

2006 Census Bulletin #5

Household & Family Structure in Metro Vancouver

Introduction

This bulletin provides an overview of changes in family structure and size between 1996 and 2006 and includes information on:

- ◆ The structure and composition of family households across Metro Vancouver;
- ◆ Changes in family household size and type; and,
- ◆ Changes in non-family households.

Households¹ in Metro Vancouver

Based on the 2006 Census, there were 817,255 households living in Metro Vancouver. This represents an increase of 18% between 1996 and 2006. Table 1 shows the general distribution of households by type. As shown in Table 1, one family households make up approximately 64% of all households across the region while non-family households account for approximately 33% of the total. Multi-family households, in turn, represent approximately 3% of all households across the region.

Table 1: Households by Type in Metro Vancouver Municipalities, 2006

Municipality	Total Households	One Family Households (%)		Multi-Family Households (%)		Non-Family Households (%)		Persons per Household
		Households	(%)	Households	(%)	Households	(%)	
Anmore	535	450	84%	20	4%	65	12%	3.3
Belcarra	260	220	85%	0	0%	40	15%	2.6
Bowen Island	1,340	985	74%	30	2%	330	25%	2.5
Burnaby	78,035	50,120	64%	2,850	4%	25,055	32%	2.6
Coquitlam	41,245	29,735	72%	1,205	3%	10,305	25%	2.8
Delta	33,550	25,190	75%	1,320	4%	7,040	21%	2.9
Electoral Area A	4,500	2,720	60%	40	1%	1,740	39%	2.3
Langley City	10,570	6,120	58%	105	1%	4,345	41%	2.2
Langley Township	33,335	25,530	77%	715	2%	7,090	21%	2.8
Lions Bay	515	425	83%	0	0%	90	17%	2.5
Maple Ridge	24,935	18,395	74%	580	2%	5,955	24%	2.7
New Westminister	27,050	14,545	54%	505	2%	12,000	44%	2.1
North Vancouver City	21,350	11,815	55%	230	1%	9,305	44%	2.1
North Vancouver District	29,750	22,810	77%	495	2%	6,440	22%	2.8
Pitt Meadows	5,820	4,280	74%	135	2%	1,400	24%	2.7
Port Coquitlam	18,700	13,900	74%	520	3%	4,285	23%	2.8
Port Moody	10,130	7,695	76%	195	2%	2,240	22%	2.7
Richmond	61,430	44,175	72%	2,855	5%	14,400	23%	2.8
Surrey	131,135	92,805	71%	8,840	7%	29,490	22%	3.0
Vancouver	253,385	130,725	52%	7,155	3%	115,495	46%	2.2
West Vancouver	16,840	11,695	69%	175	1%	4,965	29%	2.5
White Rock	9,515	4,855	51%	80	1%	4,580	48%	1.9
Metro Vancouver	817,225	521,060	64%	28,170	3%	267,995	33%	2.6

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

¹ **Household** - refers to a person or a group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada. It may consist of a family group (census family) with or without other persons, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, of a group of unrelated persons or of one person living alone.



In comparing the results from 1996 with 2006, the most significant change has been in the number of multi-family households. During the period from 1996 to 2006, the number of multi-family households increased by 43% or 8,500 households. This change can be attributed to individual and household preferences as well as potential affordability considerations.

Family Structure

Statistics Canada defines a census family as a married couple (with or without children), a couple living common-law, or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. With the changes introduced in 2006, a couple may be of opposite or same sex. In addition, children in a census family can include the traditional family arrangements as well as non-traditional arrangements such as grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

The 2006 Census reported 580,120 census families across Metro Vancouver. This represents an increase of 102,245 census families between 1996 and 2006. Table 2 shows the general distribution of census families by municipality including changes in the number of census families between 1996 and 2006.

