



DEMOGRAPHICS

REPORT AND OUTLOOK 2020|2021

Summary

According to Statistics Canada, the population of the Québec City *census metropolitan area* (CMA) increased by 7,178 people (0.9%) to 832,328 between 2019 and 2020, in line with the provincial average growth rate. Québec City had the lowest population growth of any major Canadian CMA between 2015 and 2020, with a rate of 4.2%. It was below the provincial (4.9%) and Canadian (6.4%) rates for the same period.

Québec City's growth in 2020 was driven primarily by migration and to a lesser degree by natural growth. Despite declines in the previous year, both natural growth and migration were positive in 2020. These results have their roots in the pandemic, which caused more deaths and reduced migratory activity, and structural factors such as population aging. These findings reflect demographic trends in the region, including changes to the working-age population's demographic weight, which has been declining steadily over the years. In 2020, 64% of the population of Québec City was in the 15–64 age group, the lowest percentage for a major Canadian CMA.

In 2019–2020, Québec City once again had the highest net interregional migration, with a net total of 1,573 migrants. It also had a positive net migration of 58 people from the rest of the country, a first in terms of available data. The Québec City CMA remains attractive internationally, but it must increase its efforts to welcome more international immigrants and non-permanent residents.

Population of Canada's top 8 CMAs

	Population (thousands)	Growth 2019-2020		Growth 2015-2020	
	2020	Number (thousands)	Variation (%)	Number (thousands)	Variation (%)
Québec City	832.3	7.2	0.9%	33.3	4.2%
Montréal	4,364.2	31.1	0.7%	254.5	6.2%
Ottawa	1,461.5	23.4	1.6%	124.2	9.3%
Toronto	6,555.2	92.4	1.4%	510.0	8.4%
Winnipeg	850.1	5.9	0.7%	64.2	8.2%
Calgary	1,543.3	29.3	1.9%	129.3	9.1%
Edmonton	1,468.9	26.1	1.8%	130.8	9.8%
Vancouver	2,737.7	30.9	1.1%	193.2	7.6%
Province of Québec	8,574.6	72.9	0.9%	399.3	4.9%
Canada	38,005.2	411.9	1.1%	2,302.3	6.4%

Sources: Statistics Canada (Table 17-10-0135-01) and Québec International, 2021



832,328
total population
in 2020



+0.9%
population
growth
in 2020



5,898
immigrants attracted
-13% (2019-2020)



617
natural population
growth
in 2020
-55% vs. 2019

Uneven population trends by age group

Although the Québec City CMA's population has grown slowly overall, growth by age group has been uneven. The 15–64 age group, which has the highest demographic weight, stagnated between 2019 and 2020 with 0.1% growth. It remained at 64% of the total population, the lowest proportion among Canada's major CMAs, including Montréal (67%). The proportion for the rest of the province was 62%.

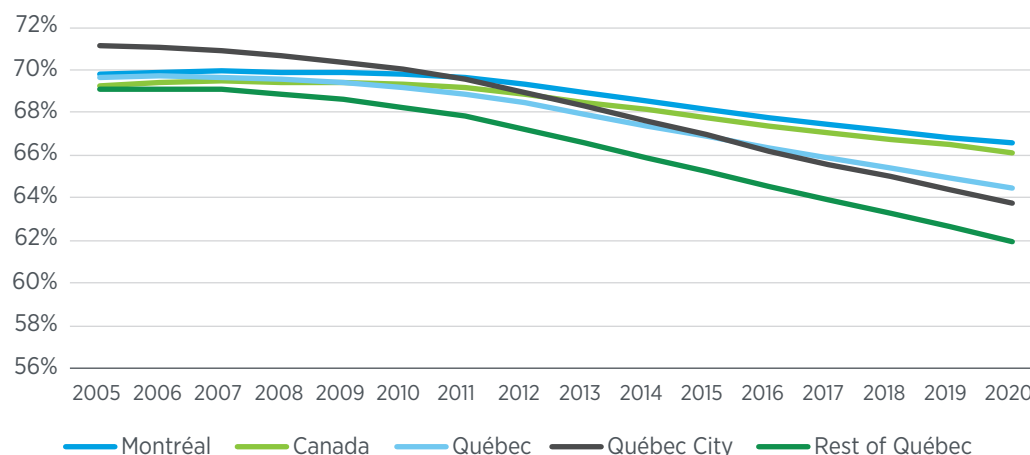
Portrait of the population of Canada's major CMAs by age group in 2020

