

# **DIVERSITY AND IMMIGRATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

## **NEW WESTMINSTER**

### **A PROFILE BASED ON THE 2006 CENSUS**

DATE: 15/DECEMBER/2008

**PREPARED FOR:**

KATHY KNIGHT, SENIOR ECONOMIST,  
IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES,  
MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

**PREPARED BY:**

SARA PARKER-TOULSON, RESEARCHER, AND  
KAROLIEN SWAAK, RESEARCHER  
KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND CITIZENS' SERVICES



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

DAWN NICKEL, PHD., DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH SERVICES,  
KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND CITIZENS' SERVICES  
PHONE: (250) 356-0378  
E-MAIL: [DAWN.NICKEL@GOV.BC.CA](mailto:DAWN.NICKEL@GOV.BC.CA)

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

### An introduction to diversity and immigration in New Westminster

This profile is a description of the major **diversity** and **immigration** trends in the city of New Westminster based on 2006 Statistics Canada census data. While not comprehensive, it offers a concise overview of a broad range of topics including languages, **ethnic ancestries**, **visible minorities**, **Aboriginal identity**, population composition, **period of immigration**, age and gender, education, and the labour market. Please note that any data cited for 2001 and 2006 are based on New Westminster's 2006 jurisdictional boundaries, whereas data for other years are based on New Westminster's boundaries at that time.

As a city within **Greater Vancouver**, New Westminster shares a number of characteristics with its neighbouring communities. It also varies from Greater Vancouver in many important ways. While New Westminster and Greater Vancouver share similar patterns of immigrant population growth proportional to total population growth, there are nearly four times as many residents who identify as Black in New Westminster. There are also a larger proportion of Aboriginal residents in New Westminster. These and other dissimilarities set New Westminster apart as a unique community that requires customized programs and services.

Throughout this profile, terms defined in the glossary are highlighted in bold the first time they appear in the text.

---

## DIVERSITY

---

### LANGUAGES

#### English is the most commonly reported home language and mother tongue in New Westminster

In the last census, a large majority of New Westminster residents (97.3%), like Greater Vancouver residents (94.8%), indicated that they were able to conduct a conversation in English. English was both the most commonly cited **home language** (81.2%) and the principal **mother tongue** (67.4%) of New Westminster residents who indicated a **single response**. These proportions are well above those of Greater Vancouver (72.7% and 57.8%, respectively) and indicate that New Westminster is primarily English speaking.

English aside, Panjabi (Punjabi) is the most widely spoken language in New Westminster, although it is significantly less prevalent than English is. In 2006, 3.2% of residents who indicated a single response reported Panjabi (Punjabi) as their home language, and 4.2% named it as their mother tongue.

English and Panjabi (Punjabi) also predominate in Greater Vancouver. A comparable but slightly higher proportion of Greater Vancouver residents reported Panjabi (Punjabi) as both their home language (4.3%) and mother tongue (5.7%) than did New Westminster residents (3.2% and 4.2%, respectively) in 2006. However, while Cantonese and **unspecified Chinese languages** were not cited in significant numbers by New Westminster residents, they were the second and third most prevalent home languages and mother tongues in Greater Vancouver, following English.

No home languages other than English and Panjabi (Punjabi) were reported in significant proportions in New Westminster, and Tagalog (Filipino) and Mandarin were the only other commonly reported mother tongues (3.1% and 2.0%, respectively).

Home language and mother tongue statistics are based on single responses. In New Westminster, 96.0% of the **total population** (immigrants and Canadian-born residents) indicated a single response for home languages and 97.0% did so for mother tongues.

### English aside, Panjabi (Punjabi) and Tagalog (Filipino) are the most common home languages and mother tongues among New Westminster immigrants

As was true of the total population, English was the most commonly reported home language and mother tongue by New Westminster immigrants who indicated a single response in 2006. 49.9% of immigrants selected it as their home language, and 21.8% selected it as their mother tongue during the census. Compared to Greater Vancouver, where 41.8% of immigrants reported English as their home language and 18.3% reported it as their mother tongue, these are somewhat higher proportions.

