

Waterloo Region Immigration Fact Sheet



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH



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Language, Interpretation and Translation

This is one of a series of fact sheets that provide a profile of immigrants in Waterloo Region. Understanding the makeup of our community is important for planning programs and services. Between 2006 and 2011, 15,465 individuals immigrated to this region. Immigrants and Canadian-born in Waterloo Region speak many different languages. While most people in Waterloo Region can speak English, the number of people who can also speak languages other than English or French is increasing. Definitions for key terms used throughout the document can be found in the Notes section at the end of this fact sheet.

Top 20 mother tongue languages of the total population, Waterloo Region, 2006 and 2011

Rank	Language	2011		Change from 2006	
		Number	Per cent	Per cent	Rank
1	English	375,515	74.8%	6%	-
2	German	16,515	3.3%	-12%	-
3	Portuguese	10,025	2.0%	-10%	-
4	Chinese Languages	9,445	1.9%	24%	-
5	Spanish	7,975	1.6%	15%	-
6	French	6,090	1.2%	-1%	-
7	Romanian	5,560	1.1%	16%	▼1
8	Polish	5,440	1.1%	-9%	▲1
9	Serbian	5,080	1.0%	12%	-
10	Arabic	4,425	0.9%	38%	▼1
11	Panjabi (Punjabi)	3,870	0.8%	22%	▼1
12	Vietnamese	3,195	0.6%	-1%	▲2
13	Persian (Farsi)	2,925	0.6%	11%	▼1
14	Urdu	2,800	0.6%	35%	▼3
15	Dutch	2,340	0.5%	-15%	▲2
16	Croatian	2,340	0.5%	-3%	▲1
17	Gujarati	2,170	0.4%	54%	▼3
18	Italian	1,930	0.4%	-14%	▲2
19	Hungarian	1,825	0.4%	-4%	▲1
20	Russian	1,545	0.3%	30%	▼5

Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2011

- English remained the predominant mother tongue language in Waterloo Region.
- German continued its historical presence as the second most common mother tongue language, although there was a decline in the number of mother tongue speakers compared to five years ago.
- All top five mother tongue languages remained unchanged from their 2006 ranking. Among these, Chinese Languages and Spanish experienced the highest growth compared to five years ago.
- Gujarati and Arabic showed the largest per cent change, increasing by 54% and 38% respectively from 2006.

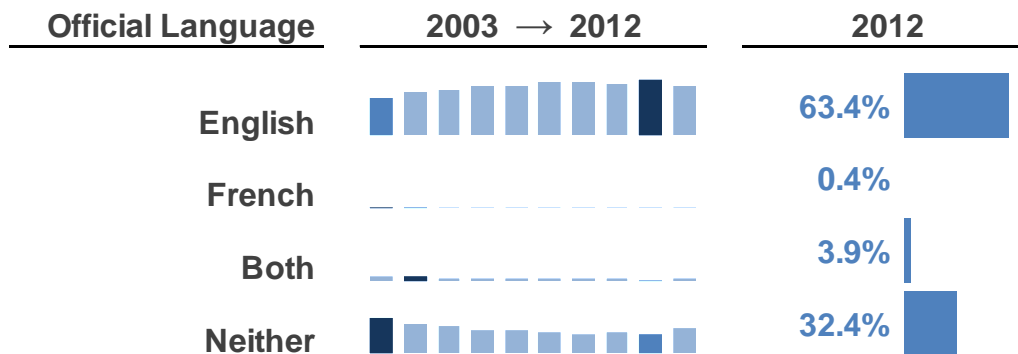
Top 20 mother tongue languages of recent immigrants, Waterloo Region, 2011

Rank	Language	Number	Per cent
1	Arabic	1,860	14%
2	Chinese Languages	1,685	12%
3	Spanish	1,520	11%
4	Hindi	885	6%
5	Urdu	885	6%
6	Panjabi (Punjabi)	825	6%
7	Persian (Farsi)	725	5%
8	Russian	690	5%
9	Romanian	675	5%
10	Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	445	3%
11	Gujarati	435	3%
12	Somali	430	3%
13	German	355	3%
14	Korean	340	2%
15	Pashto	260	2%
16	Serbian	215	2%
17	Amharic	210	2%
18	Vietnamese	205	1%
19	Portuguese	185	1%
20	Polish	180	1%

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011

- Among recent immigrants to Waterloo Region, Arabic was estimated as the predominant mother tongue language, followed closely by Chinese Languages and Spanish.

Proportion of recent immigrants, by knowledge of official languages, Waterloo Region, 2003-2012



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Permanent Residents Rounded Data Cube, 2012

- In 2012, approximately one-third of recent immigrants to Waterloo Region had no knowledge of English or French when they received their permanent resident status.
- In Waterloo Region, the proportion of recent immigrants with no knowledge of an official language has been relatively stable over the last five years but has decreased over the last 10 years.
- At the same time, the number of recent immigrants with knowledge of English has been relatively stable over the last five years, but has increased compared to 10 years ago.

Most popular languages for translation and interpretation services, Waterloo Region, 2014

Based on a scan of local settlement agencies including the KW Multicultural Centre, YMCA Cross Cultural and Immigrant Services and the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, the most popular languages for translation and interpretation services in Waterloo Region in 2014 included:

- Arabic
- Dari
- Farsi
- Mandarin
- Serbo-Croatian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Urdu

Mother tongue of individuals with no knowledge of official languages, Waterloo Region, 2011

Rank	Language	Number	Per cent
1	Portuguese	1,320	16.6%
2	Chinese Languages	955	12.0%
3	German	645	8.1%
4	Spanish	520	6.5%
5	Panjabi (Punjabi)	450	5.7%
6	Vietnamese	425	5.4%
7	Arabic	370	4.7%
8	Serbian	345	4.3%
9	Romanian	330	4.2%
10	Persian (Farsi)	270	3.4%
11	Gujarati	220	2.8%
12	Polish	170	2.1%
13	Urdu	150	1.9%
14	Korean	110	1.4%
15	Russian	100	1.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2011

- Individuals with no knowledge of official languages identified a wide range of mother tongue languages.
- Portuguese was the most frequently reported mother tongue among those with no knowledge of either official language in Waterloo Region in 2011 at almost 17%.

Notes

1. Statistics Canada employs rounding of numbers to the nearest multiple of five to ensure confidentiality. Caution must be taken when interpreting the data in this fact sheet, especially in situations where data counts are low.
2. Due to the voluntary nature of the 2011 NHS, caution must be used when interpreting the data. Further, due to changes in the survey methodology from 2006 and previous census years, direct comparisons, including the calculation of growth rates, percentage and absolute changes should not be made. Interpretations based on NHS survey data are presented as estimates.
3. Chinese Languages include Cantonese, Chaochow (Teochow), Fukien, Hakka, Mandarin, Shanghainese, Taiwanese, Chinese and not otherwise specified.
4. Recent immigrant refers to those who came to Canada at some point in the five years preceding May 10, 2011.
5. Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual.

References

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012). Facts and Figures 2012: Permanent Residents Rounded Data Cube. Accessed October 29, 2014.

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