	Age 0–14			Age 15–64			Age 65+		
	Population	Change 2019-2020	Proportion	Population	Change 2019-2020	Proportion	Population	Change 2019-2020	Proportion
Québec City	125,199	1.0%	15%	530,957	-0.1%	64%	176,172	3.8%	21%
Montréal	711,824	0.4%	16%	2,905,745	0.3%	67%	746,620	2.6%	17%
Ottawa/Gatineau	236,140	0.8%	16%	991,527	1.3%	68%	233,827	3.9%	16%
Toronto	1,003,056	-0.2%	15%	4,552,412	1.3%	69%	999,737	3.6%	15%
Winnipeg	141,600	0.4%	17%	572,989	0.1%	67%	135,467	3.5%	16%
Calgary	278,108	0.9%	18%	1,070,048	1.4%	69%	195,127	6.3%	13%
Edmonton	263,503	1.3%	18%	1,005,478	1.3%	68%	199,945	5.5%	14%
Vancouver	373,133	0.5%	14%	1,914,005	0.6%	70%	450,560	4.2%	16%
Province of Québec	1,353,560	0.7%	16%	5,529,528	0.1%	65%	1,691,483	3.4%	20%
Rest of Québec	516,537	1.1%	15%	2,092,826	-0.1%	62%	768,691	4.1%	23%

Sources: Statistics Canada (Table 17-10-0135-01) and Québec International, 2021

The 15–64 age group is known as the *working-age population*. One year into the pandemic, the Québec City area is already showing signs of a tightening labour market. As a result, it's important to pay close attention to this age group. Québec City has seen a steady decline in the demographic weight of the working-age population.

Working-age population weight



Sources: Statistics Canada (Table 17-10-0135-01) and Québec International, 2021

With the percentage of the working-age population at nearly 71% (514,642 people) in 2005, Québec City was among the top CMAs in Canada. In the same year, the proportion was nearly 70% for the Montréal CMA and the province as a whole and 69% for Canada. The weight of the 15–64 age group in the Québec City CMA started to decline in 2011 (540,963 people), gradually slipping below the Canadian average in 2013 and the provincial average in 2016. In 2020, the proportion was nearly 67% in Montréal, compared to 66% across Canada, less than 65% across the province, and only 64% in Québec City.

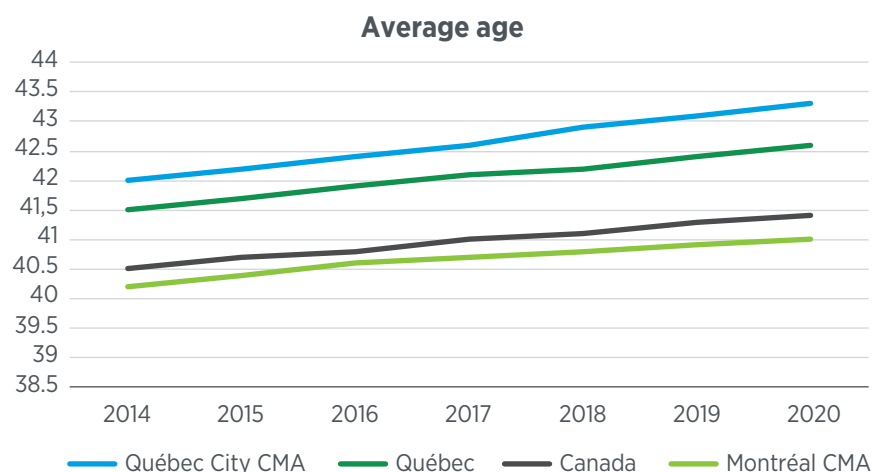
The youngest population category (age 0–14) grew by 1% between 2019 and 2020, a solid performance compared to other CMAs. Only Edmonton saw higher growth for this age group (1.3%). Over the same period, growth for the 0–14 category was 0.4% in Montréal, compared with a provincial average of 0.7%.

Between 2015 and 2020, Québec City saw 6.2% growth for this age group—higher than the provincial rate (6%) but lower than Montréal (7%). Only the Ottawa/Gatineau, Toronto, and Vancouver CMAs had lower rates over the same period.

The underlying trend toward population aging has existed in Québec City for a number of years. 2020 was no exception, with the number of people 65 and older reaching 176,172. With 3.8% growth, the 65 and older category posted the highest year-over-year growth, accounting for 21% of the CMA's population.

That's the highest proportion since 2006¹ and the highest among Canada's major CMAs, including Montréal (17%). The proportion was 23% in the *rest of Québec*.²

These changes are reflected in an average age of 43.3 in the Québec City CMA for 2020. This figure is higher than the average age in the Montréal CMA (41), the provincial average (42.6), and the Canadian average (41.4).



