Quarterly Population Highlights

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B.C. Highlights

The population of B.C. was estimated at 5,071,336 as of July 1, 2019, growing by 24,556 persons in the second quarter of 2019 (up 0.49% from April 1, 2019).

Combined net in-migration from all sources (interprovincial and international) totalled 22,879 persons during the second quarter of 2019, slightly less than the same quarter in 2018. Most of the population growth in the second quarter was due to international immigration. Broken down, net international in-migration contributed 19,207 persons to population growth, with net interprovincial migration accounting for an additional 3,672. Rounding out the second quarter growth was a natural increase (births minus deaths) of 1,677 persons.

The Last Twelve Months

B.C.’s total population grew by 70,166 persons (+1.4%) over the twelve months ending June 30, 2019, mostly due to international migration. On an annual basis, net international migration accounted for a gain of 58,993 while net interprovincial migration contributed 6,111 persons from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Natural increase added another 5,062 people during the last twelve months.

National Overview

The population of Canada grew by an estimated 181,057 persons (+0.48%) to 37,589,262 during the second quarter of 2019, a similar growth than in the same quarter of 2018. Leading the growth at the provincial and territorial level were Prince Edward’s Island (+0.83%), Yukon (+0.62%), Ontario (+0.57%), British Columbia (+0.49%) and Nova Scotia (+0.48%). Alberta (+0.47%), Quebec (+0.44%), New Brunswick (+0.38%), Manitoba (+0.37%), Nunavut (+0.29%) and Saskatchewan (+0.29%) saw population increases lower than the national average in the second quarter of 2019, while the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland saw small decreases.
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International Migration

Net international in-migration to British Columbia (immigrants plus the net change in non-permanent residents (NPRs), plus returning emigrants, less emigrants and persons temporarily abroad) resulted in a gain of 19,207 in the second quarter. This compares to a net gain of 18,207 in the second quarter of 2018. The total number of immigrants arriving in British Columbia from April 1 to June 30 was 13,704. The province also saw a net NPR gain of 7,423 which compares to a net gain of 8,013 NPRs observed in the same quarter of 2018. In regard to persons exiting B.C. for international destinations, an estimated 1,920 left on a permanent basis and 1,230 were away temporarily in the second quarter of 2019.

Interprovincial Migration

British Columbia experienced a net population gain due to interprovincial migration in the second quarter of 2019. An inflow to B.C. of 22,211 was offset by an outflow of 18,359, for a net gain of 3,672. British Columbia's net exchange with Alberta was positive, with an estimated net gain of 1,453 people from Alberta to B.C. The province also reported positive net migration from Saskatchewan (+978), Manitoba (+746), Ontario (+351), Newfoundland (+327), Quebec (+166), Yukon (+161) and the Northwest Territories (+114). B.C. reported net migration losses to Nova Scotia (-447), New Brunswick (-130), Prince Edward’s Island (-31) and Nunavut (-9).

B.C. Net Interprovincial Migration by Quarter, Q1 1998 to Q2 2019

Source: Statistics Canada: Table 17-10-0020-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0017) – Quarterly estimates of the components of interprovincial migration, last updated October 7th, 2019.

Visit the Demography page on the BC Stats website for more information.
Did You Know?

As of 2018, the total dependency ratio of the British Columbia population was close to 50, steadily increasing from 44 in 2010. The dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of dependents not in the labour force and those in the productive population. The total dependency ratio is the ratio of the sum of young (0 to 14 years old) and senior (65 and over) population to the working age population (15 to 64 years old), multiplied by 100. It is a simple indicator of the economic pressure on the productive population to support service delivery to the dependent population. A ratio of 50 means that, for 100 people of productive age in British Columbia, there are 50 people who depend on their economic output to support services delivered to them.

In general, a low dependency ratio means government has more resources to deliver services such as education, healthcare and pension payments. For the same level of services, a higher ratio will mean increased financial stress on the working-age population since there is more people for them to support. Like other jurisdictions in Canada with an aging population, British Columbia is expected to see this ratio go up.

Population projections produced by BC Stats indicate that the total dependency ratio for British Columbia will continue to increase over the next 20 years. By 2038, this ratio could reach 65, a 30% increase from the current levels. This outlines the importance of population projection for government planning, as well as the importance of developing and implementing strategies to make sure future British Columbians can receive the services they need in the future.