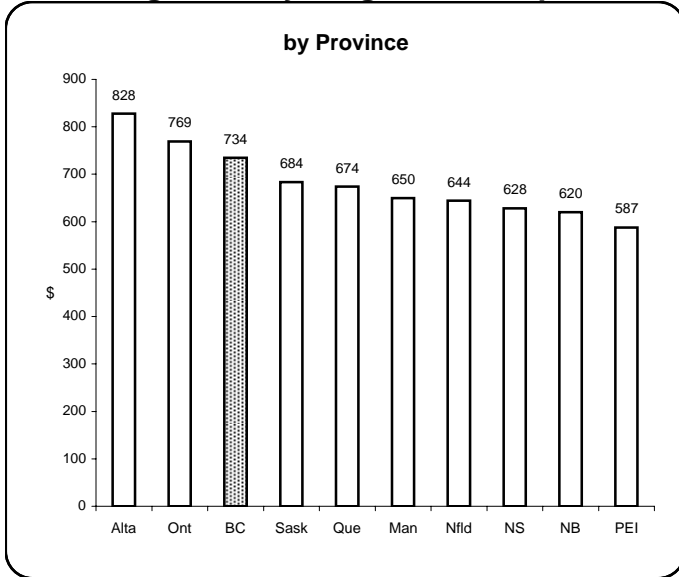
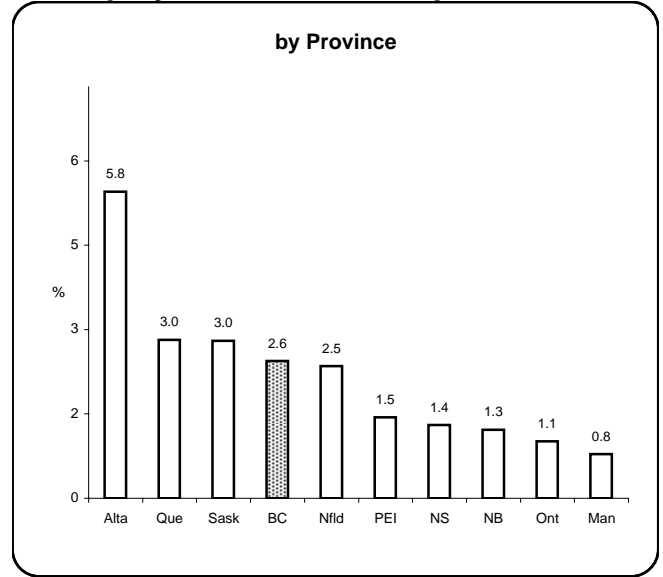