Sources: Statistics Canada (Table 17-10-0135-01) and Québec International, 2021

This ongoing trend puts the region first among Canada's major CMAs. The top three is rounded out by Vancouver (41.3) and Montréal (41). Calgary and Edmonton are tied for the lowest average age for 2020, at 38.4. The gap between the Québec City CMA and other regions widened between 2015 and 2020. During that time, the average age in Québec increased by 0.9 years, while the average age in Montréal increased by 0.6 years—close to the Canadian average of 0.7 years. The Québec City area saw an increase of 1.1 years over the same period.

Population growth and trends for individual age groups in the Québec City area are affected by natural population growth, which has declined in recent years.

Natural growth in decline

In 2020, there were a total of 7,543 births in the Québec City CMA, a decrease of 3.4% compared to 2019 and 10% compared to 2015. It's the second lowest annual total on record—there were only 7,481 births in 2006. The Montréal CMA saw a 3.9% decline in births between 2019 and 2020, and a 7% decline between 2015 and 2020. Over the same periods, the rest of Québec saw respective decreases of 1.4% and 3.4%.

The Québec City area had a total of 6,926 deaths in 2020, up 7.6% from 2019. For the five years prior to 2020, the average number of deaths in the region was 6,247. This increase is due to population aging and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit the country hard in recent months. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of deaths in the region increased by 18%. The Montréal CMA saw a 15% spike in deaths between 2019 and 2020, and a nearly 22% increase between 2015 and 2020. Over the same periods, the rest of Québec saw respective increases of 5.3% and 10.4%.

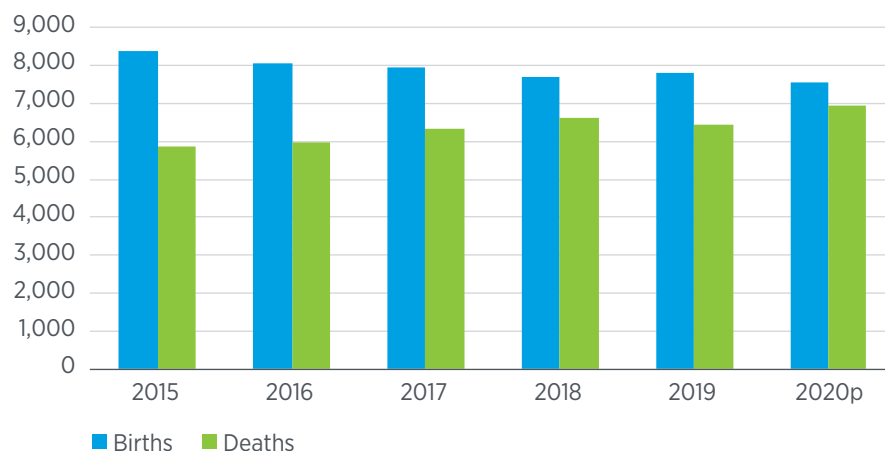
¹ That year, 14% of the population in the Québec City CMA was age 65 or older.

² Québec, excluding the Québec City and Montréal CMAs





Natural population growth in the Québec City CMA



P: Preliminary data

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2021

In 2020, natural population growth fell to 617 in Québec City, a year-over-year drop of 55%, marking the lowest annual natural growth since 2006. The decline is due to a sharp decrease in births and an even sharper rise in deaths. For the five years prior to 2020, the average natural population growth for the CMA was 1,725. Montréal saw a 46% decline, while the rest of Québec saw a 165% drop, due to natural growth of -813 in 2020.

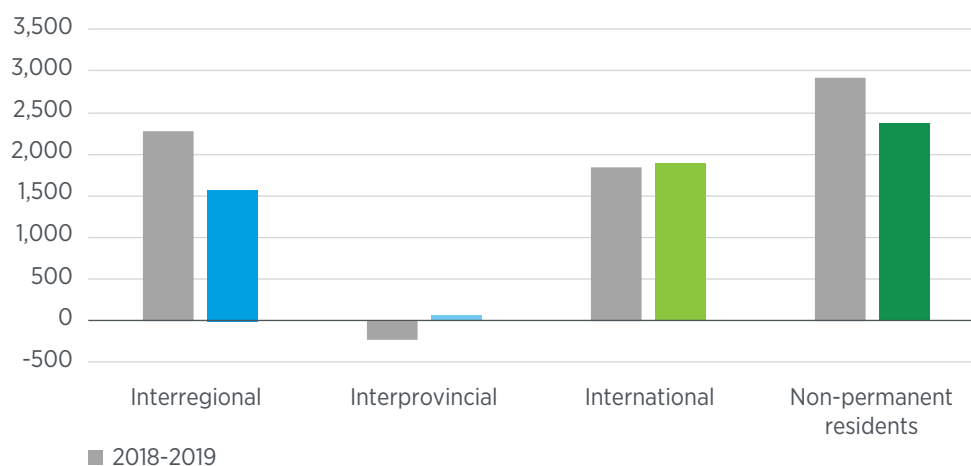
Between 2015 and 2020, Québec City saw natural growth decline by 75%, compared to declines of 56% in Montréal and 124% in the rest of the province.

