

Regional Demographic Summaries

Prepared for the
Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

December, 1998



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Introduction

Over the last year the Clearinghouse has produced several breakdowns of statistical data from the 1996 Census of Canada. Now that Statistics Canada has finished releasing the demographic data from Census '96, it is time to pull those data together. This report combines the various data to create a brief summary of the main demographic points of the Clearinghouse region and of each of the partner colleges' service areas (see map p.6). This report also includes some observations on economic and employment trends seen in the Clearinghouse region.

Clearinghouse Region Demographics

The population of the Clearinghouse region makes up 11% of the population of Alberta but it is not simply a smaller version of the provincial population. Northern demographics differ from the province as a whole in terms of age patterns, education levels, immigration and ethnicity, employment and income.

Age

The percentage of young people is higher in the north than in the province generally. The "Baby Boom" generation is matched by the "Boom Echo" generation, those under 15 years of age. In the rest of the province the echo is smaller than the boom.

Education

The percentages of northerners with mid-range education levels (high school graduates, trades certificates or diplomas and other non-university) are similar to those throughout the province. However, the Clearinghouse region has a larger percentage of adults with less than grade 12 education and a smaller percentage of those with university educations.

Immigration

Across Canada, major cities prove more attractive than rural areas to immigrants. Not surprisingly, the percentage of immigrants in the largely rural Clearinghouse region is much lower than the provincial figure which includes Edmonton and Calgary. The percentage of people who moved from other parts of Alberta or Canada between 1991 and 1996 is higher in our region than elsewhere but fewer people moved within their Census Division.

Ethnicity/Language

The percentage of visible minorities (which does not include Aboriginal people) is lower in the Clearinghouse region than elsewhere in Alberta. Three of the four most popular languages spoken at home in the North are the same as those in the province generally. English, French and German are common throughout Alberta but in the North, Cree is the second most popular language whereas Chinese rounds out the top four province-wide.

Regional Trends and Training Implications

The following are observations of coincidence and patterns. While some causal relationships can be guessed, the numbers alone do not indicate cause and effect.

- The highest education levels coincide with the highest income levels in the region, in the Keyano College service area. This area has the highest percentage of university-educated people and the highest percentage of people with employment incomes over \$60,000 per year. Conversely, The Fairview and AVC - LSL areas have the highest percentages of people with less than grade 9 education and the highest percentages of people earning less than \$10,000 per year.
-The cost of training may be a factor for some colleges in that people in the areas with the highest need for training are least likely to be able to spend much money on it.
- A trend is visible in the construction permit and job ads data for Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. In both cases, industrial growth has led to a demand for trades people. Large retail development has followed, increasing the demand for tradespeople. As the retail development is completed, the demand for tradespeople has dropped and the demand for retail staff, largely part-time, has grown rapidly.
-This shows the importance of keeping track of the type of development that is going on in a community, in order to plan for the future job market.
- The high demand for retail salespeople hits at a time when the number of likely candidates for such jobs is at its lowest. Entry-level retail positions generally go to young people between 15 and 24 years of age. In both the Keyano and Grande Prairie regions these age cohorts are smaller than those older and younger. As a result, many retail companies may have to look to an older group of people than usual in order to staff their stores.
-This may create a market for customer service training aimed at older students.
- The 25 to 29 year-old cohort is also smaller than those between 30 and 45. As a result, there are fewer people in their twenties, the age during which most tradespeople enter their apprenticeships. This may explain many informants' statements that the average age of employees in most trades has climbed over the past decade, with fewer young people to enter the field.
-This suggests that training courses for apprentices should be designed to suit students who have been out of school for several years. Programs aimed at high school students may become more important as well.
- Not surprisingly, the area with the lowest percentage of people over 60 years of age, the Keyano region, has the lowest percentage of widows and widowers. Conversely, Lakeland region, which has the highest percentage of seniors also has the highest percentage of widowed persons. It is easy to assume that the small percentage of seniors in the Keyano region is a result of the massive influx of people that came with the development of the oilsands near Fort McMurray in the past 30 years. This is supported by the fact that The Keyano region has the lowest

percentage of Alberta-born residents in the Clearinghouse area.
-This difference in age profiles will have a significant impact on the market for Continuing Education programs aimed at seniors.

Demographic Summaries of the Partners' Service Areas

Grande Prairie Regional College

- With 70,953 people as of the 1996 Census, this is the most populous of the partner colleges' regions. The Baby Boom - Bust - Echo pattern is evident here. The largest age cohorts are found between 30 and 40 years of age, followed by the 10 to 14 year-olds. In between, the 20-30 year-old cohorts are much smaller.
- This region is fairly well educated. The percentage of adults with less than grade 9 education is lower than the average for the North. The percentages of those with "some high school" education and with "other non-university" training are higher than provincial and northern averages. Other categories are on par with the rest of the Clearinghouse region.
- The percentage of people in the GPRC service area who were born in Canada is the lowest for the Clearinghouse region but is still higher than that across Alberta. The percent born in Alberta is in line with the regional average.
- The most commonly claimed ethnicity in this area is "Canadian" followed by English, German and Scottish. The most popular languages spoken at home are English, French, German and Cree.
- Among workers in the GPRC service area in May, 1996, the largest number, 25%, worked in sales and service, followed by trades & transport, business, finance & administration and occupations unique to primary industry.
- In general, income levels in the GPRC area resemble those throughout the region, with more people in the higher income brackets than most other areas.

