



Canadian Hispanic Congress Vol. 10 | November 2023

In this issue:

- The 2021 Canadian Census: A Comprehensive Overview of Population and Gender Diversity
- Minister Kamal Khera's Vision: Inclusive Canada Through Accessibility
- RCC's Progress in Streamlining Permanent Residence Applications and Reducing Backlogs
- Navigating the Shadows: Protecting Mental Health in a Hyperconnected World
- Canada's Clean Energy Push: Kitselas Geothermal's Green Initiative

Regular segments:

- Message from the President
- Upcoming CHC events

***Celebrating the 40th anniversary of
the Canadian Hispanic Congress***

The 2021 Canadian Census: A Comprehensive Overview of Population and Gender Diversity

In 2021, Canada conducted its census, following the 2016 enumeration that counted 35,151,728 people. The 2021 census reported a notable 5.2% population increase, reaching 36,991,981 as of May 11, 2021. This census, conducted by Statistics Canada, stood out due to its timing during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a contactless approach, with a participation rate of approximately 98% of the population.

The planning phase included extensive content consultation from September 11 to December 8, 2017. Despite pandemic challenges, Statistics Canada hired 900 supervisors and 31,000 field enumerators to carry out door-to-door surveys with stringent COVID-19 safety measures.

The 2021 census featured an accessible questionnaire with online completion options for 80% of households. Notably, it included new questions about gender, making Canada the first country to collect data on transgender and non-binary individuals.

Canada's population growth varied by region. Yukon, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Ontario experienced significant increases, while Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories saw declines. The census identified 59,460 transgender and 41,355 non-binary individuals.

The inclusion of gender diversity questions in the census marked a significant step toward inclusivity and recognition of transgender and non-binary people. The data collected will be valuable for public decision-makers, employers, and service providers, helping them better meet the diverse needs of all Canadians, regardless of their gender identity.



CENSUS

**The 2021 Census questionnaire
is now available!**

 Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada





Minister Kamal Khera's Vision: Inclusive Canada Through Accessibility



The Government of Canada, led by Kamal Khera, Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities of Canada, is committed to ensuring equal access to programs and services, with a special focus on individuals with disabilities. They have launched a call for proposals through the Enabling Accessibility Fund, offering up to \$3 million for projects that enhance accessibility in various facilities, such as respite centers, sport centers, and workplaces, with the goal of reducing waitlists for disability-focused programs. To be eligible for this funding, facilities must exclusively serve individuals with disabilities or offer multiple disability-focused programs and services. The application deadline is December 13, 2023, and online information sessions are available to assist organizations through the process.

This initiative aligns with the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, striving to create a more inclusive Canada that is free from physical, societal, and attitudinal barriers. Minister Khera emphasizes that simple improvements like ramps and accessible washrooms can significantly enhance the participation of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Enabling Accessibility Fund has already supported over 7,200 projects since its launch in 2007, and Budget 2023 allocates an additional \$10 million to address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities in communities and workplaces. In conclusion, Canada is dedicated to promoting accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that all citizens, including those with disabilities, can fully engage in their communities and access the services they deserve.



RCC's Progress in Streamlining Permanent Residence Applications and Reducing Backlogs



Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, has welcomed the report by the Office of the Auditor General on the processing of applications for permanent residence in Canada. The audit, conducted in 2022, examined the procedures and methods used by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for processing applications, particularly addressing backlogs.

Minister Miller emphasized the critical role of immigration in Canada's long-term success and the need for efficient immigration systems. IRCC has made it a priority to improve processing times and client services, with the goal of processing 80% of all applications within established service standards. They have been making consistent progress toward this goal and have started publishing monthly data to inform the public about efforts to reduce application backlogs.

Notably, Canada has welcomed 339,000 permanent residents as of August 31 in 2023, up from 310,000 during the same period in 2022. IRCC has reduced backlogs by adopting digitization, hiring and training staff, and utilizing automation technologies to enhance processing capacity and efficiency. Many lines of business are now meeting service standards, including federal high-skilled applications and applications for spouses, partners, and children.

