



CANADIAN TOURISM  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
COUNCIL

# ABORIGINAL PEOPLES EMPLOYED IN TOURISM

Canada's population is aging and its birth rates are declining. By 2025, the potential labour shortage for the tourism sector is projected to balloon to a quarter-million jobs. At the same time, estimates by Statistics Canada show that Canada's Aboriginal population (Inuit, Métis and First Nations) is growing at a faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada projects that over 600,000 Aboriginal youth will enter the labour market between 2001 and 2026.<sup>2</sup>

## Canada's Tourism Sector: a quick overview

Canada's tourism sector consists of five component industry groups: food and beverage services, transportation, accommodation, recreation and entertainment, and travel services. A large and dynamic contributor to the nation's economy, tourism spending in Canada reached \$75 billion in 2008 and the sector's contribution to Canada's GDP was 2.2%.

According to the 2008 Labour Force Survey, 1.75 million people were employed in Canada's tourism sector, which represents 10.2% of all employment in the country. Among the five tourism industry groups, food and beverage services was the largest employer, employing 827,900 people (47% of the tourism labour force).

While there are over 400 occupations in the tourism sector, over three-quarters of the tourism workforce is employed in one of 38 occupations. One-third of all tourism workers are employed as food counter attendants and kitchen helpers, food and beverage servers, and cooks.

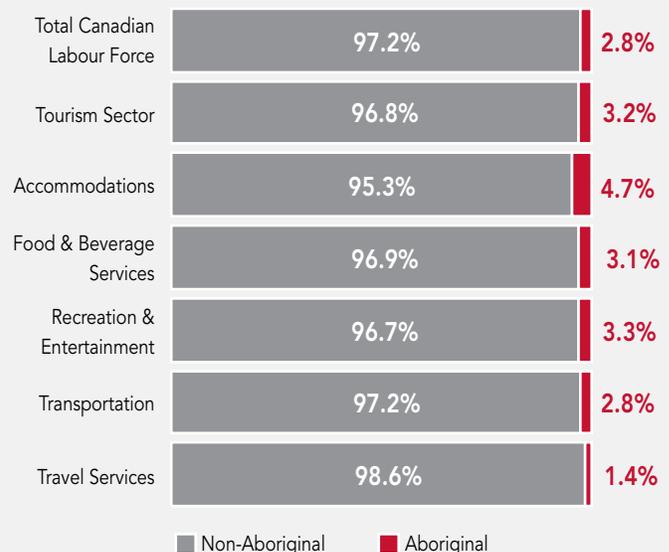
## Over 3% of the tourism labour force identified themselves as an Aboriginal person

According to the 2006 census, more than 50,000 people (3.2%) working in Canada's tourism sector self-identified as an Aboriginal person, somewhat more than the proportion of Aboriginal workers in the overall Canadian workforce (2.8%).

## The accommodations industry group had the largest proportion of Aboriginal workers

The accommodations industry group employed the largest share of Aboriginal workers (4.7%). This was followed by industries within the category of recreation and entertainment (3.3%). Travel services employed the smallest proportion of Aboriginal peoples (1.4%).

## Aboriginal Peoples within the Tourism Sector's Employed Labour Force, 2006



SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006, Customized tabulation.

Although the accommodations industry group had the largest overall share of Aboriginal peoples in 2006, the occupation with the most Aboriginal workers was in the recreation and entertainment industry group. Fourteen percent of people employed as outdoor sport and recreational guides identified themselves as an Aboriginal person. Other occupations employing large shares of Aboriginal workers were light-duty cleaners (6%), casino workers (6%), and tour and travel guides (5%).

1 Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census, *The Daily*, Tuesday, January 15, 2008.

2 Hull, Jeremy. 2008. "Aboriginal Youth in the Canadian Labour Market." In *Hope or Heartbreak: Aboriginal Youth and Canada's Future*, Horizons. Cited by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's online Fact Sheet: 2006 Census Aboriginal Demographics.