Earnings & Employment Trends ♦ April 2007

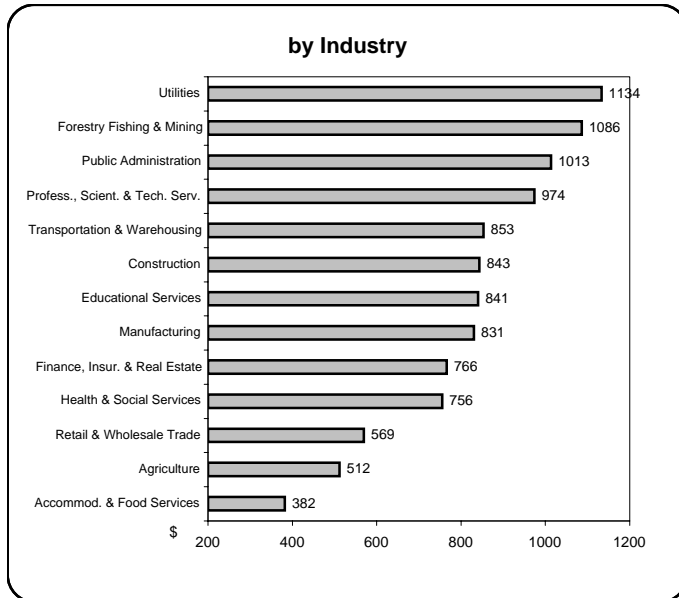
Average Weekly Wage Rate* - April 2007



Employment Growth* - April 2007

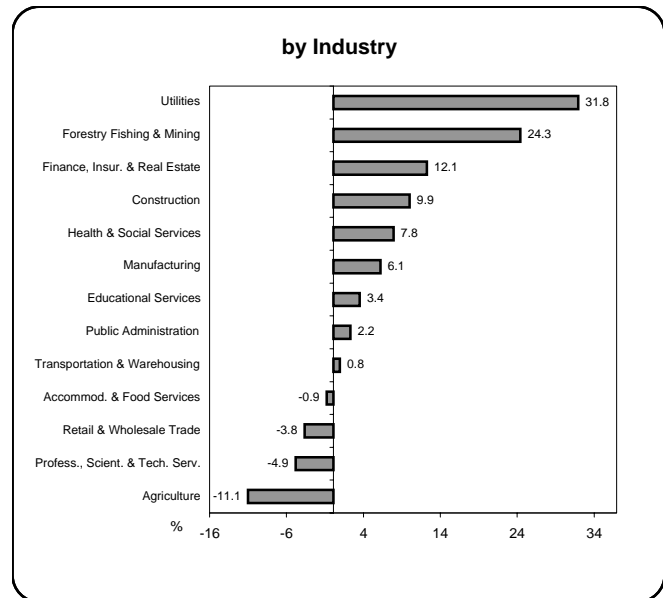


by Industry



* 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: Labour Market Characteristics of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population in BC

Labour Market Characteristics of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Population in BC

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 British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. To get more reliable information for the British Columbia component of the survey, the Province sponsored an increased sample, which was phased in over six months starting in October 2004. We now have almost three full years of annual data covering the off-reserve First Nations¹ and Métis populations living in BC. This paper presents highlights from that data.²

Aboriginal Population in BC

According to the 2001 Census, 170,025 British Columbians identified themselves as Aboriginal—4.4 percent of the total population. The Aboriginal population is made up of those persons who self-identified with at least one Aboriginal group (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) or who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian (as defined by the Indian Act of Canada) or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation.

Employment and Labour Force Participation

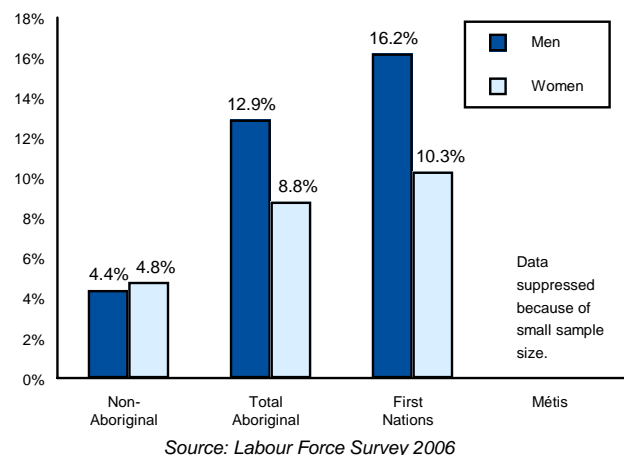
In a time when the British Columbia labour market has been performing extremely well, with an average unemployment rate of 4.8 percent in 2006,³ the Aboriginal unemployment rate still remains

more than double that of the non-Aboriginal population—10.8 percent. First Nations people show the highest incidence of unemployment; among the working aged population, the unemployment rate of 13.1 percent is more than three times that of the non-Aboriginal population (4.6 percent).

The Métis people are finding work more easily than First Nations people, but their unemployment rate, at 7.4 percent, is considerably higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population (4.6 percent).

While the unemployment rates for non-Aboriginal men and women have been very similar in the last year (4.4 percent and 4.8 percent respectively), Aboriginal men appear to have more difficulty in finding work than Aboriginal women, particularly First Nations men.