Table 2: Census Families in Metro Vancouver, 1996 - 2006

Municipality	Census Families 1996	Census Families 2001	Census Families 2006	5 Year Change		10 Year Change	
				Absolute	(%)	Absolute	(%)
Anmore	265	365	490	125	34%	225	85%
Belcarra	210	220	220	0	0%	10	5%
Bowen Island *	n/a	905	1,040	135	15%	n/a	n/a
Burnaby	46,225	52,155	56,035	3,880	7%	9,810	21%
Coquitlam	27,745	31,385	32,185	800	3%	4,440	16%
Delta	26,660	27,570	27,995	425	2%	1,335	5%
Electoral Area A *	n/a	1,875	2,805	930	50%	n/a	n/a
Langley City	6,050	6,315	6,330	15	0%	280	5%
Langley Township	22,575	24,680	26,975	2,295	9%	4,400	19%
Lions Bay	430	430	425	-5	-1%	-5	-1%
Maple Ridge	15,390	17,795	19,570	1,775	10%	4,180	27%
New Westminster	12,190	13,920	15,580	1,660	12%	3,390	28%
North Vancouver City	10,495	11,720	12,270	550	5%	1,775	17%
North Vancouver District	22,780	23,550	23,815	265	1%	1,035	5%
Pitt Meadows	3,775	4,195	4,565	370	9%	790	21%
Port Coquitlam	12,975	14,415	14,960	545	4%	1,985	15%
Port Moody	5,945	6,905	8,090	1,185	17%	2,145	36%
Richmond	40,570	46,015	50,225	4,210	9%	9,655	24%
Surrey	84,080	97,875	111,760	13,885	14%	27,680	33%
Vancouver	119,110	134,380	145,605	11,225	8%	26,495	22%
West Vancouver	11,585	11,865	12,065	200	2%	480	4%
White Rock	4,675	4,865	5,015	150	3%	340	7%
Metro Vancouver	477,875	535,255	580,120	44,865	8%	102,245	21%

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996, 2006 Census

Note: Bowen Island, incorporated in 1999. The geographic area of Electoral Area A has changed since the 1996 Census.

As shown in Table 2, the growth in family households is not uniform across the region. For example, some municipalities such as Port Moody, Surrey, New Westminster and Maple Ridge reported significant increases in the number of census families while others such as Belcarra, Delta, the City of Langley, the District of North Vancouver and the City of West Vancouver reported much lower rates of growth during the same time period. These changes have important implications in terms of future planning for schools, parks, day care and recreation centres as well as other services and amenities which support family well-being and healthy childhood development.

Family Type

Table 3 shows the general distribution of census families by family type including couples with children, couples with no children and lone parent families. While couples with children represented nearly half of all census families (49%), the findings in Table 3 show that there can be a significant level of diversity in the structure and composition of census families across the region.

In some municipalities such as White Rock, Lions Bay, Belcarra, Bowen Island and the City of New Westminister, couples without children tended to be more prevalent when compared to other communities as well as Metro Vancouver as a whole. In other communities such as the City of North Vancouver, Langley City and Burnaby lone parent families tended to be more prevalent.

