

Non-metro population trends by age

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Highlights

- The population in the non-metro potential labour force (15 years of age and over) did not grow in 2014 and 2015.
- There is an on-going structural shift towards older individuals in the non-metro potential labour force.
- The share of the population in the core-age workforce (25-54 yr.) is declining and the share of the population 55 years of age and over is increasing.
- This shift in the age structure of the potential labour force will be accompanied by a change in the overall employment rate because the employment rate is different for individuals in different age groups.

Why look at population trends by age?

An appreciation of the population numbers and the population trends by age is important for understanding the level and trends of employment. Specifically, the employment rate (i.e. the proportion holding a job) is different for individuals in different age groups.

The objective of this FactSheet is to show the level and trends of the population by age to provide context for the accompanying FactSheets on non-metro employment.

Findings

The population in non-metro¹ has remained (almost) unchanged at 2.8 million since 2006 (Figure 1).

The year-to-year percent change in non-metro population has been (almost) zero since 2006 (Figure 2).

For discussions on job levels and job growth, the focus is on the potential labour force – which has traditionally been defined as the population 15 years of age and over.

Ontario's non-metro potential labour force (i.e. the population 15+ yr.) was growing up to 2013 but has remained essentially unchanged in 2014 and 2015 (Figure 3).

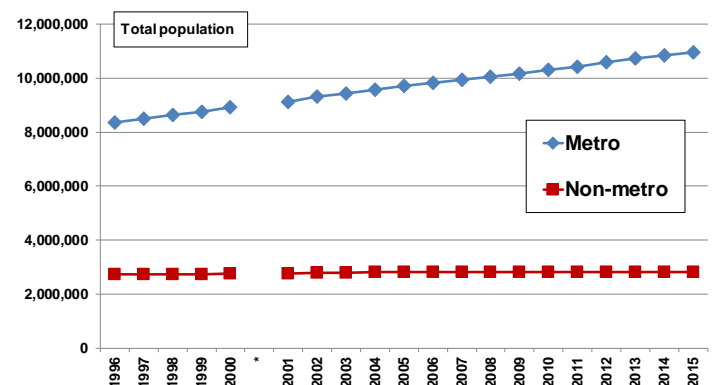
Within the potential labor force in non-metro Ontario,

there have been significant changes in the structure by age group.

Perhaps the most important change in the age structure of the population in the potential labour force (15 years and over) has been the increasing share that is 65 years and over. In non-metro Ontario, the share 65+ yr. has increased from 18% in 1996 to 24% in 2015 (Figure 4).

Figure 1

Ontario's non-metro population was 2.77 million in 2001, increased to 2.83 million by 2006 and was 2.82 million in 2015



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries.
Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics. CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Within non-metro Ontario, the specific changes in shares of the other age groups are:

- the share of the so-called core-age workforce (25-54 yr.) has declined from 54% in 1996 to 43% in 2015 (Figure 5). Individuals in this age group have the highest employment rates and thus a shift in the age structure away from this age group will reduce the reported employment

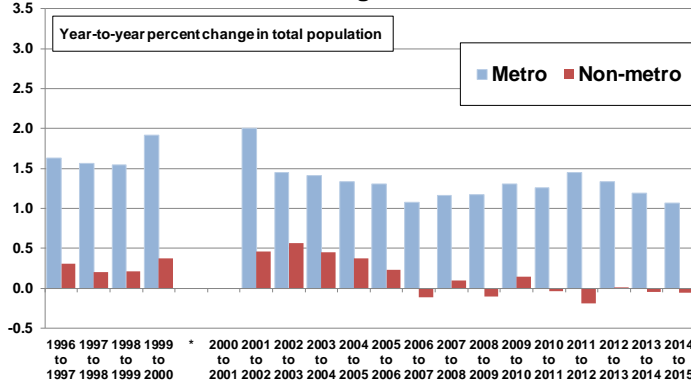
¹ Recall that "non-metro" refers to the population outside a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). See "[Overview of Ontario's rural geography](#)" (June, 2013).

rate in the 15+ potential labour force.

- the share of youth (15-24 yr.) in the non-metro potential labour force has declined² slightly from 17% in 1996 to 14% in 2015; while
- the share of non-metro individuals 55 to 64 years of age has increased from 12% in 1996 to 19% in 2015.

