



**SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF OTTAWA**

# This is Who We Are

A Social Profile of Ottawa  
Based on the 2006 Census

Executive Summary

November 2008



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## **Introduction**

This is an Executive Summary to the full report “This is Who We Are A Social Profile of Ottawa Based on the 2006 Census”. It gives an overview of the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of our community. It is the first in a series of reports from the Social Planning Council based on the 2006 census. The document provides the highlights, while subsequent reports will focus on specific thematic areas. This Executive Summary is a companion document to the full report and to an expanded version of the Executive Summary which contains geographic information system maps relevant to the substance of the report.

This executive summary is a 9 page overview of the contents of the full report. It includes an overview of the demographic structure of the community with respect to individuals, households and families. It then summarizes highlights with respect to distinct population groups in the City, including Francophones, the Aboriginal Identity population, Immigrants, Visible Minority residents and people with disabilities. The final section provides some insights into income and labour market issues, including the related topics of education, shelter costs and the agricultural sector in Ottawa.

The report emphasizes the make-up of the community as reflected in the 2006 census. Information related to incomes is based on the full year prior to the survey, specifically 2005 for the most current census. In some cases we explain the change over time based on information in the two previous censuses in 2001 and 1996. The chapters on people with disabilities and agriculture do not include data from 1996.

Most of the report is based on a standard Statistics Canada boundary called the census sub-division. This corresponds to the boundaries of the City of Ottawa. In a few clearly defined cases, we provide information based on the boundary of the census metropolitan area (CMA) identified by Statistics Canada as “Ottawa-Gatineau census metropolitan area (Ontario part)”. This is an area slightly larger than the City of Ottawa proper, and includes a few areas within Russell Township on the east. We use CMA data only where comparable data was not available to us at the census sub-division level. The section on people with disabilities, including the comparator information, is based on the CMA. The 1996 information is based on the geography of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. The primary data sources are the three censuses from 1996, 2001 and 2006.

We gratefully acknowledge the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) which has provided funds to the Social Planning Network of Ontario to produce social profiles in 14 communities. OTF resourced some data and software purchases. We also offer sincere thanks to United Way Ottawa for its generous support of this report, resourcing the staffing and custom data purchases and part of the translation. Additional resources for translation are raised through fundraising of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

## Demographic Trends

The City of Ottawa has an aging population, influenced by the post-war baby boom fertility decline. Currently, one-third of the population gain is due to natural increase in the country.<sup>1</sup> As a result, international immigration has become the most dynamic factor of the population growth in the City and in Canada as a whole. During 1996-2006 Ottawa's population grew from 721,136 to 812,129 (12.6% increase rate) and the median age<sup>2</sup> increased from 35.0 to 38.4 years. Population projections indicate a shifting to a more aging population by 2025 when median age in Ontario will rise to 42.1 years<sup>3</sup> and the population of Ottawa will surpass the one million mark.<sup>4</sup> There are more women than men in the City, particularly in the cohorts of the senior population, which is also the case at provincial and national levels.

As a result of the demographic trends the working population is increasingly composed of older workers. The retirement and the slower growth of the population will affect the core-working-age population 15-64 that it is expect to begin to fall in 2011. On the other hand, the children and youth population is declining and unable to provide the replacement workforce needed for aging workers. In 1996-2006 the growth rate of Ottawa's children and youth population aged 0-24 dropped two points and its share in the total population dropped as well. However, the Census indicates that the Aboriginal identity population and visible minority groups will play a significant role on workforce replacement. In 2006 the population of the City aged 0-24 was 12.4%, while the Aboriginal population and visible minority population on this age bracket was 39% and 41%, respectively.

It is expected that the senior population will increase dramatically in the next two decades as a result of the aging baby boomers. In 2006, close to one quarter of the City's population was in the age group 55-64 that will become seniors on the next decade. The increasing senior population is widening the demand for seniors services, particularly culturally and gender sensitive ones. In 2006, the population 65 years and over accounted for 12.4% of Ottawa's population. Among them were five predominant ethnic groups: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab and Southeast Asian.<sup>5</sup> Gender differences in mortality influence women predominance in the senior population, particularly in the older age brackets. In 2006 there were 2.4 women per one man who were 85 years and over. Furthermore, women were the majority of seniors living alone. In 2006, the City had 60,200 seniors living alone and three quarters of them were women.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, *Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006: National Portrait*.

<sup>2</sup> The median age divides the population into two groups of equal size.

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Ministry of Finance, *Toward 2025: Assessing Ontario's Long-Term Outlook*. Section I: Demographic Trends and Projections.

