

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Zaryab Ahmad, Economic Development Officer, Burlington Economic Development
Kate Hill-Montague, Coordinator of Planning Policy, Community Planning

Cc: Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, Burlington Economic Development
Mark Simeoni, Director of Community Planning
Brynn Nheiley, Executive Director of Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility
Tim Commisso, City Manager

Date: October 28, 2022

Re: 2021 Census Release: Language

This memo presents the 2021 Census language data for the City of Burlington. The memo was jointly prepared by Burlington Economic Development and Community Planning to present the latest data in one comprehensive document while providing some analysis relevant to the interests of each department.

Background

On August 17, 2022, Statistics Canada released the 2021 Census data on linguistic diversity. This was the fourth release of the 2021 Census data with three future data releases until November 30, 2022. The Census of Canada commenced in May 2021 during a global pandemic, with Statistics Canada reporting an overall response rate of 98.3% for Ontario.

Previous 2021 Census Release Memos:

February 25, 2022: [2021 Census Release: Population and Dwelling Counts](#)

June 30, 2022: [2021 Census Release: Age, Sex at Birth and Gender, and Types of Dwellings](#)

July 13, 2022: [2021 Census Release: Income, Canadian Military Experience, and Families, Households, and Marital Status](#)

2021 Census on Language

The vast majority of Burlington residents (99%) know¹ at least one of Canada's two official languages (i.e., English and French), with over 90% able to speak in English only, 0.05% in French only, and almost 9% bilingual in both languages. This is largely similar to the rest of Ontario, where nearly 98% of residents know either English or French. In all of Ontario, there are more French-only speakers (0.3%), and somewhat more of those bilingual in both English and French (10.8%) as well as those that know neither English nor French (2.4%).

¹ According to Statistics Canada, being able to conduct a conversation in a language indicates *knowing* that language.

As seen across most of Canada, between 2016 and 2021 the proportion of the population that only speaks English of the two official languages has slightly increased (+2%), while the proportion speaking French-only decreased (-5%). A small but growing population in Burlington does not know either of the official languages. In 2021, 1,770 Burlington residents (1% of the total population) fell into this category. In the last 15 years, the population of non-official-language speakers has more than doubled in the city. As Burlington’s linguistic diversity continues to increase, the need to develop and improve programs and services accessible to all of its residents will become increasingly important.

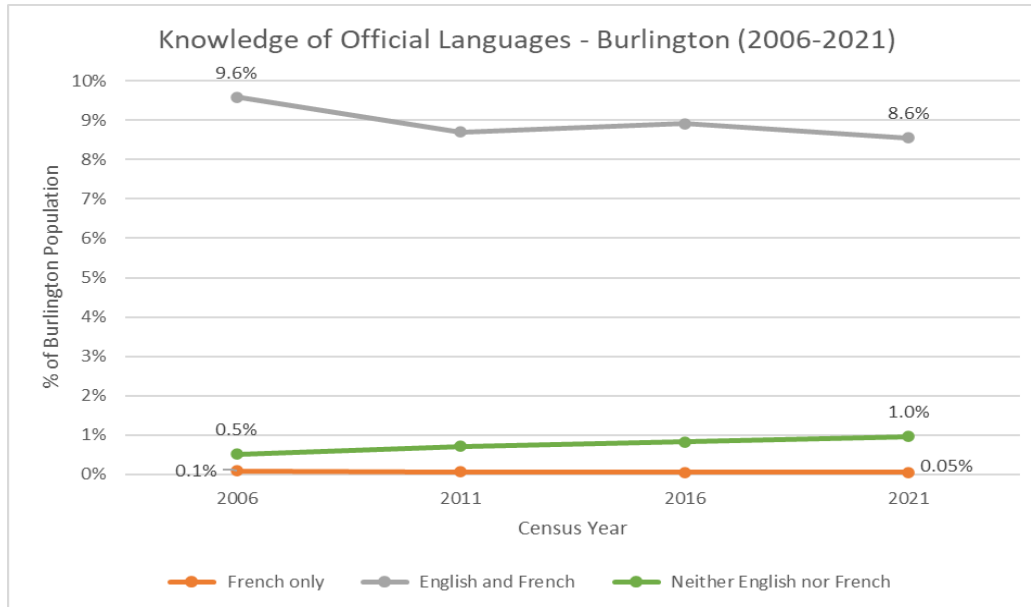


Figure 1: Knowledge of English (not displayed) rose from 89.8% in 2006 to 90.4% in 2021. Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006-2021