English aside, Panjabi (Punjabi) and Tagalog (Filipino) were the most common home languages (7.8% and 5.1%, respectively) and mother tongues (9.0% and 8.8%, respectively) among New Westminster immigrants who indicated a single response.

Home language and mother tongue statistics are based on single responses. In New Westminster, 93.3% of immigrants indicated a single response for home languages and 97.3% did so for mother tongues.

## ETHNIC ANCESTRIES

### British Isles and other North American ethnic ancestries predominate in New Westminster

When asked to specify their ethnic ancestries, Greater Vancouver residents report British Isles ancestries most often (25.0% of the total population). This is also true of New Westminster residents (29.0%). **Other North American origins** are also commonly reported in both New Westminster (11.4%) and Greater Vancouver (9.9%). Additionally, while East and Southeast Asian ethnic ancestries are common in both New Westminster and Greater Vancouver, they are nearly half as common among New Westminster residents (10.8%) than they are among Greater Vancouver residents (19.5%).

In addition to British Isles ancestries, other common European ancestries in New Westminster include Western (9.9%), Eastern (8.6%), and Southern European (6.1%). This prevalence of European ancestries, however, is more a reflection of Canada's past than suggestive of recent immigration patterns. Whereas **very recent immigration** (2001 to 2006) accounts for 27.4% of all Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants in New Westminster, only 17.6% of all European immigrants arrived during this period. More specifically, less than 7% of New Westminster's 815 Western European immigrants and less than 1% of its 1,580 U.K. immigrants landed between 2001 and 2006.

Other commonly specified ancestries in New Westminster include South Asian (5.4%), French (5.2%), and Northern European (5.0%).

All statistics on ethnic ancestries are based on **multiple ancestry responses**.

## VISIBLE MINORITIES

### Black visible minorities are the fourth most common in New Westminster

29.2% of New Westminster residents identify as belonging to a visible minority group. This is a significantly lower proportion than that of visible minorities in Greater Vancouver (41.4%).

However, New Westminster and Greater Vancouver are similar in that four of their five most prevalent visible minorities are the same: South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean minorities. The exception is Black visible minorities, which are the fourth most common in New Westminster (8.0%) and the tenth most common in Greater Vancouver (2.4%).

There are also significant proportional differences between New Westminster and Greater Vancouver's Chinese and Filipino visible minority groups. While Chinese visible minorities predominate in Greater Vancouver (43.6%), they are significantly less common in New Westminster by comparison (22%). Also, whereas 19.3% of New Westminster's visible minorities are Filipino, the proportion is considerably lower in Greater Vancouver (9.0%).

South Asian minorities make up the largest proportion of visible minorities in New Westminster (27.3%), whereas Korean minorities are the fifth most prevalent (5.9%).

Other common visible minority groups in New Westminster include Latin American (4.8% of the visible minority population), West Asian (3.2%), Japanese (2.9%), Southeast Asian (2.2%), those identifying with multiple visible minorities (2.1%), and Arab (2.0%).

## ABORIGINAL IDENTITY

### New Westminster's Aboriginal population is larger than that of Greater Vancouver

Aboriginal people make up a small proportion of New Westminster's population (3.1%) but still a larger proportion than that of Greater Vancouver as a whole (1.9%). **North American Indians** form the bulk of the Aboriginal population in New Westminster (53.4%), followed by **Métis**

(42.0%). This is similar to Greater Vancouver, where North American Indians comprise 58.3% of the Aboriginal population and Métis comprise 37.4%.

Additionally, similar proportions of Aboriginal people do not self-identify as exclusively North American Indian or Métis in New Westminster (4.6%) and Greater Vancouver (4.3%). These are Aboriginal residents who identify as **Inuit**, as being of multiple Aboriginal origins, or as not fitting into any of the listed categories.

---

## IMMIGRATION

---

### POPULATION COMPOSITION

From 2001 to 2006, increases to the immigrant population comprised 79.1% of total population growth in New Westminster

The composition of New Westminster's population changed rapidly between 1986 and 2006 due to large increases to the immigrant population, which more than doubled in size. From 1986 to 1991, increases to the immigrant population accounted for 18.8% of total population growth. From 1991 to 1996, they accounted for 66.4% of total population growth, a 47.6% increase over the previous five year period. Then, New Westminster's immigrant population growth rate went on to experience a decrease, causing the proportion of immigrant population growth to total population growth to decrease to 51.7% between 1996 and 2001. Finally, during the period from 2001 to 2006, the extent to which immigrant population growth accounted for total population growth increased again to 79.1% in New Westminster.