IRCC is also planning to open the online Permanent Residence Portal to private refugee sponsor groups and government-assisted refugee referral partners, addressing concerns raised in the Auditor General's report. Minister Miller expressed optimism about the progress made by IRCC and acknowledged the dedication of its employees in application processing. He stressed the responsibility to fulfill promises and maintain Canada as a welcoming and inclusive destination for those seeking to start a new life.



Navigating the Shadows: Protecting Mental Health in a Hyperconnected World



On World Mental Health Day, Canadian health ministers emphasized the universal importance of mental health care and the need to remove barriers to access. This article addresses two critical aspects of mental health: the effects of overexposure to light and exposure to traumatic news. Strategies are provided to protect and enhance mental well-being.

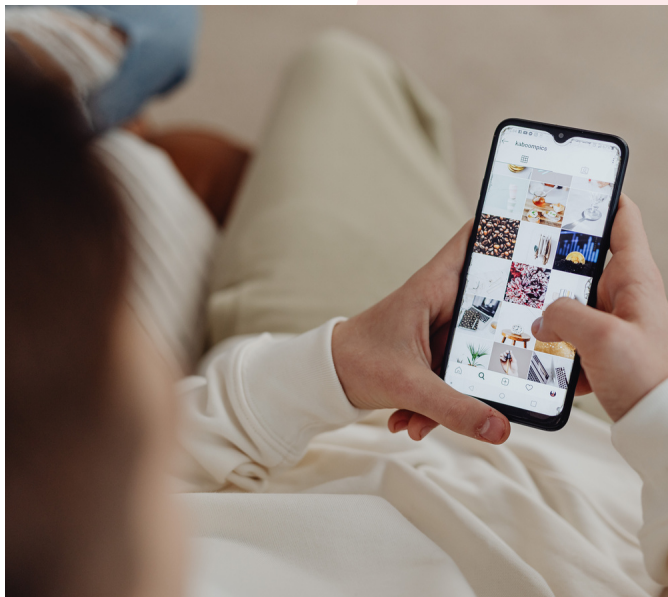
Recent research from Monash University reveals a strong connection between light exposure and mental health.

Circadian rhythms, our internal biological clocks regulating sleep and wakefulness, play a crucial role in mood and cognition. Natural light during the day improves these rhythms, while exposure to artificial light at night can disrupt them, contributing to issues such as insomnia, depression, and anxiety. Excessive nighttime light exposure is associated with a 20% increase in psychiatric disorder symptoms. The disconnection from natural light-dark cycles in modern society negatively affects mental health.

The article also addresses the impact of constant exposure to traumatic news and offers strategies to minimize this impact, such as limiting the depth and duration of exposure, choosing balanced and fact-based news sources, diversifying news sources, and recognizing one's own emotional limits.

In summary, the importance of addressing mental health is highlighted, and solutions are offered to tackle the challenges of overexposure to light and exposure to traumatic news, with the goal of eliminating the stigma associated with mental health and improving care worldwide.

For more information, visit: <https://www.psychiatrist.com/news/study-illuminates-the-dark-side-of-light-overexposure-on-mental-health/>



Canada's Clean Energy Push: Kitselas Geothermal's Green Initiative

Kitselas Geothermal has received a substantial funding boost of over \$3.6 million from the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada (PacifiCan) as part of the Government of Canada's initiative to promote a clean economy in British Columbia. The funding is directed towards the "Fuel for Reconciliation" geothermal project, aimed at harnessing geothermal energy within the Kitselas First Nation's traditional territory. This project seeks to replace 270,000 gigajoules of natural gas annually, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over 13,000 tonnes.

The announcement was made by Minister Harjit S. Sajjan, marking a significant step towards the economic independence of Kitselas First Nation and the transition to cleaner energy solutions in British Columbia. Geothermal energy, which uses heat beneath the Earth's surface, is a sustainable and eco-friendly alternative to fossil fuels. British Columbia's geographically advantageous position along the Pacific Ocean's "Ring of Fire" makes it well-suited for geothermal energy development.