Aboriginal men have higher unemployment rates than Aboriginal women



Overall, the labour force participation rates for non-Aboriginal persons have been stable since 2004; however, rates are decreasing slightly for Aboriginal men and increasing among Aboriginal women. The

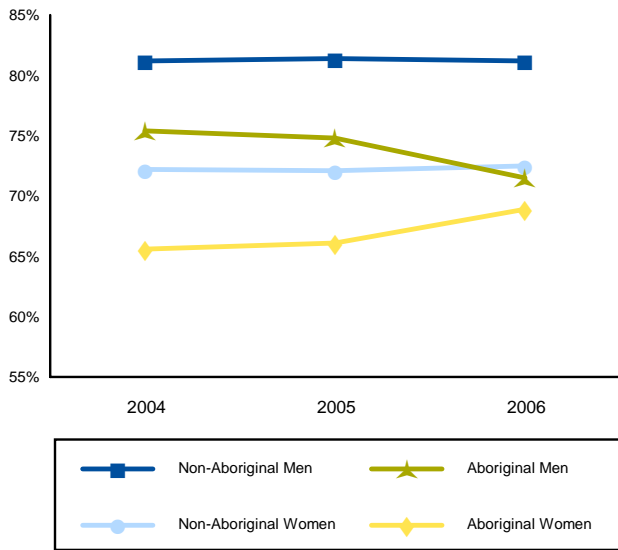
¹ First Nations as used here is synonymous with North American Indians.

² The 2004 annual average is based on April 2004 to December 2004.

³ Among the working aged population (15 and over).

drop in the labour force participation rate for Aboriginal men is because their population is growing but the number of men in the labour force has not kept pace. The increase in the participation rate for Aboriginal women is a result of more women joining the labour force at a faster rate than the population is growing.

The labour force participation rates of Aboriginal men aged 15-64 are declining



Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

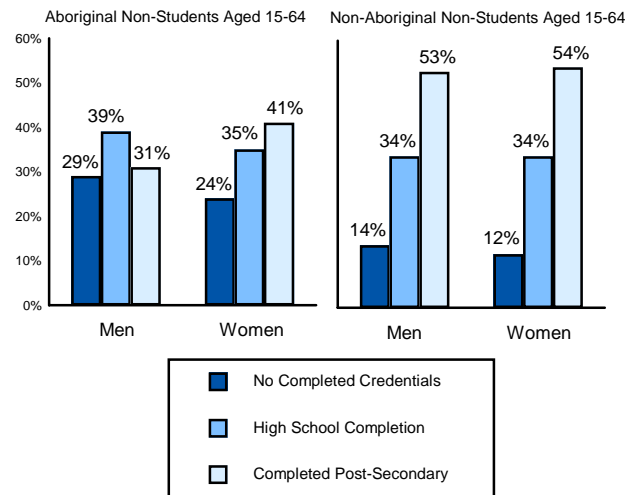
Education

The large gap in educational attainment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people has been reduced, but there is still considerable room for improvement. In 2006, more than a quarter (27 percent) of the prime working aged (15-64) Aboriginal people in BC, excluding those who were still studying, did not have a high school diploma or a post-secondary credential. Only 6 percent of the Aboriginal population had a university degree, compared with 23 percent of the non-Aboriginal population.

The gender differences in educational attainment are also of interest. Aboriginal women living off-reserve have higher education levels than men. Seventy-six percent of Aboriginal women have completed high

school or post-secondary education (including a university degree) compared with 71 percent of Aboriginal men. Comparable rates for the non-Aboriginal population are 88 percent and 86 percent for women and men respectively. Additionally, 23 percent of non-Aboriginal women and 22 percent of non-Aboriginal men have a university degree compared with 8 percent and 5 percent of Aboriginal women and men.

