

Fast Facts: Languages in Ottawa, 2006

Social Planning Council of Ottawa, September 2009

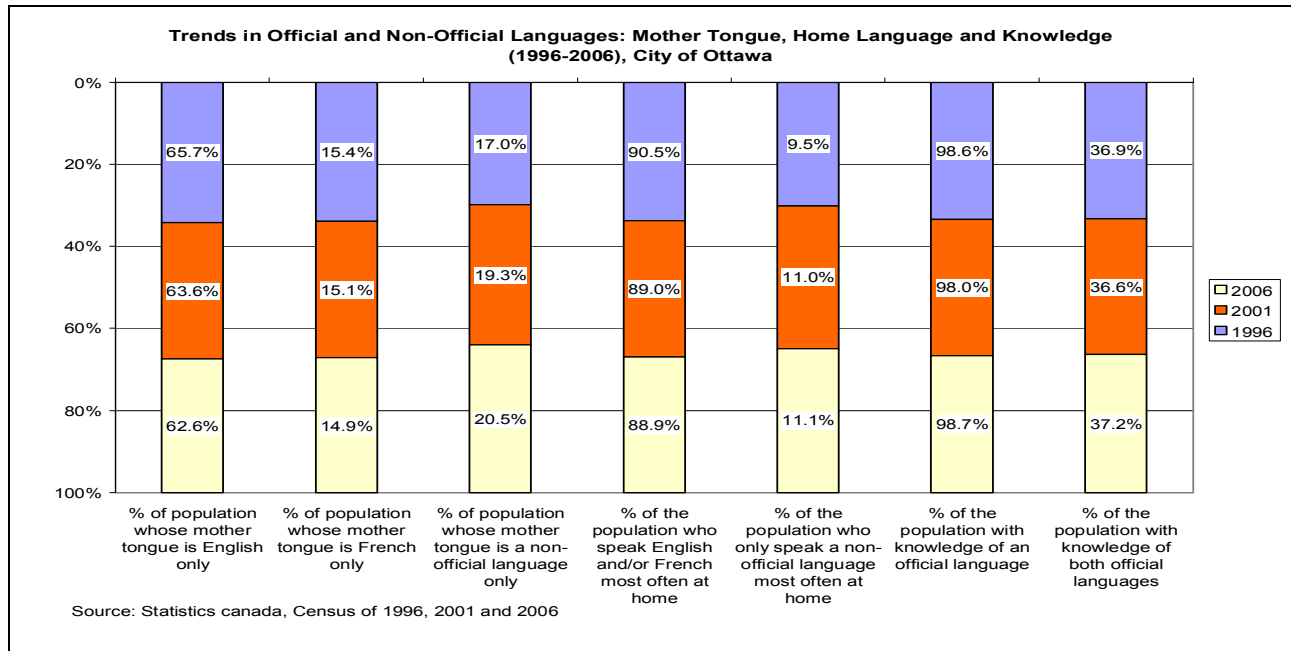
During the 1996-2006 period, the percentage of Ottawa's population whose mother tongue was only one of Canada's official languages (English or French) decreased slightly. The percentage of languages spoken at home revealed the same downward trend for both official languages. By contrast, the percentage of population whose mother tongue was a non-official language increased during this same period.

Highlights

➤ From 1996 to 2006:

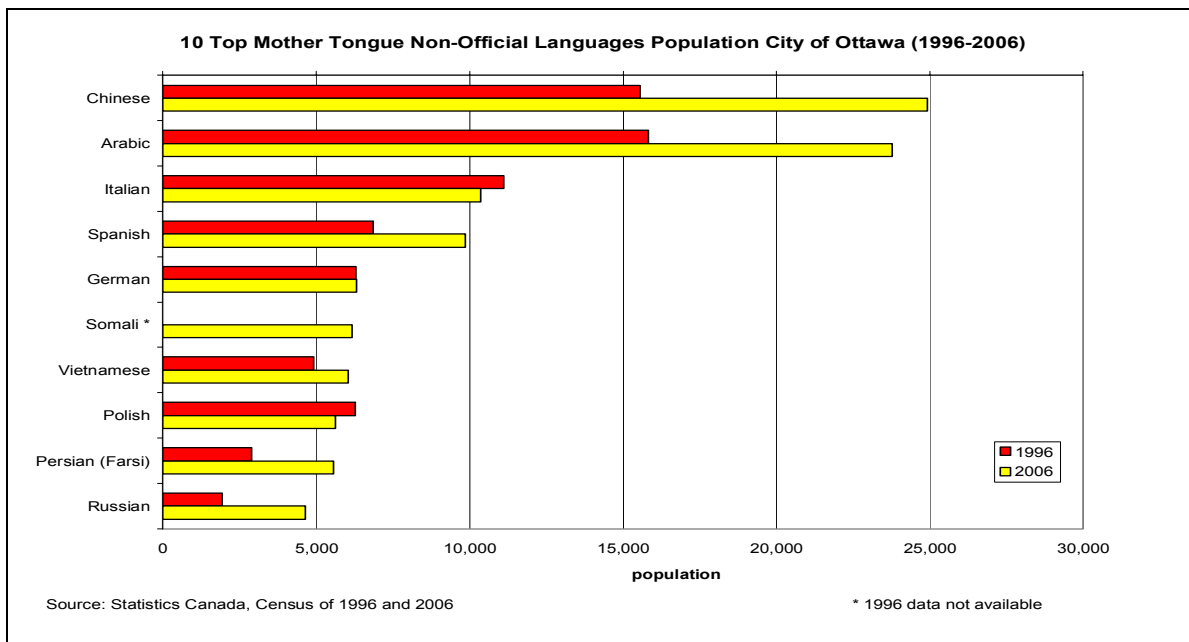
❖ Educational Attainment:

