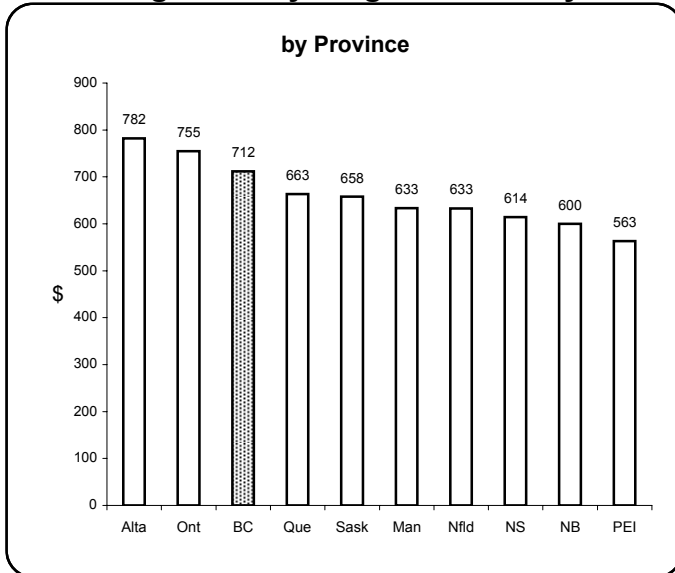
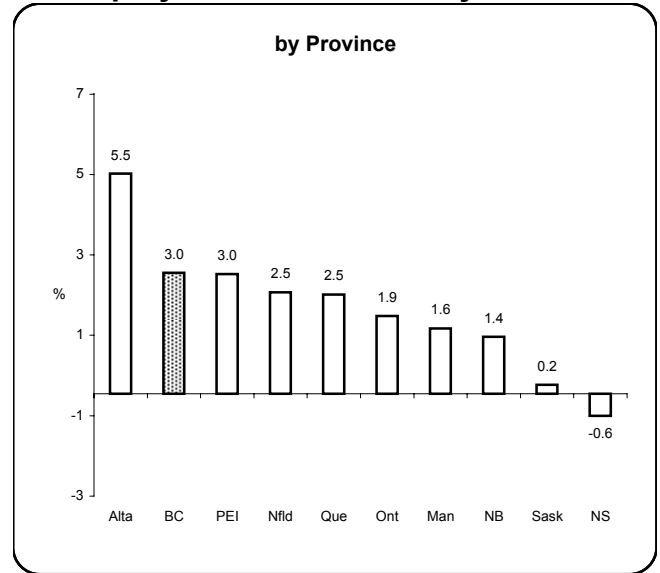