Immigration also in decline

The Québec City region saw net positive migration of 5,898³ people in 2019–2020,⁴ a 13% decrease from the previous year. The decline was driven by reduced migration in all categories except international and interprovincial migration. Interprovincial migration increased and was positive, a noteworthy performance.



Migratory patterns for the Québec City CMA in 2018–2019 and 2019–2020



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

Migratory growth continues to play a major role in population growth for the Québec City CMA. It has offset weak natural growth over the past several years.

³ Including non-permanent residents

⁴ July 1, 2019, to July 1, 2020

Québec as a whole

Data on interregional migration in Québec shows that in 2019–2020, the Québec City area remained the province's most attractive CMA. With a net interregional migration of 1,573 people, Québec City saw a 31% dip from the previous year's total of 2,227 people.

Net migration between CMAs in Québec, 2019–2020									
		Total	408	421	433	442	462	505	Non-CMA
CMA code	CMA	n							
408	Saguenay	219	...	-145	-17	-37	170	-2	249
421	Québec City	1,573	145	...	104	10	898	66	350
433	Sherbrooke	1,287	17	-104	...	0	967	-10	417
442	Trois-Rivières	1,120	37	-10	0	...	665	1	426
462	Montréal	-24,673	-170	-898	-967	-665	...	-460	-21,513
505	Ottawa/Gatineau*	-142	2	-66	10	-1	460	...	-546
Non-CMA	Non-CMA	20,616	-249	-350	-417	-426	21,513	546	...

Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

* Québec part only

A drop in net migration was also observed between 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 in the Montréal CMA, with 24,673 fewer migrants (-77%), and the Ottawa/Gatineau CMA, with 142 fewer migrants (-132%). For Montréal, the decrease is largely due to an exodus to neighbouring regions that are not part of the CMA. Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières remained among the top three most attractive regions in Québec, with 1,287 migrants (+11%) and 1,120 migrants (+31%), respectively. It's worth noting that the average net interregional migration for the Québec City CMA was 1,502 people between 2014–2015 and 2018–2019. The average for the Montréal CMA over the same period was -10,033 people.

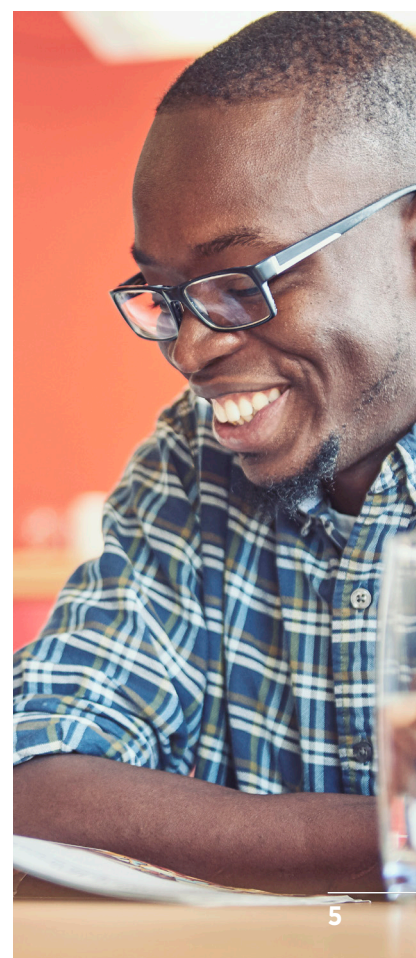
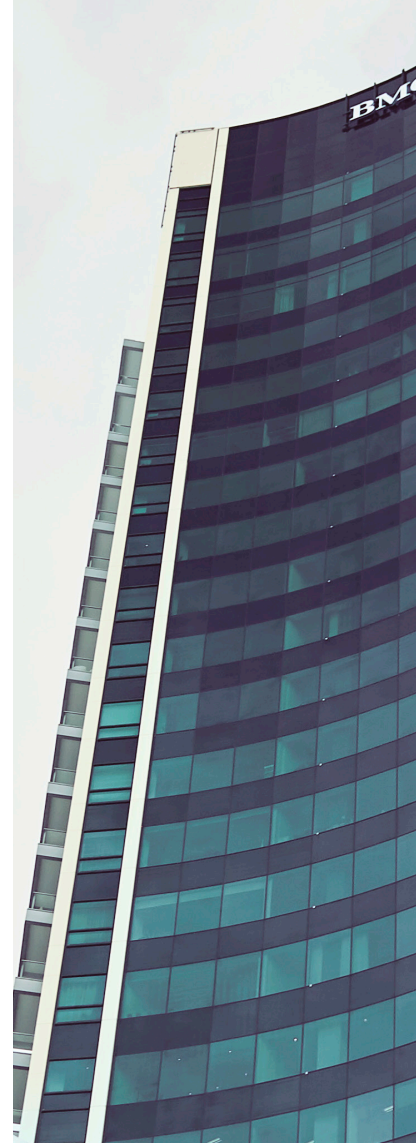
Québec City's performance in 2019–2020 was again driven by the 15–24 and 65+ age groups, for whom it was the province's most attractive CMA. Québec City had a positive net migration of 1,051 people age 15–24, the smallest number since 2001–2002, and a 12% decrease from the previous year. Apart from Trois-Rivières, the other CMAs in Québec also saw a decline for the 15–24 age category.