Fairview College

- The Fairview College service area has a population of 41,896, according to the 1996 Census. This is a very young population. The largest age cohort is from 0 to 4 years, followed by 5 to 9 years and 10 to 15. The "Baby Boom" and "Bust" apparent elsewhere are much less pronounced in this area.
- Education levels in this part of the province are lower than those found elsewhere. This area has the highest percentage of adults with less than grade 9 education. There is also a large number of people with "some high school", though this may be partly due to the comparatively high number of people between 15 and 20 years of age many of whom are still in high school.
- The Fairview area has a very high percentage of Canadian-born residents. Between 1991 and 1996 only 210 immigrants moved into the area, coming from a wide range of different countries.

- Unlike other parts of the Clearinghouse region, the most commonly cited ethnicity in this area is German. This is followed by Canadian, English and North American Indian. German is also the second most popular language, after English, spoken in homes.
- Sales & service is the most common occupation in the Fairview College area, even though the percentage of sales & service employees is smaller here than elsewhere in the Clearinghouse region. In addition, this area has the highest percentage of employees in primary industry within the Clearinghouse region.
- Income levels in the Fairview College service area are generally on the low edge of the regional average, although the percentage of people earning \$40,000 to \$49,000 in this area is the highest in the region.

Alberta Vocational College - Lesser Slave Lake

- The AVC area's population of 36,547 is the second smallest of the partners' service areas according to the 1996 Census.
- Like the Fairview area, AVC's population is quite young. The largest age cohorts are all under 15 years of age.
- Education levels are generally low in this area. The percentage of those over 15 years of age with less than grade 9 or some high school education is higher than average for the Clearinghouse region and the percentages for all other levels are lower than average.
- This part of northern Alberta boasts the highest percentage of Canadian-born and Alberta-born residents (95% and 77% respectively) in the region.
- The most commonly cited ethnicity in the AVC area is North American Indian at 30% of the population, followed by Canadian, French, English and German.
- The AVC area has the highest percentage of people working in social sciences, government, education & religion and the lowest percentage in business, finance & administration.
- The population of the AVC - LSL area does not earn a great deal of money. This area has the highest percentage of those earning under \$10,000 per year and the lowest percentage of those earning over \$60,000.

Lakeland College

- The Lakeland College area has a population of 66,387, the second highest in the Clearinghouse region. This is also the most densely populated part of the Clearinghouse region.
- This area has a high percentage of elderly people, more than any other northern area or the province as a whole.
- Education levels in the Lakeland area are very close to the averages for the Clearinghouse region.
- At 99%, The Lakeland area has the highest percentage of Canadian citizens within its boundaries. Just under 95% of its residents were born in Canada.

- English is the most popular ethnicity in this area, followed by Canadian, French, German, Scottish and Ukrainian. English is the most popular language spoken in area homes, with French, Cree and Ukrainian filling out the top four.
- The Lakeland area has the highest percentages of people working in management occupations and in health of any of the partners' areas. It also has the lowest percentages in trades & transport and in manufacturing.
- This area has the region's highest concentration of people in the \$10,000 to \$29,000 income ranges. Census Divisions 10 and 12, parts of which make up the Lakeland College service area, have the lowest average incomes of all the northern CDs.

Keyano College

- The C96 population figure of 36,124 for Wood Buffalo was disputed by municipal officials who suggested that with the rapid growth of the Fort McMurray area, the real population was much higher.
- In contrast to the Lakeland area, the Keyano area's senior citizen population is smaller than that anywhere else in the North. The largest age cohorts are found in males between 35 and 44 years of age.
- The Keyano area has the most educated population in northern Alberta. This area boasts the lowest percentage of people with less than grade 9 education and the highest percentages of those with trades training; other non-university education and with university education. Even so, the university numbers are lower than the Alberta average.
- The Keyano area has the lowest percentages of Canadian-born and Alberta-born residents in the North.
- The most commonly claimed ethnicities are English, Canadian, Scottish and Irish. Where German is the most popular language after English and French throughout the Clearinghouse region, Chipewyan takes that place among Census respondents in Keyano's area
- Trades & transport jobs, occupations in manufacturing & processing and those in natural & applied sciences are more popular here than anywhere else in the region. Occupations in primary industry and in health are less popular here than elsewhere.
- Incomes are high in this area. More than 20% of employed people here earn over \$60,000 per year. The average income in CD 16, roughly equal to the Keyano service area, is almost \$10,000 more than the next highest in the North.

This is a general overview of demographic data. For more detail, readers are directed to the following Clearinghouse reports:

Census 1996 Population and Dwelling Counts, May, 1997

Census '96 Data Summary - Age, Sex, Marital and Family Status, December, 1997

Census '96 Data Summary - Ethnicity & Immigration, March, 1998

Census '96 Data Summary - Education Labour and Income, July, 1998

If you need specific information not included in those reports, please call the Research Coordinator.