PacifiCan's Jobs and Growth Fund is supporting this project, with plans to create more than 170 jobs, including opportunities for Indigenous workers. Kitselas Geothermal Inc., a collaboration between Kitselas Development Corp. and Borealis GeoPower, is at the forefront of this endeavor.

This funding announcement highlights the cooperation between government, Indigenous communities, and the private sector in advancing sustainable energy projects and working towards a cleaner and more prosperous future for the region and the nation. It underscores the potential of geothermal energy as a promising and eco-friendly alternative to traditional fossil fuels, offering economic and environmental benefits.



Message from the president

Dear friend of the Hispanic Canadian Congress,

Did you know that there are at least 1,193,880 Hispanic Latin Americans living in Canada?

Possibly not, as this information is not available through a simple search such as: How many Latinos live in Canada? Following the 2021 Census, the answer to this question on the StatsCan website would have been that there are 580,235 Hispanics living in Canada. However, it has been possible to arrive at a number much closer to reality, which indicates that there are at least 1,193,880 Hispanic Latin Americans living in Canada, essentially, more than double the number originally reported. This figure has been extracted through the re-tabulation of some data recorded by the national census, conducted in Canada in the year 2021, more than two years ago.

The re-tabulation of the data has been based on three components, mother tongue, place of birth and ethnicity. For a respondent's information to be part of the re-tabulation, the respondent must meet one, two or all three components. By meeting at least one of these conditions, a total of 1,193,880 individuals have qualified as part of the "Hispanic/Hispanic-origin or Spanish-speaking" population according to the 2021 Census.

You may be wondering about the origin of this difficulty in getting the count right, and this seems to be an explanation. Coming from at least 21 countries where Spanish is spoken, we are a very diverse culture, self-identifying ourselves in various ways, all obviously very valid and relevant, some of these self-identifiers are Mexican, Colombian, Chilean, Latin American, South American, Spanish, Hispanic, Latino, Central American and more, creating small fragments of a strong community united by the language we share.

For many years, the Canadian Hispanic Congress has been aware that the actual number of Hispanic Latin Americans was much higher than the numbers reported following each national census. Following the presentation of the 2001 census statistics, the CHC assigned itself the task of finding the closest possible number to the reality of the Hispanic Latin American population in Canada. We had also secured the commitment and support of the chief statistician of Statistics Canada.

Twenty-two years later, we remain as determined to obtain and share the most accurate information about the Hispanic Latin American community, the CHC continues to ensure that government authorities and private businesses can base their decisions on the right information when planning services and categorizing the Hispanic-Latin American community, not as a small minority, but as a 'majority' within minorities.

As a part of our celebration of Hispanic Latin American Heritage Month, on October 25, 2023, in a collaboration between the Canadian Hispanic Congress and Statistics Canada, the Hispanic Canadian Congress convened a press conference entitled "The Demographic Realities of the Hispanic Latin American Community" for the purpose of sharing essential information about a young, growing and dynamic Hispanic Latin American community that brings much to this homeland that has embraced us and is interested in better serving us.

We invite you to visit canadianhispaniccongress.com where we are honoured to share with you this important and interesting information prepared by Statistics Canada for the Hispanic Canadian Congress. We also invite you to follow us every day through our social networks.

Thank you for your support of our work.

Monique Forster

President

Canadian Hispanic Congress

The **Canadian Hispanic Congress** invites you to visit:

<https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/statistics/> where you will find resources on topics relevant to Spanish-speaking community in Canada and explore the statistics section where you can learn about the results of the Census 2021 data re-tabulation.



To sign up for our newsletter please email us at: membership@canadianhispaniccongress.com

We ask for your support by following us on our official social media accounts shown below.

Edited by: Camila García Quiros and Monique Forster.

 @CHC1983

 @CANADIANHISPAN1

 @CANADIANHISPANICCONGRESS

 CANADIAN HISPANIC CONGRESS



Scan this QR code to access to our web page.