<sup>4</sup> City of Ottawa, *Growth Projections for Ottawa 2006-2031*. November 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Census data used by the Council of Aging of Ottawa on the report, *Housing Seniors: Choices, Challenges and Solutions*. 2008.

## **Marital Status, Families and Households**

Married-couple families are the defining family in Ottawa. The second in importance are lone-parent families, followed by common-law-couple families. For the first time the Census enumerated in 2006 same-sex couples reflecting the legalization of same-sex marriages in Canada as of July 2005. In Ottawa there were 45,345 same-sex couples, 16.5% of them married. More people chose to be single (never married) during the period 2001-2006. The fast increase (10.1%) of this marital status was only matched by divorced couples. Female seniors 65 years and over were the majority of unmarried divorced and widowed persons in this age group. Among lone-parent families, growth during the period 2001-2006 was most rapid for families headed by men. Their number increased four times more than among those headed by women. However, women continue to be the larger number on lone-parents, 82% in 2006.

Over the last decade (1996-2006) there has been a growing tendency of adult children to remain in, or return to the parental home. In 2006 the City of Ottawa had 25,115 individuals 25 years and over living in the parental home. Factors that could explain this situation include difficulties accessing the labour market, low-paid jobs, the high cost of housing, the number of people over 25 years attending post secondary education, immigrant family values that emphasize the extended family and early school leavers with low levels of education jeopardizing their economic independence, and adult children looking after aging relatives.

Ottawa's household size is changing as a direct result of changing demographics and living arrangements. Between 1996 and 2006 the one person household increased by 25% outpacing all the other household sizes. This trend continues as fewer children are born, more couples separate and more individuals live alone. In 2006, the 2 person household was the dominant household, which may indicate a typical couple-family without children or a lone-parent family with a child.

## **Language Diversity**

Bilingualism continues to be an important qualification in Ottawa's workforce, dominated by the public administration. As a result, Ottawa has a much higher percentage of people, including Aboriginal people, with knowledge of both official languages compared to Ontario. In 2006, almost two in five (37.2%) residents reported being able to conduct a conversation in both official languages.

The 2006 Census showed that English remained the language spoken most often at home. However, the proportion of people who speak English or French most often at home has been falling steadily. Allophone<sup>6</sup> immigration has also had an impact on the increasing proportion of people who speak a non-official language most often at home, 11.1% in 2006. In this year the five top-non-official mother tongues in Ottawa were Chinese, Arabic, Italian, Spanish and German.

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<sup>6</sup> A person of a mother tongue other than English or French.

## **Francophone Population and Use of French**

In 2006, there were 135,225 residents from the French language minority in Ottawa.<sup>7</sup> Despite the national trend of reduced members outside Quebec, the French language minority in Ottawa has shown a steady increase in numbers. This has resulted in the group remaining stable as a percentage of Ottawa's population since 1996. The City of Ottawa is one of the 25 designated areas of French-language services under the French Language Services Act.

Regardless of the current stability of Ottawa's Francophone community, the age distribution of those with French as a mother tongue reveals some challenges with respect to the future vitality of French as a mother tongue in Ottawa. The age distribution of those with French as a mother tongue reflects the population trend in Ottawa in general, specifically, an aging population with a relatively smaller proportion of children and youth. As a result, the knowledge and regular use of a French language rests largely with the older generations. To ensure the stability or growth of the Francophone community in Ottawa, it will be important to attract Francophone immigrants to Ottawa.

Although the majority of Francophones in Ottawa are not immigrants, an important source of growth for the Francophone community in Ottawa is immigrants and the children of immigrants. Francophone immigrants accounted for 12.3% of the Francophone population in Ottawa in 2006.

## **Aboriginal Identity Population**

The Aboriginal identity population — North American Indian (First Nations people) Métis or Inuit — is one of the fastest growing and youngest population in the City. During the period 1996-2006 it had an increase nearly six times higher than the growth for the non-Aboriginal Population. As well, the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA<sup>8</sup> is one of the urban areas where more than half of the Aboriginal population live.<sup>9</sup>

The increase of the Aboriginal population has brought more diversity in Aboriginal mother tongues to the City. In 2006 there were eight Aboriginal languages in Ottawa up from four in 1996<sup>10</sup>. This diversification had a major impact in the increase of Aboriginal home languages during the period 1996-2006, especially for the Cree and Inuktitut languages<sup>11</sup>. These were the two Aboriginal groups with the higher population increases in the City during that period.

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<sup>7</sup> The French Language Minority Population is established by Statistics Canada, based on the variable; "First Official Language Spoken." The figure represents all those who had French (single response) plus half of those who had "English and French" as their first official language spoken.

<sup>8</sup> Census Metropolitan Area. Note in this case, this is referring to the Ontario and Quebec portions of the CMA.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: First Nations People.