In comparison, the average net interregional migration for the 15–24 age group in the Québec City area was 1,305 people between 2014–2015 and 2018–2019. This downward trend was also visible in the Montréal CMA, which had an average of 743 migrants over the same period, compared with -1,199 in 2019–2020.

Net interregional migration for CMAs in Québec by age group, 2019–2020						
	Age 0–14	Age 15–24	Age 25–44	Age 45–64	Age 65+	Total
Saguenay	-4	-40	225	31	7	219
Québec City	117	1,051	46	-141	500	1,573
Sherbrooke	160	389	39	399	301	1,287
Trois-Rivières	163	288	158	227	284	1,120
Montréal	-3,802	-1,199	-8,826	-9,498	-1,348	-24,673
Ottawa/Gatineau*	113	-92	270	-420	-14	-142
Non-CMA	3,253	-397	8,088	9,403	269	20,616

Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

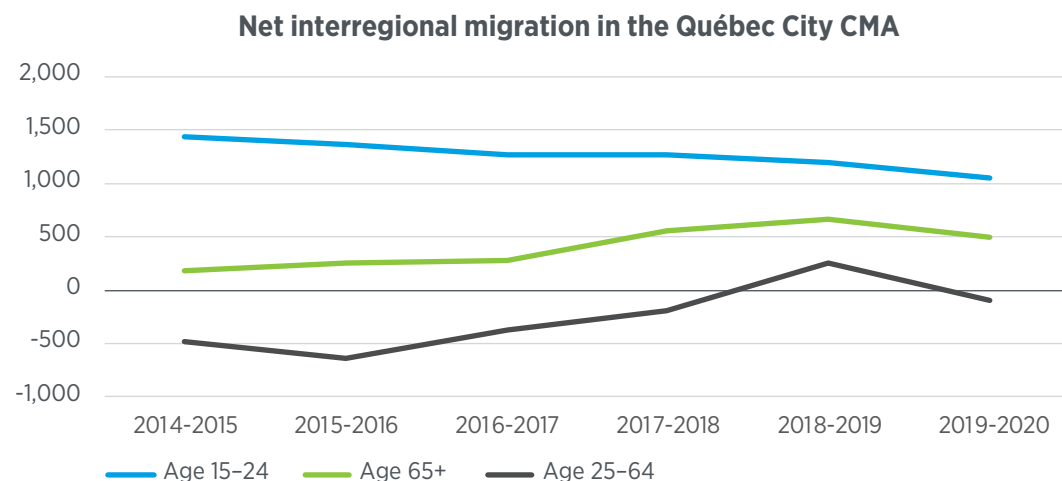
* Québec part only





The net figure for the 65+ age group in the Québec City area was 500, down 25% from the previous year, but up from the average of 287 between 2014–2015 and 2018–2019. The net figure for the 65+ age group in the Montréal area was -1,348. The average for the period between 2014–2015 and 2018–2019 was -176.

A closer look at the two age categories with the most migrants to the Québec City area reveals opposing trends.



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

The contribution of the 15–24 age group has been trending downward in recent years, dropping 27% from 1,433 in 2014–2015 to 1,051 in 2019–2020. Meanwhile, the contribution of the 65+ age group has steadily increased by a total of 181% (from 178 to 500) over the same period. These patterns should be tracked in the long term to anticipate their effects on population aging in the region. They also highlight the need for the Québec City area to continue its efforts to attract young people.

In the Québec City CMA, the 25–64 age group had a net migration of -95 people in 2019–2020. There was a net total of 46 migrants in the 25–44 age group, but it was not enough to offset the net total of -141 migrants in the 45–64 age group. For the 25–64 age group, only the Ottawa/Gatineau (-150) and Montréal (-18,324) regions fared worse than Québec City. All other Québec CMAs had positive totals for this age group. The Québec City CMA's performance in 2019–2020 is higher than the 2014–2015 to 2018–2019 average of -288 people. Apart from 2018–2019, when the net interregional migration for the 25–64 age group was 254, the last time the figure was a positive number was in 2008–2009 with 190 people.