## Aboriginal women were more likely than Aboriginal men to work in tourism

A higher percentage of Aboriginal women (60%) were employed in the tourism sector than men (40%).

Within the industry groups, accommodations employed the highest share of Aboriginal women (72%), while transportation industries employed the highest share of Aboriginal men (66%).

	Aboriginal Peoples	
	MALE	FEMALE
<b>TOURISM SECTOR</b>	40%	60%
Accommodations	28%	72%
Food & Beverage Services	32%	68%
Transportation	66%	34%
Recreation & Entertainment	52%	48%
Travel Services	35%	65%

SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006. Customized tabulation.

## Four in ten Aboriginal workers in tourism are young men and women

Aboriginal Peoples working in tourism were younger than their counterparts in the overall labour force. While Aboriginal peoples 15-24 years of age represented less than one-quarter (23%) of workers in the overall Canadian labour force, this group comprised over 42% of the tourism sector labour force.

The labour force in food and beverage industries had the largest share of young Aboriginal workers. The proportion of Aboriginal Peoples aged 15-24 working in travel services (27%) was significantly higher than the percentage of youth working in this industry group overall (12%).

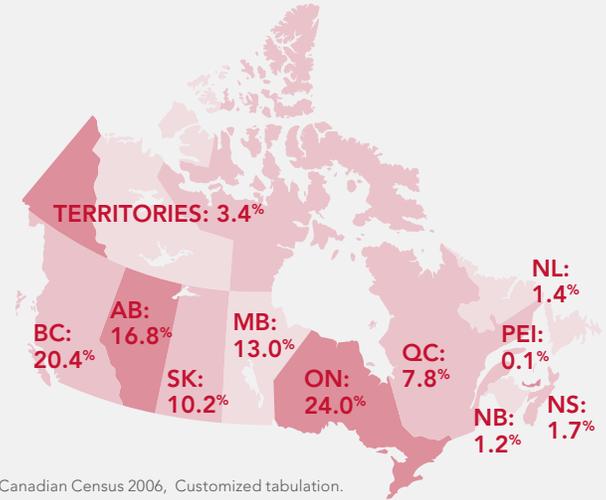
## A quarter of all Aboriginal peoples employed in tourism work in Ontario

Aboriginal workers employed in tourism were most likely to be found in Ontario (24%), British Columbia (20%), and Alberta (17%). These proportions are a reflection of the overall size of the labour force in these provinces.

When comparing the number of Aboriginal Peoples employed in the sector with each province's total tourism workforce, a different trend appears. The participation rates of Aboriginal

peoples employed in tourism were the greatest in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In these regions, Aboriginal workers were more likely to be employed in accommodations and recreation and entertainment industries.

## Geographic Distribution of Aboriginal Workers in Canada's Tourism Sector, 2006



SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006, Customized tabulation.

## Cities in western Canada had the largest proportion of Aboriginal peoples employed in tourism

At the city level, most Aboriginal workers in tourism were employed in Winnipeg (22%), Edmonton (22%), and Vancouver (22%).

When the percentage of Aboriginal peoples working in tourism is compared to a city's overall proportion of Aboriginal workers, a different story emerges. In this scenario, the share of Aboriginal tourism workers was slightly greater in Saskatoon and Winnipeg than in other cities.

*While some businesses are already utilizing Aboriginal workers to help meet demand for labour, other regions in Canada must recognize this demographic group as an important source of workers. Past censuses show that the Aboriginal population is growing much faster than the total population. Moreover, 72% of all Aboriginal Peoples live in urban areas and their median age is 26 years old, making them a young, strong, and accessible option for many tourism businesses coping with staffing issues*

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

The "Demographic Profile of Tourism Sector Employees" report is produced every five years as new Census data is made available. This summary was developed using specialized tabulations from the 2006 Census and offers employment statistics for demographic groups within the tourism labour force.

The detailed "Demographic Profile of Tourism Sector Employees" report is available on the CTHRC website: [www.cthrc.ca](http://www.cthrc.ca)

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**Canada**

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