- During the 1996-2006 period, the percentage of Ottawa's population whose mother tongue was only one of Canada's official languages (English or French) decreased slightly. In the case of the English language, the percentage decreased from 65.7% to 62.6% and for French, it went down from 15.4% to 14.9%.
- The percentage of languages spoken at home also revealed a downward trend for both official languages between 1996-2006.
- By contrast, the percentage of population whose mother tongue was a non-official language rose 3 points during this 1996-2006 (from 17.0% to 20.5%). This is a direct outcome of the linguistic diversity of the immigrant population and is also reflected in a higher percentage of residents who speak a non-official language most often at home.
- In 2006, (37.2%) of the population declared a knowledge of both official languages, showing that there are more residents who are becoming officially bilingual.



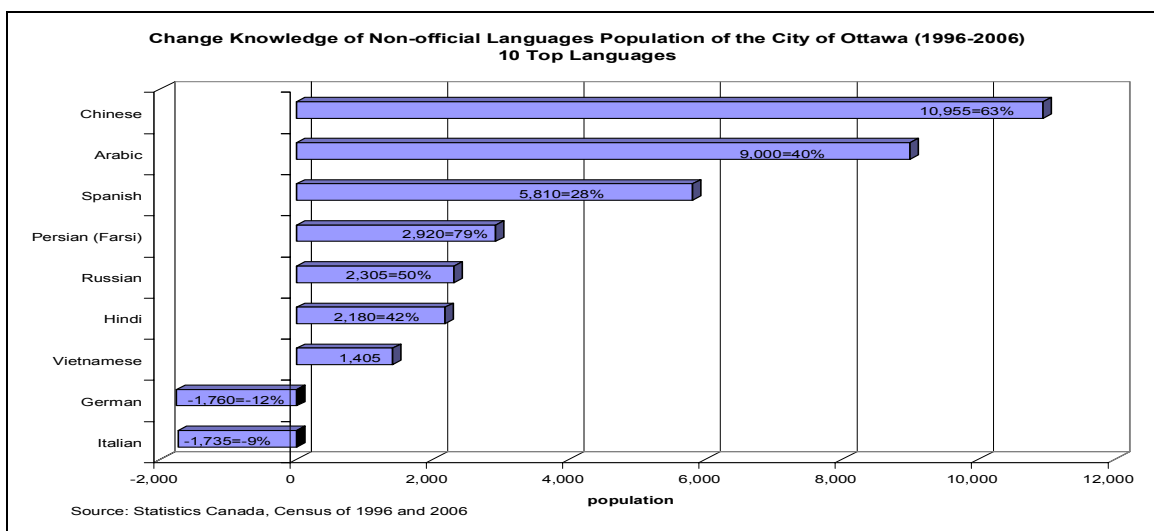
❖ Mother Tongue

- In 2006, nearly 69 languages, in addition of English and French, were reported as mother tongues among the foreign born population. Anglophones – those who reported English as their mother tongue – accounted for the majority (63.9%), while the Francophone population represented 15.2%.
- Allophones whose mother tongue is a non-official language reported the highest increase in absolute and relative terms. Its percentage rose to 20.9% from 17.3% with a growth rate of 35.5%. During the 1996-2006 period, the Chinese and Arabic languages led the top 10 non-official reported mother tongues. In 2006, their representation was 15.2% and 14.5%, respectively.



❖ **Knowledge of Non-Official Languages**

- The number of residents who had knowledge of non-official languages increased between 1996 and 2006. Thirty-three percent of residents had knowledge of Chinese, Arabic and Spanish, representing high growth rates (62.7%, 40.4% and 28.5%, respectively).
- Other significant increases were in the number of persons with knowledge of Hindi and Russian (42.0% and 49.7%, respectively). Two groups experienced a decrease over this period Italian and German decreased by 9.4% and 11.6%, respectively.



❖ **Languages Most Used at Work**

- In 2001 and 2006, 90.7% and 90.5% of Ottawa residents used English at work, while the use of French accounted for 5.1% and 5.5%, respectively. However, the increase of the use of French language at work was higher than that of English (14.8% versus 5.3%).
- The use of non-official languages at work had the lowest reported participation in this period (0.8% and 0.6%, respectively) with a downtrend reflected on negative changes of the use of non-official languages at work.