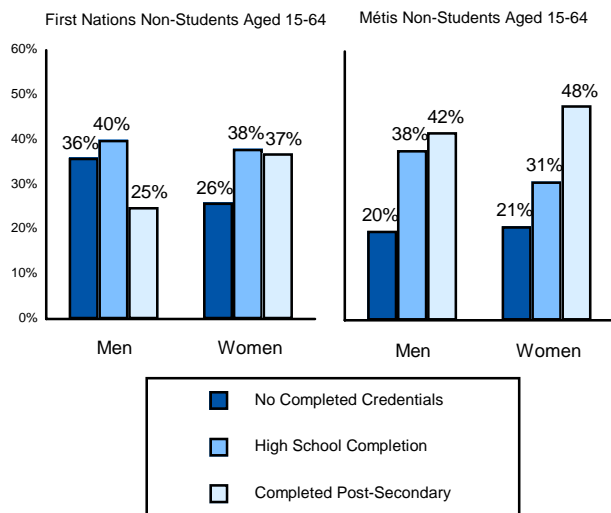
The educational attainment of Aboriginal women is higher than that of Aboriginal men



Note: Excludes anyone currently attending school. Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

First Nations women living off-reserve have higher education levels than First Nations men. Seventy-five percent of First Nations women have completed high school or post-secondary education (including a university degree) compared with 65 percent of First Nations men. As shown below, Métis women are more likely to have completed post-secondary studies than their male counterparts—48 percent and 42 percent for women and men respectively.

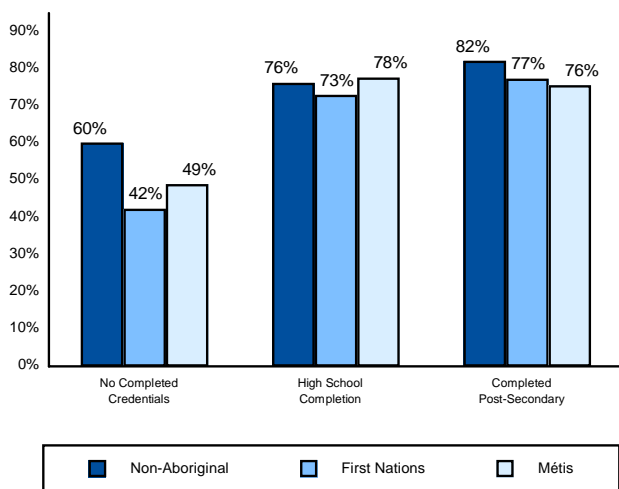
Métis women are more likely to have completed post-secondary education than Métis men



Note: Excludes anyone currently attending school.
Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

When you compare the employment rates⁴ between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who have completed post-secondary education, many of the differences in labour market outcomes decrease. It becomes very clear that improving education levels of Aboriginal individuals makes a difference in their labour market outcomes.

The gap in employment rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people varies depending on education levels



Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

⁴ The employment rate (or the employment/population ratio) is the number of persons employed expressed as a percentage of the population 15-64.

Aboriginal people are underrepresented in post-secondary education in British Columbia, but the relative number of Aboriginal people enrolling for post-secondary studies is encouraging. In 2005/06,⁵ some 290,000 domestic students were enrolled in BC’s public post-secondary college sector. Aboriginal people account for 5.1 percent (over 15,000) of the students enrolled. See the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey box for information on outcomes of Aboriginal students who attended BC’s public colleges, university colleges, institutes, or Thompson Rivers University.

Aboriginal Youth and Education

High school non-completion rates for Aboriginal youth have been a concern. In today’s environment, high school graduation is considered a minimum requirement for most jobs. In 2006, 21 percent of non-Aboriginal youth (15-24), excluding those who were still studying, had not yet completed a credential—either a high school graduation or a post-secondary credential—compared with 35 percent of Aboriginal youth.