<sup>10</sup> There are 69 Aboriginal languages in Canada and most of them are declining.

<sup>11</sup> The highest Inuit population outside the Inuit land (725 individuals) lives in Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.

A significant percentage of the Aboriginal population living in Ottawa has higher levels of education and knowledge of the two official languages. This situation reflects the fact that national Aboriginal organizations and Federal Aboriginal offices have their headquarters in Ottawa. In 2006, almost two in five (37%) Aboriginal persons living in the City were bilingual and close to half (45%) from the age bracket 25-34 had university education. However, there is also a significant portion of the younger population, 15-24 who does not have a certificate, diploma or degree. Among them are early school leavers who left school before completing their studies. In 2006, 44% of the Aboriginal population aged 15-24 was in this situation, as well as 9% of the age group 25-34. This population is at disadvantage in the labour market.

Economic exclusion continues to affect the Aboriginal population, despite their education achievements and higher knowledge of the official languages. The population has higher rates of unemployment and lower median income. In 2006, its unemployment rate was three points higher than that of the total population. In 2005 the median income of the Aboriginal population 15 years and over living in Ottawa, was lower than the median income of the total population of the City (\$26,157 vs. \$33,024).

### **Immigrant and Visible Minority Population**

Ottawa is a multi-ethnic City, with 156 ethnic groups representing the immigrant population.<sup>12</sup> In 2006, there were 178,545 immigrants living in Ottawa, representing almost a quarter of the population (22.2%). The demographic trends indicate that this population is growing faster, is younger and prominent in the working age group. In 2006, one in five (20%) persons in the City were foreign-born population, 78% of them hold Canadian citizenship and more than half belonged to the age group 25-54.

In the last three decades, there has been a significant change in the main source countries of immigration to Canada. The immigrant influx has shifted from European countries to Middle Eastern and African countries primarily. More than half of recent immigrants who arrived in Ottawa between 2001 and 2006 came from Asia and the Middle East. As a result, the City has become more culturally and linguistically diverse. Visible minority<sup>13</sup> groups are part of this diversity. In 2006 one in five (20%) of Ottawa residents belonged to a visible minority group. The largest group was Black. Chinese was the second, followed by the South Asia and Arab visible minority groups.

Not all visible minority persons are immigrants. A significant percentage (32.8%) of visible minority residents are Canadian citizens by birth who belong to the second and third generation. Ottawa's visible minority population is younger compared to the immigrant and total population of Ottawa and has a predominance of women, particularly Filipino, Japanese, Latin American and Black.

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<sup>12</sup> A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada, permanently by immigration authorities.

<sup>13</sup> Visible minority are defined in the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other, than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

## **People with Disabilities**

Close to one in five (18%) of Ottawa's residents<sup>14</sup> had a disability in 2006 with high representation of seniors and women. One third of them were 65 years or over, as the incidence of disability increases with age. Women were also more likely to have a disability than men, partly related to their higher percentage among seniors.

Persons with disabilities have diverse ethnicity reflecting the composition of the population of the City. This includes immigrants who arrived many decades ago and have developed disabilities as they age. In 2006, over half of people with disabilities in Ottawa were within the working age groups of 25-64, highlighting the importance of effective workplace and labour market policies related to accommodation of disabilities.

Economic exclusion continues to be a major issue for people with disabilities. Their economic situation changed only negligibly from 2000 to 2005. In 2005, more than one in five individuals with a disability lived on a low income before tax, among them 25% of children under 6 with disabilities, reduced by only 2% after tax (23%). This reflects the challenges faced by some parents of some children with disabilities where their care giving responsibilities affect their labour market participation.

Access to decent employment is an important strategy to improve the economic situation of people with disabilities. However, in 2005 the participation rate of people with disabilities was still significantly lower than the participation rate for the general population in the CMA<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, people with disabilities experienced a rate of unemployment notably higher than the unemployment rate for the general population.

## **Education and Labour Market Outcomes**

The 2006 Census showed that 101,330 residents of Ottawa 15 years and over did not have a certificate, diploma or degree and women were overrepresented in this group. Some of this population are early school leavers. The 2006 census revealed that there were 8,400 early school leavers aged 15-24 who left school before completing their studies. As a result, they face significant challenges in accessing suitable employment, and have greater difficulty improving their situation over time. The majority are Canadian citizens, Canadian born and third generation or more of British Isles or French ethnic origin. A disproportionate percentage of them are of Aboriginal identity or ethnic origin, while immigrants are significantly under-represented.