Earnings & Employment Trends ♦ May 2006

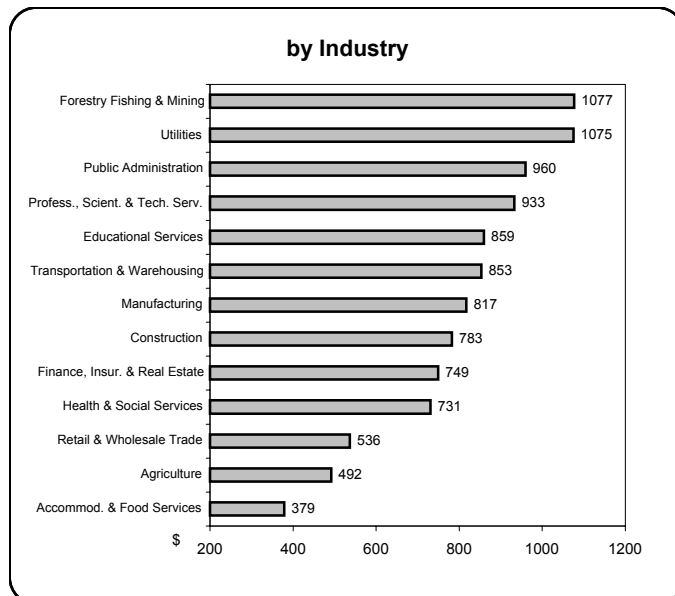
Average Weekly Wage Rate* - May 2006



Employment Growth* - May 2006

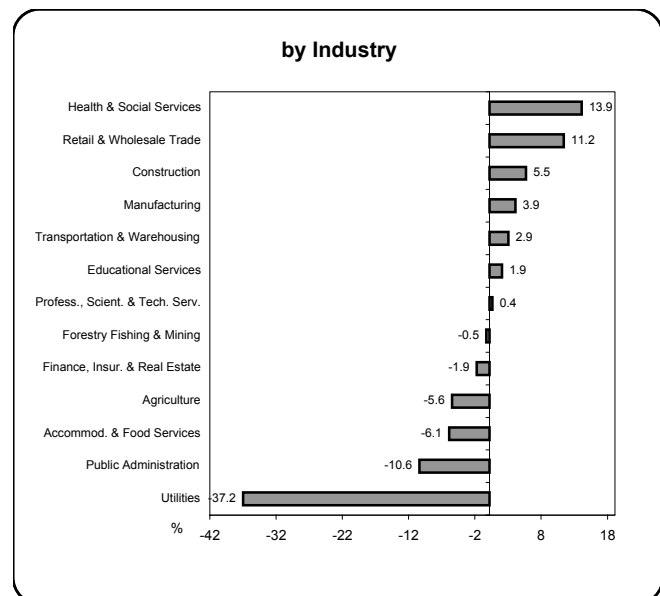


by Industry



* Latest 12 month average

by Industry



* Month over same month previous year (unadjusted)

Prepared by: BC STATS

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

Feature Article: Highlights: Labour Market Characteristics of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population in BC - Annual 2005/06



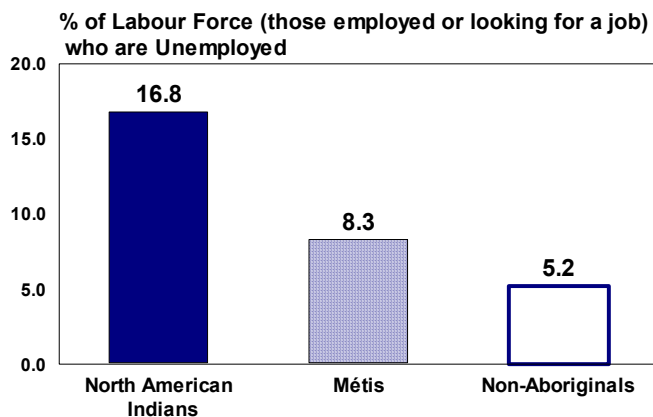
Highlights: Labour Market Characteristics of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population in British Columbia

For the 12 month period April 2005 to March 2006

Since April 2004, Statistics Canada has been collecting data through the monthly Labour Force Survey on the labour market status of Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve in the four western provinces. In order to get more reliable information for the British Columbia component of the survey, the province of British Columbia sponsored an increased sample which was phased in from October 2004 until March 2005. From April 2005 to March 2006, the survey continued monthly at its maximum level of respondents. Thus, for that 12 month period, the most reliable labour market data covering a full year¹ was produced on the off-reserve North American Indian and Métis populations living in BC. For this reason, BC STATS decided to release a summary of the data for this unconventional time period.

The expanded sample of Aboriginal peoples in the Labour Force Survey has made it possible to provide estimates of their labour market characteristics at 3 sub-provincial areas of the province; 1) the Large Metropolitan Areas of Vancouver, Victoria, Abbotsford and Kelowna; 2) the South, excluding the large metropolitan areas; and 3) the North. [To view the geography of these three regions click here.](#) There are also tabulations of where the First Nations, who live off-reserve, reside in the province by First Nations Groups and by Band. [To view the place of residency of First Nations/Band Members who live off-reserve click here.](#)

The Unemployment Rate for Aboriginal peoples remains significantly higher than for non-Aboriginal people. The pattern seen in this chart is typical of the ethnic groups' relative labour market successes.



In this chart of comparative unemployment rates from the LFS, the inequity between the Aboriginal Groups and non-Aboriginals is indicative of the profile revealed by Census data over the years. The relative success in the labour market of North American Indians, Métis and non-Aboriginal people follows a very consistent pattern in all the standard measures used to measure labour market success - unemployment rates, employment rates, wage rates, occupation distribution, skill levels, etc. - a pattern that shows North American Indians in BC are considerably disadvantaged compared to the non-Aboriginal population and the Métis group falls somewhere in between.

¹ Census produces far more reliable estimates but the data measures the labour market conditions for only the month of May every 5 years.