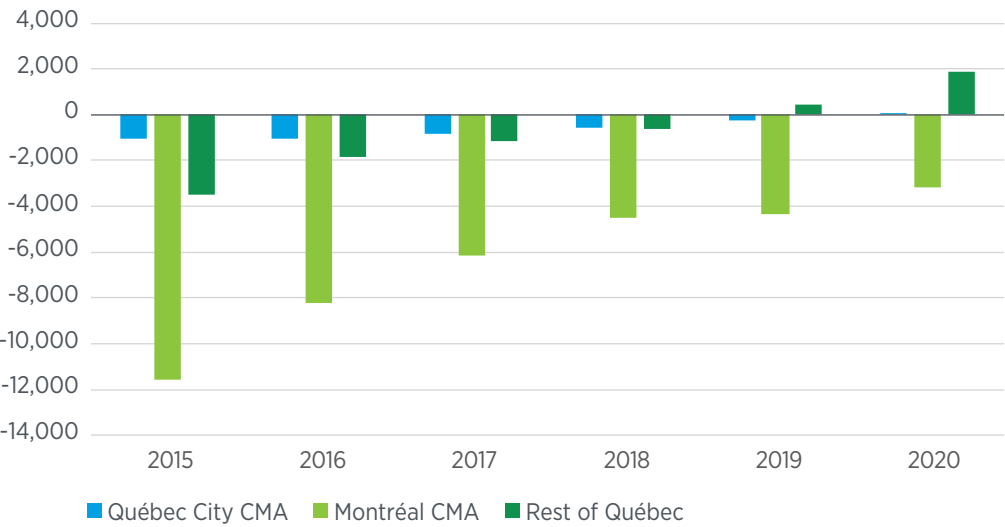
For the 0–14 age group (families with young children), the Québec City CMA posted a positive net migration of 117, down from the previous year's total of 157. These numbers are a marked improvement over previous years. The net average from 2014–2015 to 2018–2019 was 98 people. In comparison, the Montréal CMA saw a net migration of -3,802 people in 2019–2020, down from the average of -1,764 between 2014–2015 and 2018–2019.

Overall, the Québec City area had a positive net migration with respect to the rest of the province. For only the second time since 2010–2011, most of the interregional migration to the Québec City CMA came from Montréal. A total of 898 people or 57% of net migration was from Montréal. In 2010–2011, Montréal accounted for 45% of interregional migration to Québec City. In other years, most of the interregional migration to the Québec City CMA was from non-CMA regions.

Canada

2019–2020 was a banner year for migration between the Québec City area and the rest of Canada, with a positive net migration from the rest of Canada (58 people) for the first time on record. 1,741 people moved to the CMA from other provinces, while 1,683 left Québec City for other parts of Canada. These statistics confirm a trend of growth in migration from the rest of Canada over the past several years. To varying degrees, a similar trend has also been seen in other parts of Québec. In 2019–2020, the Québec City CMA and the rest of Québec⁵ had positive total net migration from the rest of Canada, as did all other CMAs in Québec, except for Sherbrooke and Montréal.