Nearly 20% of Burlington residents have a mother tongue that is not an official language, and 10% speak a non-official language most often at home, up from 7.3% in 2016. Aside from English, the top five languages Burlington residents speak regularly at home are Spanish Arabic, Punjabi, Hindi, and Mandarin. These languages are spoken most often at home by 4% of Burlington residents, with another 91 non-official languages spoken often at home by the remaining 6% of residents.

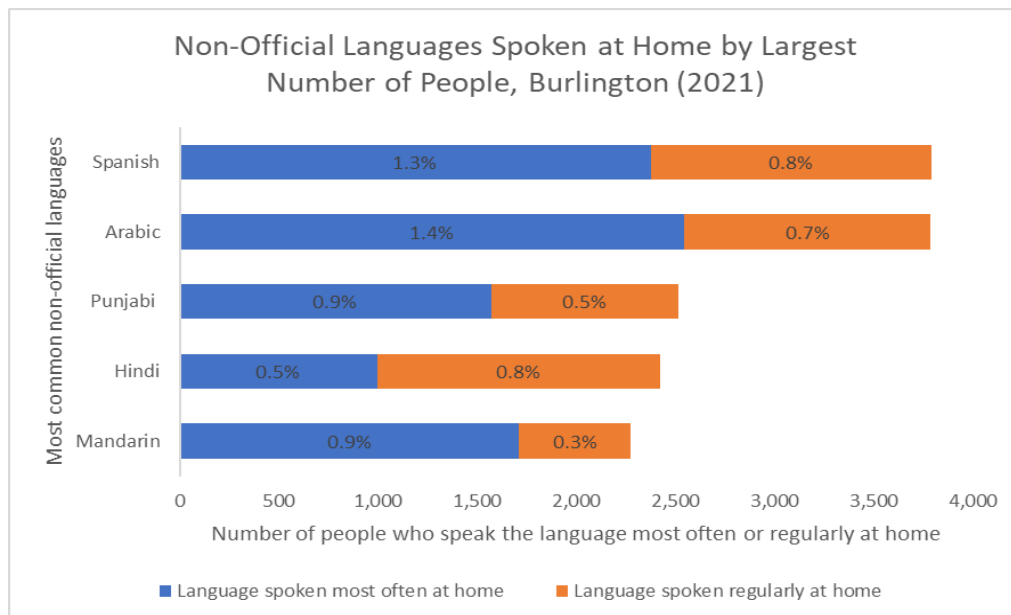


Figure 2: Cumulative percentage of Burlington’s population that primarily and regularly speak each of the top five non-official languages at home. Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2021

A linguistically diverse population is valuable to Burlington's economic growth. A workforce with varied perspectives, languages, and cultural insights can help foster innovation and creativity, connect with new markets, and create an environment of inclusion that supports top talent attraction and retention.

Next Steps

Staff will use the 2021 Census language data as well as other data sources to support any growth-related studies and initiatives that would benefit from this data. Staff will also continue to update Council on future 2021 Census releases, as appropriate, in accordance with the following Statistics Canada release schedule:

- **September 21, 2022:** Indigenous peoples and Housing;
- **October 26, 2022:** Immigration, place of birth and citizenship, Ethnocultural and religious diversity, Mobility and migration;
- **November 30, 2022:** Education, Labour, Langue of work, Commuting, Instruction in the official minority language.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Prepared by:

Zaryab Ahmad
Economic Development Officer
Burlington Economic Development
905-332-9415
Zaryab.Ahmad@burlington.ca

Kate Hill-Montague,
Coordinator of Planning Policy
Community Planning Department
905-335-7600 ext.7508
Kate.Hill-Montague@burlington.ca

Reviewed by:

Mark Steffler
Manager, Burlington Lands Partnership
Burlington Economic Development
519-767-8469
Mark.Steffler@burlington.ca

Alison Enns, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Policy and Community
Community Planning Department
905-335-7600 ext.7787
Alison.Enns@burlington.ca