On the positive side, more Aboriginal young women (15-24) have completed high school or some post-secondary than ever before. In 2006, 69 percent of young Aboriginal women had completed a high school credential and or post-secondary education—compared with 50 percent in 2004.⁶

Occupations and Industry

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. Only 6 percent of Aboriginal individuals have a university degree, so

⁵ Academic year Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 (source: BC Post Secondary Central Data Warehouse <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/datawarehouse/>)

⁶ The 2004 annual average is based on April 2004 to December 2004.

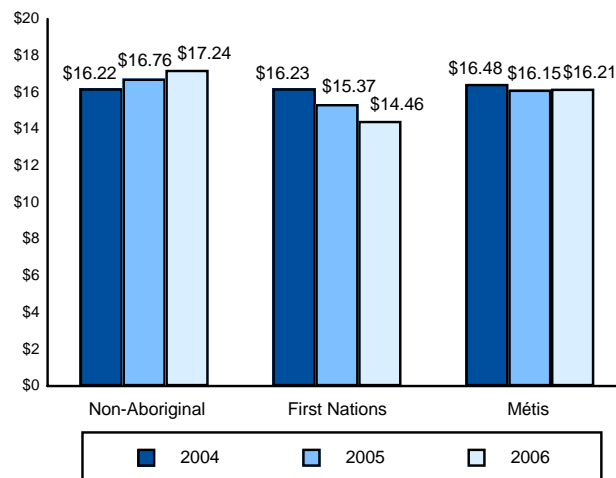
a lot of professions are not available. Overall, the top three occupations for Aboriginal people are sales and service occupations (29 percent), trades, transport and equipment operators (21 percent) and business, finance and administration (15 percent). These three account for almost two-thirds of the off-reserve Aboriginal labour force in BC. A quarter of the Métis workforce are employed as trades, transport and equipment operators.

Other interesting information gathered from the Labour Force Survey data are that First Nations people are twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to work in the forest sector. The Aboriginal population shows lower representation in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector and the education sector. Aboriginal people have lower levels of unionization. Relatively fewer Aboriginal people are self-employed because fewer are in the professions and the professions have the highest incidence of self-employment.

Wages

Aboriginal employees earn less on average than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. For example in 2006, Aboriginal employees with a high school credential earned \$15.11 per hour compared to \$17.24 per hour for non-Aboriginal employees. Métis individuals, who have completed a high school diploma, are doing slightly better than their First Nations counterparts (\$16.21 versus 14.46 per hour).

The hourly average wages for those with high school completion but no post-secondary education are declining for Aboriginal people



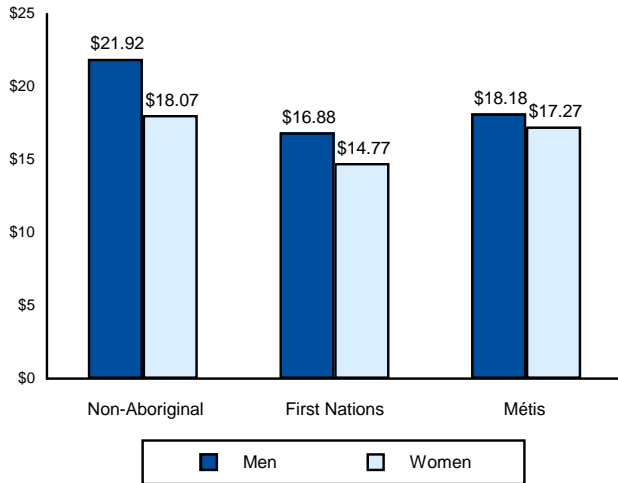
Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

There does remain a differential in wages for those who have completed high school plus post-secondary but that is explainable. All post-secondary credentials are not of equal value and as was already shown, relatively more of the non-Aboriginal population have university degrees. Among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples who are working, the hours spent on the job are fairly similar at 36.4 versus 36.9 average hours per week, respectively.