Figure 2

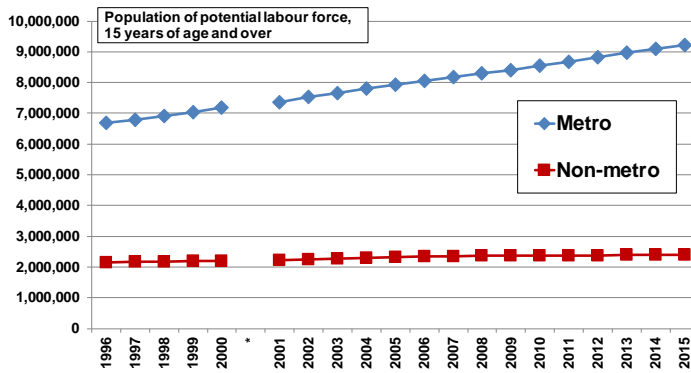
Ontario's non-metro population has shown no growth since 2006



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Statistics, CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Figure 3

Ontario's non-metro potential labour force (15+ yr.) grew from 2.23 million in 2001 to 2.39 million in 2013 and remained at this level for 2014 and 2015



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Statistics, CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Summary

The non-metro population has not grown in recent years.

The population in the non-metro potential labour force (i.e. the population 15 years of age and over) did not grow in 2014 and 2015.

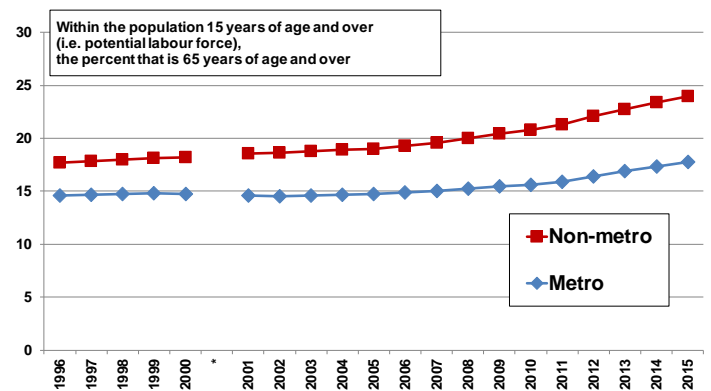
Within the non-metro potential labour force, there is an on-going structural shift towards older workers. The share of the population in the core-age workforce (25-54 yr.) is declining and the share of the

² The decline is due, in part, to fewer births 15 years previous and more mobility from non-metro to metro areas.

population 55 years of age and over is increasing.

Figure 4

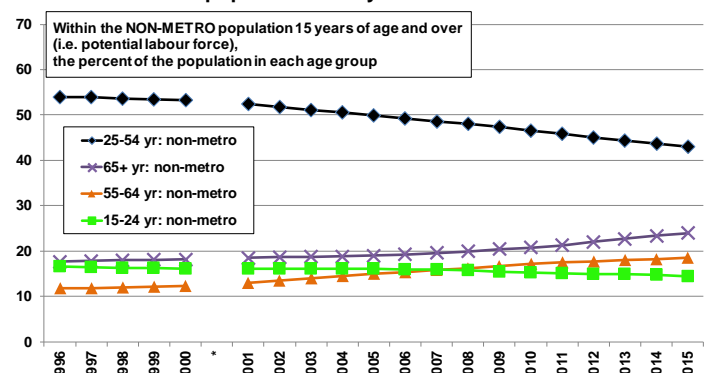
In non-metro Ontario in 2015, 24% of the potential labour force (15 years of age and over) was 65 years of age or older



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Figure 5

In the non-metro potential labour force (i.e. population 15+ yr.), the share in the core-age workforce (25-54 yr.) has declined to 43% and the population 55-64 yr. has increased to 19%



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Statistics, CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

This shift in the age structure of the potential labour force will cause a change in the reported employment rate for the population 15 years of age and over because the employment rates are different for individuals in different age groups. In non-metro areas, within the core-age workforce (25-54 yr.), 80% of the population is employed compared to 55% for those 55-64 yr. and 12% for those 65 years of age and over³. Thus, this structural shift in the age structure of the population will reduce the reported employment rate of the total potential labour force.

Rural Ontario Institute gratefully acknowledges the work of Ray Bollman in preparing this edition of *Focus on Rural Ontario*. Questions on data sources can be directed to RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net. Any comments or discussions can be directed to NRagettie@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca.

³ Details are presented in the accompanying "[Non-metro employment trends by age.](#)"