On the other hand, three in ten (32.4%) persons in Ottawa had a university diploma or degree, particularly a bachelor's degree. Women had a significant representation of high school, college or university education but they were still concentrated in traditional female fields of study. As a result, we continue to see traditional gender differences across industries, with women dominating health care and education, and men more

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<sup>14</sup> For this section, we use the geography of the Ottawa census metropolitan area, which is slightly larger than the City of Ottawa.

<sup>15</sup> Ottawa-Gatineau Census Metropolitan Area

numerous in all the goods producing sectors and the professional, scientific and technical groups.

Overall, public administration continued to dominate Ottawa's workforce. The "professional, scientific and technical" sector, which includes much of the high tech sector, dropped in terms of the labour force by industry group. We continue to see traditional gender differences across industries, with women dominating health care and education, and men more numerous in all the goods producing sectors and the professional, scientific and technical groups. In 2006, the dominant occupations were sales and service occupations and natural and applied sciences.

The primary labour force indicators were poorer for women throughout the years 1996-2006 than for men. Women had a lower participation rate, reflecting the fact that many women stay at home to care for children. However, those in the labour market experienced a higher rate of unemployment in 2001 and 2006 compared to men, indicating greater difficulty accessing work as well as the drop in manufacturing jobs in Ottawa, with a loss of 5,505 jobs between 2001 and 2006.

Labour indicators also revealed a very high labour market participation rate among those with children at home compared to the general population. The participation rate of parents highlights the critical need for a good policy and program framework around working parents, including access to licensed quality childcare, work-life balance, family leave, and supports for the working poor.

Based on the immigration point system, many immigrants in Ottawa have university education that could benefit the labour market. However, they are falling behind in the labour market because of the lack of recognition of their credentials and overseas professional experience by both employers and professional organizations alike. "Immigrants can be found working in low-skilled jobs almost three-times more than Canadian-born graduates."<sup>16</sup> For the first time the 2006 Census collected information on the location where Canadians attained their highest level of education. The information demonstrated that a significant percentage of Ottawa residents obtained their degrees outside Canada. This was the case for 30.2% with degrees in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry and 45% of doctorate graduates.

Furthermore, job seekers in general face the challenge of finding a fit between the type of work for which they are qualified (occupation) and the industry sector where such work is available. Finding better mechanisms to match the educational and experience credentials of job seekers with a constantly changing industry landscape is a central challenge in today's labour market.

### **Incomes in Ottawa**

Employment income saw a steady increase in Ottawa in the period 1995 to 2005. As with income levels overall, employment incomes were significantly lower for women

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<sup>16</sup> John McGrath, *Immigrants are Fall Behind, says Stascan*, The Globe and Mail Update and Canadian Press, May 1, 2008.

compared to men in Ottawa. Both men and women participated in unpaid work. However, women still do most of the unpaid housework, childcare and seniors care.

In the composition of income, Ottawa experienced a very slight decrease in the proportion of income that was obtained from employment compared to 2000. This is a very small change, and is significantly related to the aging of the population. The average and median incomes showed a significant increase over the levels from 2000. The median individual income in Ottawa was significantly below the average income in Ottawa, indicating a significant gap between income levels in the City. Women had incomes significantly below that of men on average. This was also the case of lone-parent families, with female lone-parent families significantly below the average income level of male lone-parent families.

The incidence of low income among families indicates that lone parent families continued to experience significantly higher rates of low income compared to all families and couple families. In particular, almost one third of female led lone parent families was living on low income in 2005. Almost one in five children and youth in Ottawa lived on low income in that year. The persistence of high levels of poverty among children and youth is a very concerning problem, given the extensive literature documenting the detrimental long term effects of poverty on children and youth. On the positive side, over the past decade the incidence of low income among seniors has improved. Part of that is due to the increase in private retirement income and the growing labour market involvement of women. However, seniors face a lack of affordable housing, as retirement residences are pricey and social housing has stagnated, particularly units to accommodate seniors.

High shelter costs contribute to the levels of poverty, particularly for single parent families. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the standard for affordable shelter cost is 30% of gross household income. In 2006, 42% of tenant households in Ottawa surpassed this benchmark, as well as 15% of household owners.

### **Agriculture in Ottawa**

The majority of farms in Ottawa are sole proprietorships. Between the two census years, there was a reduction in the number of sole proprietorships, and partner arrangements (with or without a written agreement). In that period there was an increase in the number of family and non-family corporation farms, although they still represent a small percentage of the total farms in Ottawa.

There was a decrease in the number of farms in Ottawa from 2001 to 2006. Among them were cattle farms, hog farms and goat farms. As well the number of farms with oilseed and grain farming dropped between 2001 and 2006, the changes for particular crops varied significantly. On the other hand, the number of poultry and egg production farms increased, as well as the number of “Other animal farms” (including for horses, bees and combination livestock farming).