a Chinese language, 4.5% speak Punjabi.<sup>15</sup>
- ⇒ 2.3% of the population of Alberta speak German, 1.9% speak Tagalog, and 1.5% speak Punjabi.<sup>16</sup>
- ⇒ 3.1% of the population of Ontario speak a Chinese language, 2.1% speak Italian.<sup>17</sup>

**Fig. 4– Most common language by Province, Ranked by Number of Speakers<sup>18</sup>**  
% change indicates how much a language has grown (+) or shrunk (-) between 2006 and 2011.<sup>19</sup>

Rank	British Columbia			Alberta			Ontario			Quebec		
	Language	2011 Population	% change	Language	2011 Population	% change	Language	2011 Population	% change	Language	2011 Population	% change
1	English	3,062,430	6.5	English	2,780,200	7.9	English	8,677,040	5.4	French	6,102,210	3.8
2	Punjabi	193,985	22.2	German	84,835	0.4	French	493,300	0.9	English	599,230	4.1
3	Cantonese	138,845	5.8	Tagalog	69,640	134.2	Italian	270,440	-4.4	Arabic	164,390	52.1
4	Chinese, n.o.s.*	124,580	-3.8	French	68,545	12.0	Chinese, n.o.s.*	202,225	-6.1	Spanish	141,000	29.6
5	Mandarin	96,420	33.6	Punjabi	53,315	46.8	Cantonese	195,060	7.3	Italian	121,720	-2.5
6	German	77,745	-10.3	Chinese, n.o.s.*	51,420	0.5%	Spanish	190,410	18.8	Creoles	58,895	33.4

Created by AMSSA, Data source: StatsCan \*\*Chinese n.o.s." indicates that respondent did "Not Otherwise Specify" what Chinese language they speak.

- ⇒ Tagalog grew by 52.9% in British Columbia to 77,100 speakers, and by 134.2% in Alberta to 69,640 speakers; the fastest growing language in both provinces.<sup>20</sup>
- ⇒ German, a language spoken by many established immigrants in B.C., shrunk by 10.3% in the past 5 years.<sup>21</sup>

- ⇒ Nearly 360,000 British Columbians speak a Chinese language, an increase of 22,880, or 8.1%, since 2006.<sup>22</sup>
- ⇒ Alberta is one of the only Canadian provinces to not see a major decline in any language. High interprovincial and international migration levels contribute to this trend.<sup>23</sup>

**Language information for your community**

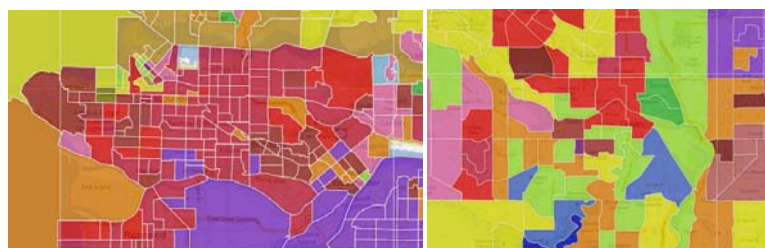
**Fig. 5– Top non-official mother tongue in Canada's largest metropolitan areas**

TORONTO	%	MONTREAL	%	VANCOUVER	%
Cantonese	8.8	Arabic	17.2	Punjabi	17.7
Punjabi	8.0	Spanish	15.2	Cantonese	16.0
Chinese*	7.0	Italian	8.1	Chinese*	12.2
Urdu	5.9	Chinese*	5.7	Mandarin	11.8
Tamil	5.7	Creole	5.4	Tagalog	6.7
CALGARY	%	EDMONTON	%	OTTAWA-GATINEAU	%
Punjabi	12.1	Tagalog	11.8	Arabic	20.4
Tagalog	10.4	Punjabi	10.9	Spanish	8.1
Chinese*	9.2	Chinese*	8.9	Chinese*	7.5
Spanish	7.9	Cantonese	6.8	Mandarin	4.4
Cantonese	7.4	Spanish	6.5	Somali	3.8

Data source: CBC News<sup>24</sup>

Detailed census information of your community, including a breakdown by language, can be found by entering your postal code on the Statistics Canada website: <http://bit.ly/zaABhJ>

**Fig. 6– Colour coded map by second Language Vancouver (left); Calgary (right)**



Interactive maps for 15 Canadian cities available online at: <http://bitly.com/TEO2uW>

13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Stats Canada, 'Focus on Geography Series', Oct. 2012. Available at: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Index-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng>.

19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Stats Canada Data, 'Profile of Language, Immigration, Citizenship, Mobility and Migration', 2007. Available at: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/rel/Index-eng.cfm>. 2006 growth calculated by AMSSA.

24. CBC News, 'Census Trends: A linguistic portrait of Canada', Oct. 24, 2012. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/interactives/cp-census/index-oct-highlights.html>.