This trend is similar to that of Greater Vancouver during the same two decades. The extent to which increases to the immigrant population accounted for total population growth in Greater Vancouver steadily increased during the period from 1986 through to 1996, then decreased slightly, and finally increased again to total 71.5% of total population growth in 2006.

In 2006, immigrants made up 31.4% of the total population of New Westminster. This is a somewhat smaller proportion than that of immigrants in Greater Vancouver at that time (39.3%).

### PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION

**40.1% of New Westminster immigrants are recent immigrants**

Immigrants have been coming to New Westminster for a long time. In fact, 1,830 people or 10.0% of immigrant residents specified that they had immigrated to Canada prior to 1961 in 2006. This figure is larger than that of Greater Vancouver (7.7%).

**Recent immigrants** (those who have been living in Canada for less than 10 years), however, formed the largest proportion of immigrants in New Westminster (40.1%). 17.0% of immigrants had arrived between 1996 and 2000, and 23.1% had arrived between 2001 and 2006 at the time

of the census. A similar trend was present in Greater Vancouver as a whole, although a smaller proportion of Greater Vancouver's immigrant population were recent immigrants (36.1%).

In proportion to the total population of New Westminster, recent immigrants comprised 12.6% of all New Westminster residents. This is slightly lower than the proportion of recent immigrants in the total population of Greater Vancouver (14.2%).

## AGE & GENDER

### More than half of New Westminster's immigrants are working-aged adults 25 to 54

There are sizable differences between the age distribution of New Westminster's immigrants and that of its total population. Specifically, there are a larger proportion of working-aged adults and a smaller proportion of youth and children among immigrants than there are among the total population. However, it is important to keep in mind that since children born in Canada to immigrant parents are defined as **second generation Canadians**, they are not considered part of the immigrant population.

In 2006, 55.7% of New Westminster immigrants were aged 25 to 54, compared to 49.7% of the total population. Additionally, 14.4% of immigrants were aged 0 to 24, compared to 25.3% of the total population. Greater Vancouver reported a similar age distribution overall but with slightly different proportions. 52.4% of immigrants and 46.1% of the total population were aged 25 to 54, and 15.7% of immigrants and 29.8% of the total population were aged 0 to 24 in Greater Vancouver.

As was true of the immigrant population of Greater Vancouver, children aged 0 to 4 comprised the smallest age bracket among New Westminster immigrants in 2006, accounting for less than 1% of the immigrant population. Their numbers were smaller than those of elderly immigrants aged 85 and over (1.9%). This is distinct from New Westminster's total population data, in which children aged 0 to 4 accounted for 4.9% of the population.

Immigrant youth and children aged 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 also accounted for relatively small proportions of the immigrant population in relation to other age groups and total population figures (2.3% and 2.5%, respectively). These proportions are comparable to those of immigrant youth and children in these age groups in Greater Vancouver (1.7% and 3.0%, correspondingly).

Seniors aged 65 and over also made up a relatively small proportion of immigrants in New Westminster (15.9%) but slightly larger than the proportion of immigrant youth and children aged 0 to 24 (14.4%). There was also a greater proportion of seniors in New Westminster's immigrant population (15.9%) than there was in its total population (13.6%). In Greater Vancouver, seniors comprised a slightly higher proportion of the immigrant population (17.0%) and a similar proportion of the total population (12.8%).

## New Westminster's immigrant population has a higher proportion of females (52.8%) than males (47.2%)

There are a higher proportion of females (52.8%) than males (47.2%) in New Westminster's immigrant population. This is also true of New Westminster's total population, where females comprise 51.4% of residents. Female immigrants outnumber male immigrants in all but six age brackets in New Westminster, but the difference is most apparent in immigrants aged 25 to 29, 30 to 34, 80 to 84, and 85 and over. Of the few age brackets in which male immigrants outnumber female immigrants, the largest difference is found among children aged 10 to 14.