Table 3: Census Families by Family Type in Metro Vancouver, 2006

Municipality	No. of Census Families, 2006	Couple, no children		Couple, with children		Lone Parent Family	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Metro Vancouver	580,120	207,650	36%	284,355	49%	88,115	15%
Anmore	490	160	33%	285	58%	50	10%
Belcarra	220	105	48%	100	45%	0	0%
Bowen Island	1,040	480	46%	460	44%	100	10%
Burnaby	56,035	19,115	34%	27,640	49%	9,285	17%
Coquitlam	32,185	9,980	31%	17,490	54%	4,710	15%
Delta	27,995	9,700	35%	14,735	53%	3,560	13%
Greater Vancouver A	2,805	1,015	36%	1,430	51%	360	13%
Langley City	6,330	2,535	40%	2,545	40%	1,240	20%
Langley Township	26,975	10,000	37%	13,610	50%	3,360	12%
Lions Bay	425	225	53%	200	47%	0	0%
Maple Ridge	19,570	6,910	35%	9,735	50%	2,915	15%
New Westminister	15,580	6,695	43%	6,280	40%	2,605	17%
North Vancouver City	12,270	5,000	41%	4,800	39%	2,470	20%
North Vancouver District	23,815	8,025	34%	12,605	53%	3,175	13%
Pitt Meadows	4,565	1,665	36%	2,335	51%	570	12%
Port Coquitlam	14,960	4,535	30%	8,055	54%	2,370	16%
Port Moody	8,090	2,725	34%	4,270	53%	1,090	13%
Richmond	50,225	15,720	31%	26,945	54%	7,560	15%
Surrey	111,760	37,465	34%	58,035	52%	16,260	15%
Vancouver	145,605	57,175	39%	64,830	45%	23,610	16%
West Vancouver	12,065	4,895	41%	5,745	48%	1,425	12%
White Rock	5,015	2,725	54%	1,515	30%	770	15%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

The 2006 Census also reported an increase in common law couples as well as an increase in male-led single parent family households. Across Metro Vancouver, in 2006 married couples represented approximately 88% of all couples while common-law couples represented approximately 12% of the total. The 2006 Census also identified same-sex married couples for the first time. Based on the findings reported in the 2006 Census, there were approximately 4,465 same-sex couples enumerated in Metro Vancouver in 2006. In comparing the 1996 data with the 2006 data, the data suggests that there was an increase of almost 22,000 lone parent family households across the region between 1996 and 2006. Lone parent families increased by 15,310 families between 1996 and 2001, then increased by 6,255 families between 2001 and 2006.

Family Size

Table 4 shows the distribution of census families across different household sizes. Of the 580,120 census families, two-person families accounted for approximately 45% of the total. Two person family households can include couples without children as well as lone parent families. Larger family households (4+) also accounted for approximately 32% of all census families in 2006.

Table 4: Census Families by Size in Metro Vancouver, 2006

Municipality	Census Families	2-person Families	3-person Families	4-person Families	5+ person Families
Anmore	490	36%	13%	32%	19%
Belcarra	220	50%	18%	30%	0%
Bowen Island *	1,040	50%	22%	23%	5%
Burnaby	56,035	45%	26%	22%	8%
Coquitlam	32,185	40%	24%	27%	9%
Delta	27,995	42%	22%	26%	10%
Electoral Area A *	2,805	43%	30%	21%	6%
Langley City	6,330	53%	21%	18%	7%
Langley Township	26,975	44%	21%	23%	11%
Lions Bay	425	53%	20%	22%	4%
Maple Ridge	19,570	43%	22%	25%	10%
New Westminster	15,580	54%	22%	18%	5%
North Vancouver City	12,270	54%	24%	17%	5%
North Vancouver District	23,815	41%	22%	27%	9%
Pitt Meadows	4,565	45%	23%	23%	9%
Port Coquitlam	14,960	39%	24%	27%	9%
Port Moody	8,090	42%	24%	26%	8%
Richmond	50,225	41%	27%	24%	8%
Surrey	111,760	42%	22%	24%	12%
Vancouver	145,605	50%	23%	20%	7%
West Vancouver	12,065	48%	20%	23%	9%
White Rock	5,015	65%	19%	13%	4%
Metro Vancouver	580,120	45%	23%	23%	9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Non-Family Households or Persons not in Census Families

As noted in Table 1 at the beginning of this bulletin, non-family households account for approximately one-third of all households across Metro Vancouver. Statistics Canada defines a **non-family household** as consisting of either of one person living alone or of two or more persons who share a dwelling, but do not constitute a family. As noted in Table 5, there were 267,995 non-family household across Metro Vancouver in 2006. This represents a net increase of more than 31,355 households between 1996 and 2006 with the greatest change being in the number of single person non-family households. It should also be noted that the change in reporting of same sex couples in 2006 could have contributed to the drop in the number of 2 person non-family households.