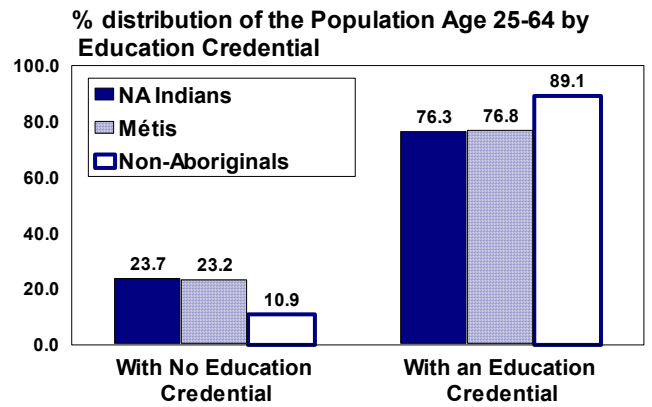
So much of the inequity can be attributed to the large discrepancies in the three groups' education attainment. Only one out of every ten prime-age persons in the non-Aboriginal population has not attained at least some form of education credential compared to one out of every four Aboriginal persons. The impression of the adjacent chart is that North American Indians and the Métis have very similar education profiles. However that is not the case. The Métis are more polarized, showing a large proportion without a credential but among those with a credential, the level of their credential is higher.

Across the whole population, persons who finish high school and then obtain a post secondary credential are more successful in the labour market than those with only a high school diploma or a post secondary credential. Most people with a post secondary credential but no high school have obtained a post secondary credential that has minimal value in the workplace. For example it might be an Adult Basic Education certificate which is the equivalent of a grade 10 or grade 11 standing without any additional vocational skills. There is a relatively high incidence of North American Indians who are in this situation.

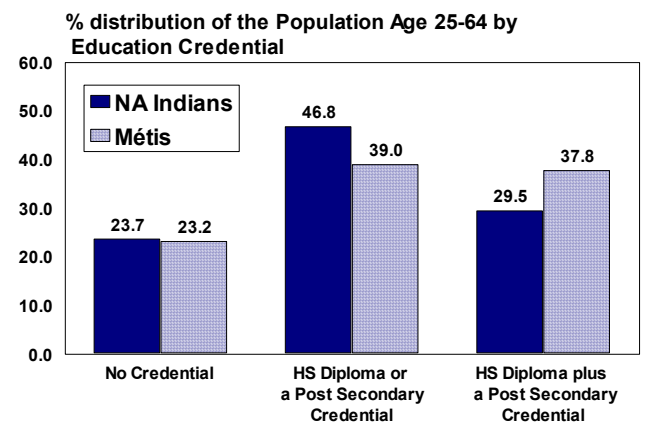
The third chart on this page shows the extent that differences in education levels dictate labour market success. Using the employment rates as the indicator of success, when the education levels are standardized² the gap in the probability of having a job is decreased significantly. In fact there is virtually no difference in employment rates between the Métis and the non-Aboriginal populations who have a high school diploma plus a post secondary credential.

² The sample size is too small to fully standardize by education level. Distortions remain because the quality of the post secondary credential varies considerably between the three groups. The non-Aboriginal group has a higher percentage with a university degree than do the Métis, and the Métis more so than North American Indians.

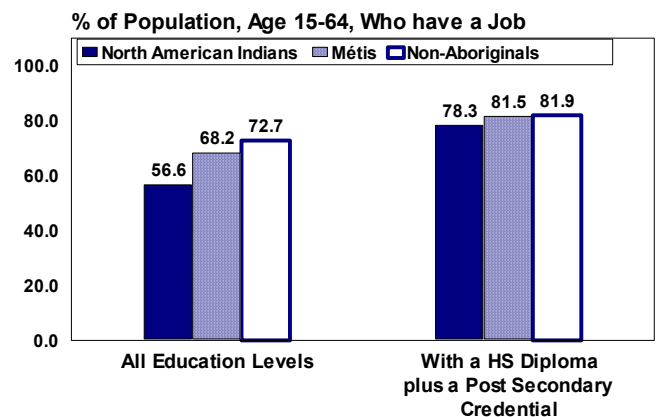
The different levels of education attainment goes a long way in explaining the inequality in the work place between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. However, according to this simple breakout, it appears as though the Métis and NA Indians have very similar education profiles.