Net interprovincial migration

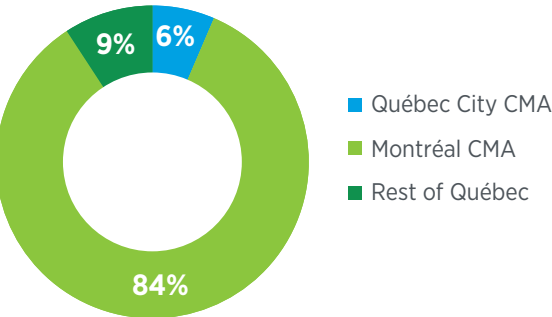


Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

International

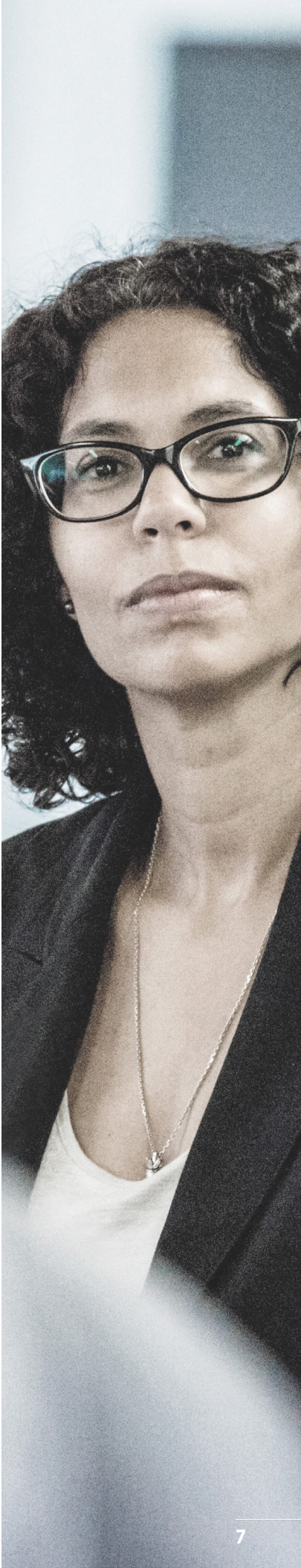
In 2019–2020, 2,242 people from abroad settled in the Québec City CMA, while 346 people emigrated. The net migration of 1,896 people is a 3% increase from the previous year. These figures are even more impressive when compared to Montréal and the rest of Québec, where net migration decreased by 25% and 29%, respectively. Nevertheless, net international migration in 2019–2020 was, as usual, concentrated in Montréal, which saw a net increase of 23,808 people and accounted for 84% of the province's net international migration.

Distribution of net international migration, 2019–2020



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

5 The province of Québec, excluding the Québec City and Montréal CMAs





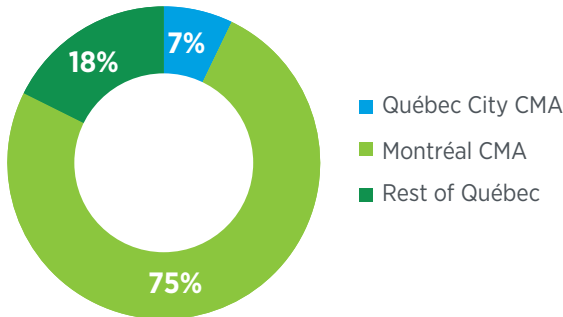
Non-permanent residents

Non-permanent residents include temporary workers, international students, and asylum seekers. Due to their non-permanent status, they are not included in estimates of international migration. Nevertheless, they are an important factor in migration growth because they may decide to settle permanently.

A net total of 2,371 non-permanent residents migrated to the Québec City area in 2019–2020, down 19% from the previous year's all-time high of 2,918. In 2019–2020, decreases were also seen in the Montréal area, with a net migration of 24,921 non-permanent residents (-38%) and in the rest of Québec, with 5,850 (-10%).

The net influx of non-permanent residents in the Québec City area accounts for 7% of the provincial total, while Montréal accounted for 75%.

Distribution of net migration of non-permanent residents, 2019–2020

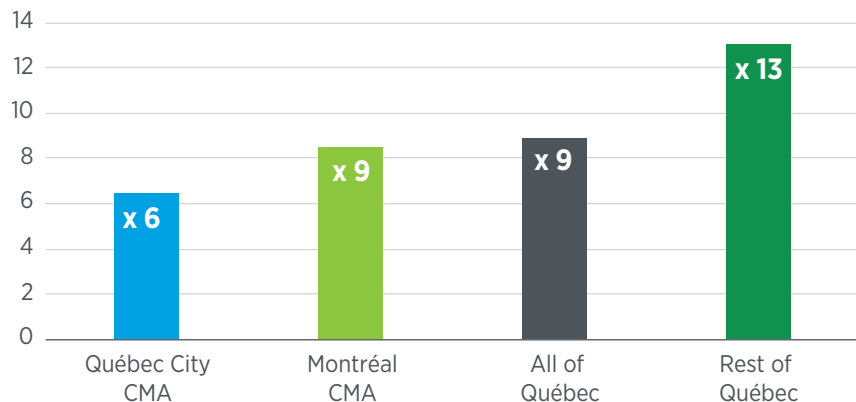


Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

Although net migration of non-permanent residents slowed in 2019–2020, the Québec City area and the province have seen an upward trend in recent years.

However, the Québec City area still tends to lag in terms of growth of non-permanent residents. Over the last ten years, net migration of non-permanent residents increased sixfold in Québec City. Over the same period, it increased ninefold in Montréal and the province as a whole and thirteenfold in the rest of the province. Evidently, the Québec City CMA still has room for improvement.