## EDUCATION

### More immigrants aged 25 to 64 have university-level credentials in New Westminster than have them in Greater Vancouver

Based on data gathered from the 25 to 64 age group, British Columbian immigrants are more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to hold university-level credentials. This trend holds true in New Westminster. 46.2% of immigrants, compared to 33.3% of the total population, hold university certificates, diplomas, or degrees in New Westminster. Immigrants also more frequently hold university-level credentials than does the total population in Greater Vancouver. However, compared to New Westminster, fewer immigrants (43.0%) and more members of the total population (37.8%) hold university certificates, diplomas, or degrees in Greater Vancouver.

By contrast, members of the total population in New Westminster are more likely to have **non-university credentials** as their highest level of education (56.2%) than are immigrants (44.6%). This is also true of Greater Vancouver, where 52.1% of the total population and 45.0% of immigrants hold non-university credentials. Additionally, compared to New Westminster, a lower proportion of the total population and a similar proportion of immigrants hold non-university credentials in Greater Vancouver.

The proportion of immigrants who have not completed high school or post-secondary education (9.2%) is slightly lower than that of the total population (10.4%) in New Westminster. In Greater Vancouver this is also true, but there is a greater difference between the proportion of immigrants (12.1%) and of the total population (10.1%) who fit into this category. Also, compared to New Westminster, a higher proportion of Greater Vancouver's immigrants and a similar proportion of its total population have not completed high school or post-secondary education.

### 38.3% of New Westminster immigrants graduated from post-secondary school in Canada

So we know that post-secondary studies are common among immigrants, but where do they normally get their education? The credentials of New Westminster's immigrants are generally from outside of Canada, most likely from their country of origin. 61.7% of New Westminster immigrants graduated from post-secondary school outside of Canada. Conversely, 38.3% completed their studies within Canada, a somewhat lower proportion than the provincial figure

(44.1%) and the Greater Vancouver figure (41.3%). Of those who did study in Canada, a large majority (87.8%) remained in British Columbia for their studies, followed by Ontario (6.1%) and Alberta (2.3%).

## LABOUR MARKET

### The unemployment rate of New Westminister's immigrants is 1.0% higher than that of its total population

Immigrants face many challenges in finding employment that don't apply to Canadian-born residents. English is often not their first language, they may have trouble getting their credentials recognized, or they might not have very strong personal networks. These barriers are particularly acute for immigrants who have been in the country for less than 10 years and whose experiences with the labour market may be considerably different from those of **established immigrants**.

In New Westminister, the **unemployment rate** of the immigrant population reflects these barriers. The unemployment rate of New Westminister immigrants 15 years and older was 6.6% in 2006, 1.0% higher than that of the total population (5.6%). The difference was greater, however, with respect to gender. The unemployment rate of female immigrants (7.3%) was not only significantly higher than that of male immigrants (6.0%), but the gap between their rate and that of New Westminister's total female population (1.1%) was also slightly greater than the gap between the rate of male immigrants and that of the total male population (0.9%).

There was a similar pattern of unemployment in Greater Vancouver as a whole. Immigrants reported a higher rate of unemployment than the total population did, and females fared worse than males did. Compared to Greater Vancouver, New Westminister reported comparable unemployment rates for the total population and for female immigrants but a slightly higher rate for male immigrants. Whereas the unemployment rate for New Westminister's male immigrants was 6.0%, the rate was 5.5% in Greater Vancouver.

### New Westminister's labour force participation rates are higher than Greater Vancouver's rates are

New Westminister had higher **labour force participation rates** for both the immigrant and total populations than Greater Vancouver had in 2006. 67.3% of New Westminister immigrants participated in the labour force, compared to 62.2% of Greater Vancouver immigrants. Additionally, 69.3% of New Westminister's total population participated, compared to 66.7% of Greater Vancouver's total population. In both New Westminister and Greater Vancouver, immigrants reported lower participation rates than the total population did, but there was a larger gap between immigrants and the total population in Greater Vancouver (4.5%) than there was in New Westminister (2.0%).