Among the non-Aboriginal population, men earn \$3.85 more per hour than women. In Aboriginal communities the hourly wage rates between men and women are much closer; for example, Métis men earn only \$.91 more per hour than women. We would expect Aboriginal women to have higher hourly wage rates based on the fact that Aboriginal women have higher levels of education but occupational choices also have a substantial impact on hourly wages. Over 90 percent of women (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) are working in the service sector where hourly wages are lower, whereas men are more likely to work in the goods-producing sector (includes: agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas, utilities, construction and manufacturing) where hourly wages are higher.

Over 40 percent of Aboriginal men are working in the goods-producing sector compared to only 8 percent of Aboriginal women.

Average hourly wage rates between Aboriginal men and women are closer than those of non-Aboriginal men and women



Source: Labour Force Survey 2006

From the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey

The BC College and Institute Student Outcomes (CISO) Survey is an annual province-wide survey conducted with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and from BC’s public colleges, university colleges, institutes, and a special purpose university. For the 2006 survey, 16,248 former students were interviewed by telephone, 9–20 months after they left their post-secondary programs. They were asked to evaluate their educational experience and to talk about their employment outcomes, further education, and personal development. Former students who took baccalaureate programs at BC’s public colleges, university colleges, and institutes were not included in the survey.

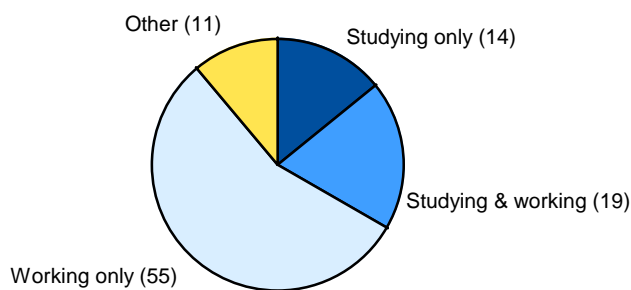
In 2006, 4.6 percent of those surveyed identified themselves as Aboriginal. Sixty-three percent of Aboriginal former students surveyed in 2006 attended colleges, 24 percent had been in university colleges, and 13 percent were from institutes. Just under 50 percent of all Aboriginal respondents were enrolled in one of three program areas: Arts and Sciences, Business and Management, and Construction and Precision Production. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents made similar choices.

Aboriginal former students were more likely to be female and older compared with other survey respondents. In 2006, 61 percent of Aboriginal former students were female, compared with 53 percent of non-Aboriginal former students. Aboriginal former students also tended to be older, with a median age of 28; the median age of non-Aboriginal former students was 24.

In 2006, respondents were asked about their family status. Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal respondents to be part of a couple with children—22 percent and 14 percent respectively. In addition, Aboriginal students were three times more likely to be single parents.

Aboriginal former students were less likely to be employed than non-Aboriginal students—75 percent and 80 percent respectively. Aboriginal former students (9.7 percent) were more likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (6.2 percent) to be unemployed. At the time of the survey, a third of Aboriginal respondents reported they were studying—19 percent were studying while they worked; 14 percent were studying only. Forty percent of non-Aboriginal students were studying at the time of the survey.

At the time of the survey, 75 percent of the Aboriginal respondents were working



Source: CISO Survey 2006

Former students surveyed were asked to report the amount of government student loans they received while they took their college, university college, or institute program. Over 30 percent of respondents said they had received a government student loan while taking their post-secondary studies. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students received government student loans to fund their education at about the same rate—33 and 32 percent respectively. Aboriginal former students’ median debt from government student loans was no different than that of non-Aboriginal respondents—the median government student loan amount was \$10,000.

Aboriginal former students were less likely to receive free or subsidized room and board from family, friends, or other sources—28 percent, compared with 42 percent for non-Aboriginal respondents. Thirty-five percent of Aboriginal respondents said they had to relocate from their home communities to attend their post-secondary institutions, compared with only 21 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents.

For more information on BC student outcomes, please see <http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/>