Increase in net migration of non-permanent residents over the past 10 years



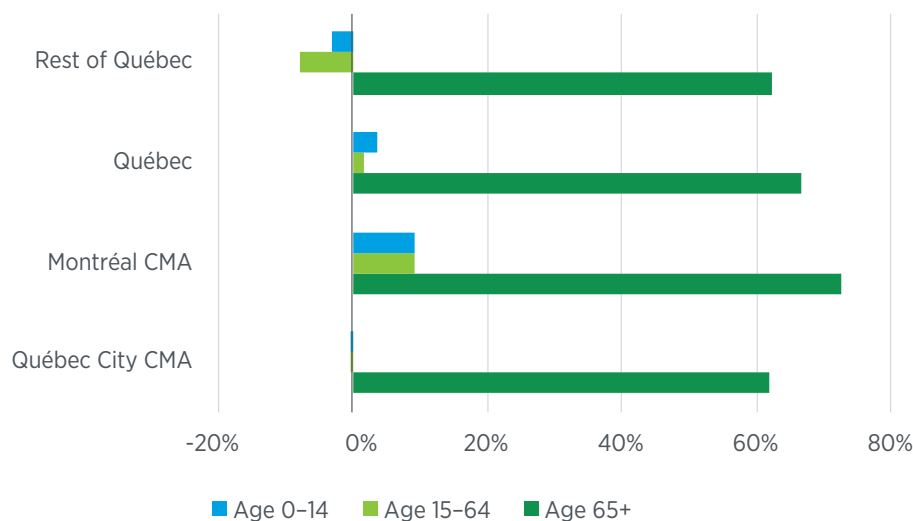
Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Québec International, 2021

Outlook

Institut de la statistique du Québec has produced 25-year demographic forecasts⁶ for Québec's CMAs that cover 2016 to 2041. The Québec City CMA's population is expected to grow by 12% to 897,400 between 2016 and 2041 (+93,000 people). Over the same period, the Montréal CMA is expected to grow by 19% to 4,938,095, the highest projected increase among Québec's CMAs. The province's overall population growth is forecast to be 14%, for a total population of 9,350,214 in 2041. With this projected population change, Québec City's demographic weight in the province is expected to dip from 9.8% to 9.6% between 2016 and 2041. Montréal leads the pack in these projections, going from 50.3% to almost 53% of Québec's population.

The Québec City CMA should see slight stagnation in growth in the 15–64 age group between 2016 and 2041 (-0.1%), with the total number of people decreasing from 532,842 in 2016 to 532,082 in 2041. In contrast, the Montréal CMA and the province as a whole are expected to see respective increases of 9% and 2% in the working-age population segment between 2016 and 2041. The rest of the province will see an 8% decrease in this category over the same period.

**Projected population changes
by age group, 2016 to 2041**



Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2016-2066* (in French only)

The number of people age 0–14 is projected to be 119,838 in Québec City, a decrease of 0.5% from the 2016 total of 120,382. In Montréal, this age segment is expected to grow by 9.4%. It's expected to increase by 3.7% in the province as a whole and decrease by 3% in the rest of Québec.

The projections confirm that population aging is an important trend. They indicate that the 65+ age group will grow by 62% in the Québec City area, from 151,692 in 2016 to 245,502 in 2041. The age segment will grow even faster in Montréal (72%) and Québec as a whole (67%) and at the same pace in the rest of Québec. According to Institut de la statistique du Québec, slower growth in the number of seniors in some regions doesn't necessarily mean less aging. The slower increase in the 65+ age group in these regions is accompanied by a decrease in other age groups, which means increased demographic weight for seniors.

The demographic weight of the 15–64 age group is expected to decline in the Québec City region between 2016 and 2041.



⁶ Institut de la statistique du Québec (2019). *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2016-2066* (in French only). 2019 edition, [Online], Québec City, L'Institut, 85 p. [www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/population-demographie/perspectives/perspectives-2016-2066.pdf]



April 2021

Demographic weight by age group

	Age 0–14		Age 15–64		Age 65+	
	2016	2041	2016	2041	2016	2041
Québec City CMA	15.0%	13.4%	66.2%	59.3%	18.8%	27.4%
Montréal CMA	16.2%	14.9%	67.8%	62.0%	16.0%	23.2%
Québec	15.7%	14.3%	66.3%	59.3%	18.0%	26.3%
Rest of Québec	15.2%	13.8%	64.6%	55.7%	20.2%	30.5%

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2016–2066* (in French only)

The proportion was 66% in 2016 and is projected to decrease by 7 points to 59% in 2041. This downward trend will also affect the Montréal CMA, which is expected to decrease by 6 points to 62% in 2041 and the province as a whole and the rest of the province, which are expected to drop 7 and 9 points respectively to 59% and 58% over the same period. At the same time, the demographic weight of the 65+ age group will increase by 8.5 points from nearly 19% in 2016 to 27% in 2041, roughly equivalent to the 8.4-point increase to 26% expected for the province, and greater than the 7-point increase to 23% forecast for Montréal. The proportion of seniors in the rest of the province is expected to reach 30.5% in 2041, up 10.4% from 2016.

This increase in the demographic weight of seniors, which stands in stark contrast to the shrinking working-age population, will inevitably raise labour supply issues. This will be a persistent challenge for many companies in the Québec City area in the coming years.



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