Table 5: Occupied Households by Household Type in Metro Vancouver, 1996 - 2006

Household Type	1996	2001	2006	5 Year Change number	5 Year Change (%)	10 Year Change number	10 Year Change (%)
Total - Occupied Private Households	692,960	758,175	817,225	59,050	8%	124,265	18%
One-family Households	436,660	483,330	521,060	37,730	8%	84,400	19%
Multi-family Households	19,655	24,750	28,170	3,420	14%	8,515	43%
Non-family Households	236,640	250,630	267,995	17,365	7%	31,355	13%
(1 person non-family households)	186,800	212,600	232,550	19,950	9%	45,750	24%
(2+ persons non-family households)	49,840	38,030	35,445	-2,585	-7%	-14,395	-29%

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2006 Census

The growing number of single person non-family households has important implications in terms of housing affordability as well as future housing demand. In addition, it is important to note that as the population continues to age, it is likely that the number of single person non-family households will continue to increase.

Table 6 shows the general composition of non-family households in 2006. Based on the findings captured in Table 6, it appears that the majority of non-family households (87%) were single person households while households of 2 or more unattached individuals represented approximately 13% of the total in 2006. The findings set out in Table 6 also suggest that there is a significant level of variation in the number and percentage of non-family households across the region. For example, in municipalities such as White Rock, Vancouver, New Westminister, Langley City and the City of North Vancouver, non-family households accounted for more than 40% of the total.

Table 6: Persons Not In a Census Family in Metro Vancouver, 2006

Municipality	Total Households	Persons in Non-Family Households		Persons in Non-Family 1-Person Hshld		Persons in Non-Family 2+ Person Hshld	
		Households	(%)	Households	(%)	Households	(%)
Anmore	535	65	12%	60	11%	5	1%
Belcarra	260	40	15%	40	15%	0	0%
Bowen Island	1,340	330	25%	300	22%	30	2%
Burnaby	78,035	25,055	32%	21,315	27%	3,740	5%
Coquitlam	41,245	10,305	25%	9,075	22%	1,230	3%
Delta	33,550	7,040	21%	6,465	19%	575	2%
Electoral Area A	4,500	1,740	39%	1,430	32%	310	7%
Langley City	10,570	4,345	41%	3,920	37%	425	4%
Langley Township	33,335	7,090	21%	6,360	19%	730	2%
Lions Bay	515	90	17%	90	17%	0	0%
Maple Ridge	24,935	5,955	24%	5,280	21%	675	3%
New Westminister	27,050	12,000	44%	10,700	40%	1,300	5%
North Vancouver City	21,350	9,305	44%	8,260	39%	1,045	5%
North Vancouver District	29,750	6,440	22%	5,755	19%	685	2%
Pitt Meadows	5,820	1,400	24%	1,200	21%	200	3%
Port Coquitlam	18,700	4,285	23%	3,760	20%	525	3%
Port Moody	10,130	2,240	22%	1,985	20%	255	3%
Richmond	61,430	14,400	23%	12,620	21%	1,780	3%
Surrey	131,135	29,490	22%	25,595	20%	3,895	3%
Vancouver	253,385	115,495	46%	97,695	39%	17,800	7%
West Vancouver	16,840	4,965	29%	4,720	28%	245	1%
White Rock	9,515	4,580	48%	4,265	45%	315	3%
Metro Vancouver	817,225	267,995	33%	232,135	28%	35,860	4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Note: Non-family households means not a couple or lone-parent family, such as a single person living alone or with roommate(s).

Conclusions and Observations

While the majority of households across Metro Vancouver live in census families, the findings from the 2006 Census draw attention to the significant level of diversity across the region. In looking at changes between 1996 and 2006, the findings suggest that the traditional family unit has continued to evolve and change with a growing number of single parent family households and non-family households across the region. Likewise, there appears to be a growing number of larger family and multi-family households in some municipalities. The changing structure and composition of family households has important implications in terms of future housing demand as well as in terms of the related community infrastructure and amenity requirements.