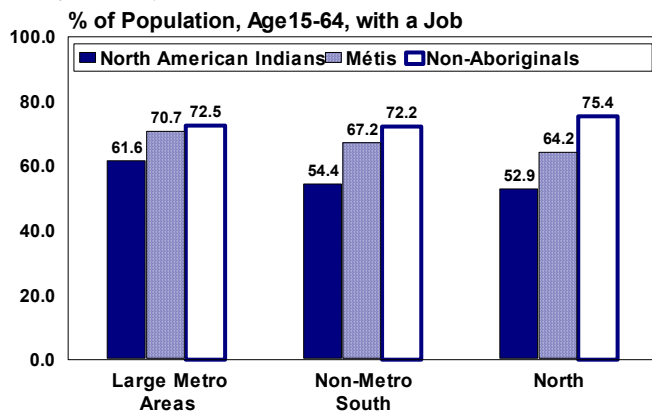
But when the type of credential is broken out, it becomes obvious that a far larger proportion of Métis have obtained both a high school diploma plus a post secondary credential.



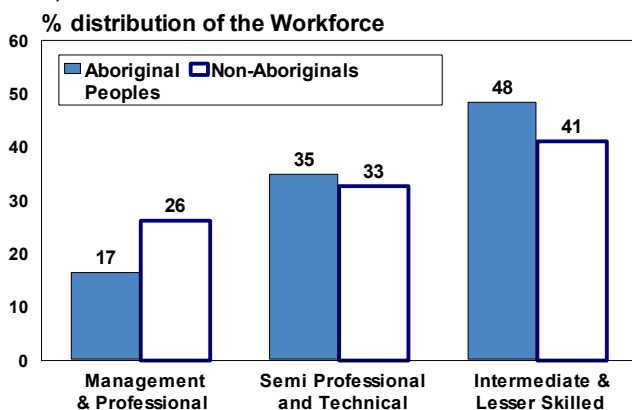
The inequity in labour market outcomes among the three groups, as measured by the proportion of the working age population who have a job, is almost eradicated when the comparison is done on the well educated population.



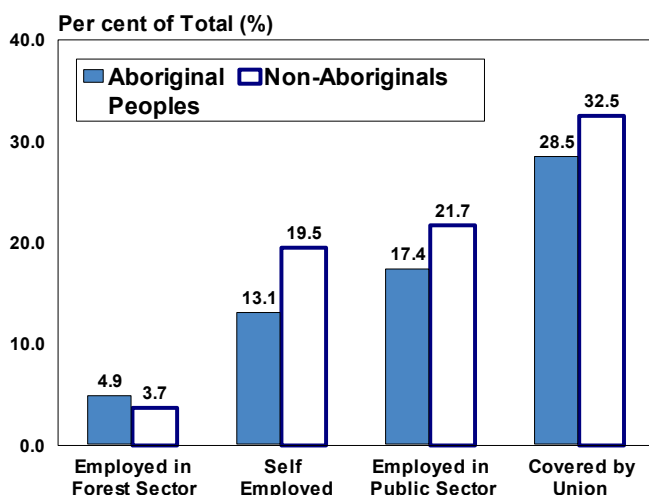
In the large metro areas of BC, the differential in the work profiles of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is not as extreme. However, the low employment rates of North American Indians indicate they are an extremely disadvantaged group throughout BC, particularly in the North.



As one would expect, given their differing levels of education attainment, Aboriginal people are under-represented in the higher skilled occupations and over-represented in the lower skilled occupations



Other Job Characteristics

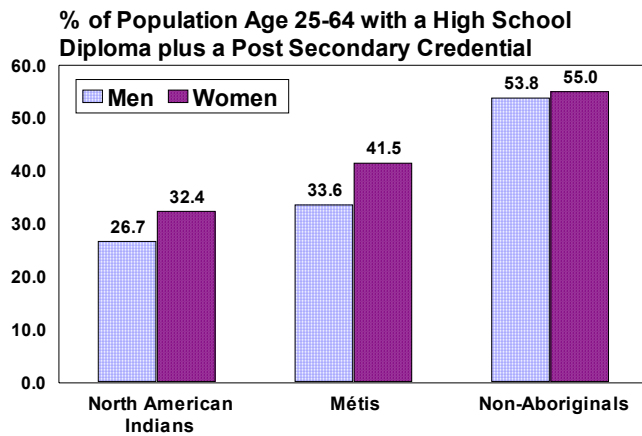


While the patterns of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal labour market inequities exist throughout the province, the difference in employment rates between North American Indians and non-Aboriginal people in Northern BC is particularly daunting. In a part of the province where three out of four prime-aged non-Aboriginal persons are able to find work, not much more than one in two (53%) North American Indians are able to do so. The Métis in the North also seem to be having problems relative to the Métis in other parts of BC as well as to the non-Aboriginals in the region. On the other hand, in the large metro areas of the province, the Métis appear to be almost as successful at getting work as the non-Aboriginal population. [Click her to view a map of the Regions.](#)