As is true of unemployment rates, labour force participation rates also have a gender component. In 2006, female immigrants had a participation rate of 62.4% in New Westminister, whereas male immigrants reported a markedly higher rate (72.9%).

## New Westminster immigrants report a lower prevalence of low income after taxes than do Greater Vancouver immigrants

In general, **low income** status in British Columbia is more prevalent among immigrants than it is among the total population. New Westminster follows this trend. The proportion of New Westminster immigrants in private households that reported **low income after taxes** in 2006 (18.2%) was higher than that of the total population (16.3%).

In comparison to Greater Vancouver, New Westminster reported a lower prevalence of low income for immigrants and a comparable prevalence for the total population in 2006. The prevalence of low income after taxes in Greater Vancouver was 20.9% among immigrants and 16.5% among the total population. There was also a significantly smaller gap between immigrants and the total population in New Westminster (1.9%) than there was in Greater Vancouver (4.4%).

Immigrant households with children under the age of six were particularly vulnerable to low income status in New Westminster (28.6% after taxes). Immigrant households with senior residents over the age of 65, conversely, had a comparatively lower instance of low income (13.0%). These trends mirror those of Greater Vancouver, where 38.6% of immigrant households with children under six and 13.5% of immigrant households with seniors over 65 experienced low income in 2006.

Total population data for New Westminster and Greater Vancouver, however, tell a very different story. The prevalence of low income for households with children under six was considerably lower among the total population than it was among immigrants in both New Westminster (16.1% compared to 28.6%) and Greater Vancouver (17.2% compared to 38.6%) in 2006. The prevalence of low income for households with senior residents over 65, however, was similar among the total and immigrant populations in both New Westminster and Greater Vancouver. 14.5% of households with senior residents in New Westminster's total population, compared to 13.0% in its immigrant population, experienced low income. Additionally, 12.3% of households with senior residents in Greater Vancouver's total population, compared to 13.5% in its immigrant population, experienced low income.

## The median employment income of male immigrants is almost \$5,000 higher than that of female immigrants in New Westminster

Two general trends with respect to **employment income** in British Columbia are that Canadian-born residents earn more than immigrants do, and males earn more than females do. Both of these trends are present in New Westminster. The **median employment income** for New Westminster immigrants of both genders (who work full time on a full year basis) was \$38,517 in 2006. This is lower than the median income reported by New Westminster's total population (\$42,295). Additionally, the median income of male immigrants was almost \$5,000 higher than that of female immigrants in New Westminster (\$40,466 compared to \$35,567).

In comparison with Greater Vancouver, New Westminster's median employment incomes were similar for both the immigrant and total populations in 2006. Greater Vancouver immigrants of both genders reported a median income of \$38,090, and the total population reported a median income of \$43,215.

### Whereas female immigrants in New Westminster are employed most often in sales and services, male immigrants are most often in trades and transport

We've talked about unemployment rates among immigrants, but what about the 62.8% of New Westminster immigrants who are working? What are they doing? As is true of the total population, most immigrants in New Westminster (87.1%) were employees in 2006, whether for a company, an organization, an individual, or the government. However, a larger proportion of New Westminster's immigrants (10.9%), relative to its total population (9.4%), was **self-employed**.

The five most prevalent occupational categories reported by New Westminster's immigrants of both genders were sales and service, business and administration, trades and transport, management, and natural and applied sciences. These categories are based on the National Occupational Classification for Statistics 2006. Males and females, however, were employed in very different sectors at very different rates. The majority of male immigrants worked in trades and transport (23.9%) and sales and service (21.4%). Following were sciences (13.3%), management (12.4%), and business and administration (9.0%).

Female immigrants were concentrated, first and foremost, in the sales and service sector (31.7%) and, secondly, in business and administration occupations (26.0%). These categories were followed by health (10.2%); social science, education, government service, and religion (8.7%); and management (6.2%).

New Westminster's total population had the same gender breakdown of top occupations. However, while male immigrants and the total male population in New Westminster reported the same order and similar proportions of top occupations, business and administration occupations (28.4%) were more prevalent than sales and services (27.7%) among the total female population. The opposite was true of female immigrants.