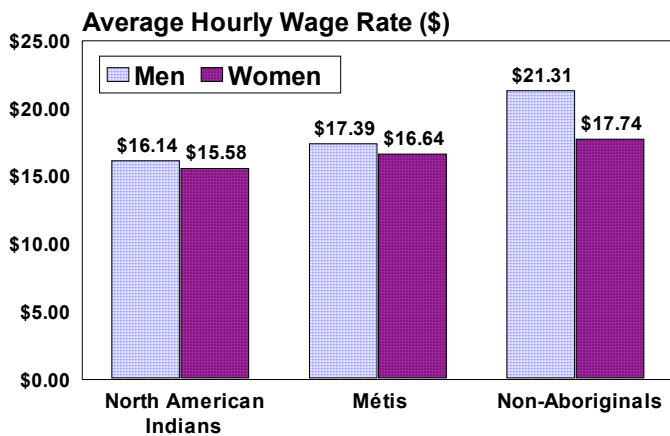
The disparity in educational attainment means the skill levels of the jobs that are available to Aboriginal people are considerably lower than those available to non-Aboriginal people. Few Aboriginal people have university degrees, so most of the professions are not accessible. Aboriginal people are more than equally represented in the Technical group of occupations, particularly in the trades. Four out of 10 of the Métis work force are in this occupational group.

Other interesting information gleaned from the data is that Aboriginal people are more likely than non-Aboriginal people to work in the forest sector; Aboriginal people show lower representation in the public sector and lower levels of unionization which both can be explained by the fact that they are less likely to work in the health and education sectors which consist primarily of unionized, public sector jobs. Relatively fewer Aboriginal people are self-employed because fewer are in the professions and the professions have the highest incidence of self-employment.

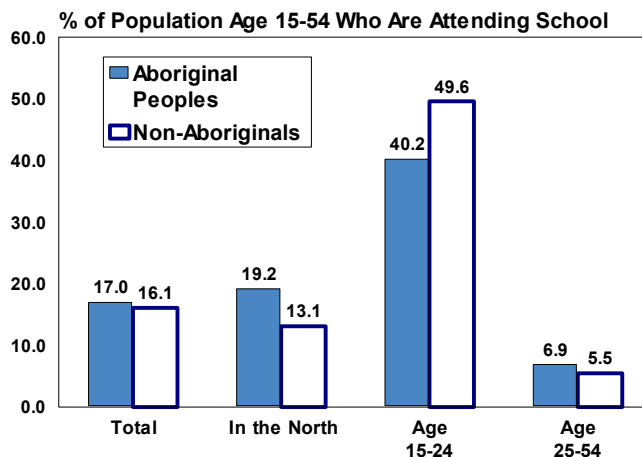
Among the Aboriginal populations, the women are significantly better educated than the men.



The fact that Aboriginal women are so much better educated than Aboriginal men probably explains why their gender wage gap is less pronounced than that for the non-Aboriginal population.



Aboriginal population over the age of 25 are more inclined to attend school than the non-Aboriginal population.



The gender differences in educational attainment are also of interest. The women in off-reserve Aboriginal communities far surpass the men in their education levels. Forty-two per cent of Métis women have completed high school plus post secondary, well ahead of the men where only 34 per cent have achieved the same level. There is considerably more equity in the education levels of men and women in the non-Aboriginal community.

The relative wage rates between the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal groups reflect the relative education levels of their populations. Thus it is not surprising that non-Aboriginals earn so much more than Aboriginals. However, the gender difference in wages between the groups is quite interesting.

Among the non-Aboriginal community, men earn \$3.57 more than women while there is a minimal difference between Aboriginal male and female wage rates (North American Indian men earn only \$.56 more per hour). But that smaller male/female wage gap in the Aboriginal communities is not indicative of greater gender equality, as the Aboriginal women's education levels are so much higher than the men's. When their differences are standardized by education levels, the wage gaps are as pronounced as they are among non-Aboriginal people.

Hope for the future comes from the fact that Aboriginal people are returning to school in their adult years. The percentages appear fairly small at 7 per cent but that is on a yearly basis. If 6 per cent of all Aboriginal adults complete a post secondary credential each year, their education attainment levels could improve very quickly.