

# Community Lens

## Age Distribution

### Interpreting Age Census Data

Median age<sup>[1]</sup> and average age are commonly used to describe the age of a population. Both metrics enable historical comparison of a population or comparison between populations. When a population is divided into various age groups, the age distribution pattern is a useful tool for government, non-profit organizations and businesses to plan, develop and deliver their age-related goods and services.

For example, the size and rate of change of the children's age group provides vital information for the planning and delivery of children's education. A non-profit agency serving seniors is interested in the growth of the various age groups over 65 years old. Businesses can better target their products and services to clients in various age groups

Age distribution can be presented in a population pyramid. Each horizontal bar represents an age group (e.g., 0-4 years old) and the proportion (percentage) of the total population. The pyramid is divided into two halves, one for male and the other for female. A pyramid with a wide base and narrow top indicates a young and possibly growing population. On the other hand, an inverted pyramid with a narrow base and wide top, points to an ageing and potentially shrinking population.

The following pyramids show the age distribution of the population in Halton's local municipalities. They capture a decade of change between 2011 and 2021. The 2021 pyramid (in red outline) is superimposed on top of the 2011 pyramid (in grey).



## **City of Burlington**

Its median age was 44.4 years in 2021, the highest among the four municipalities. The top portion of the pyramid continued to widen. The senior age groups experienced faster growth than the other age groups. They accounted for 21% of the total population in 2021. Over one in five residents was a senior. Among the 6,100 seniors over the age of 85, over two-thirds were women. There were no significant changes in the other age groups.

## **Town of Oakville**

Its median age was 41.6 years in 2021. The top portion of the pyramid was also widening. There was a noticeably narrow mid portion indicating a shrinkage of the 35 to 59 age groups. The share of the child population under 9 years of age decreased by about 2%.

## **Town of Milton**

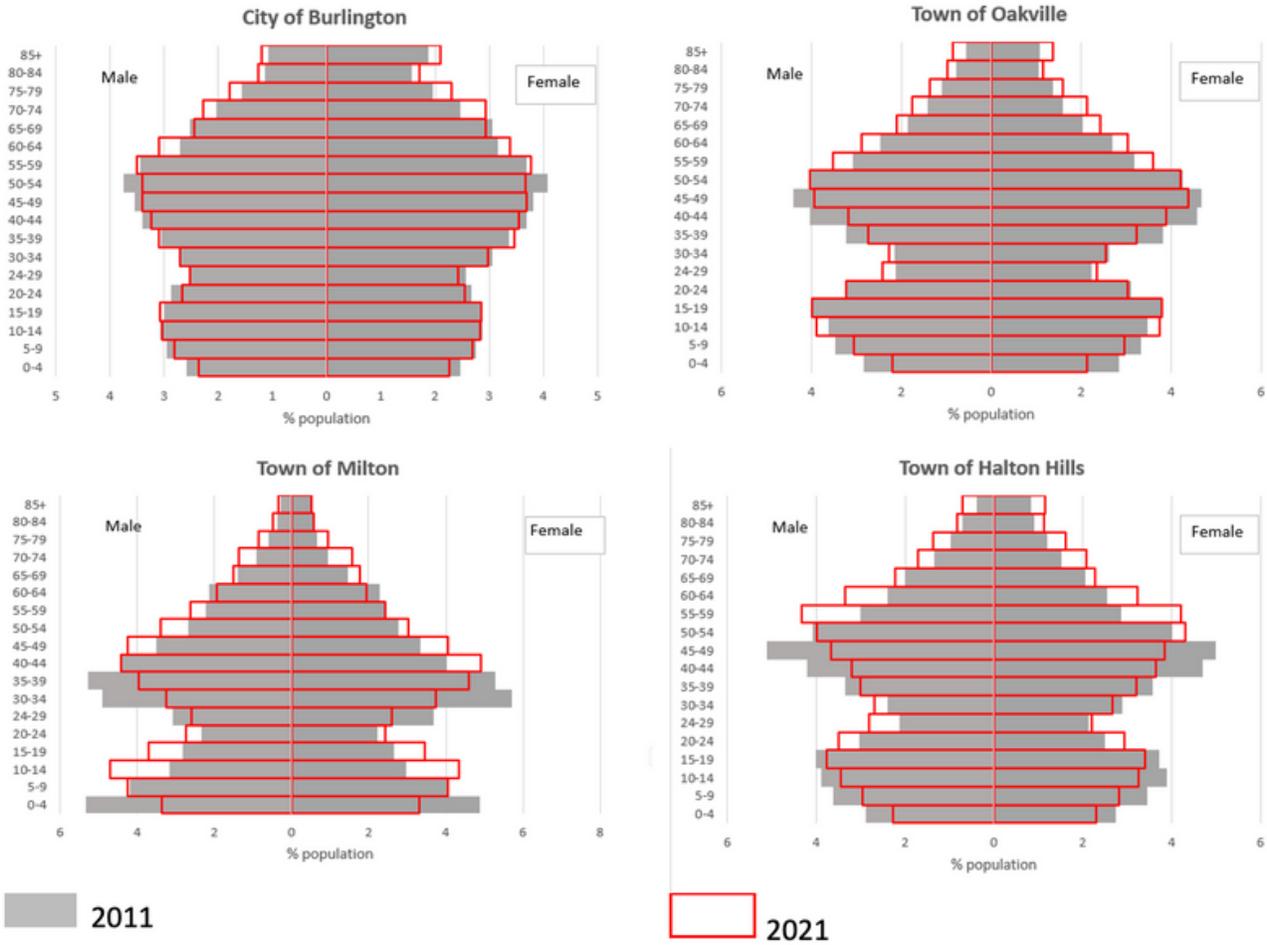
It was the youngest municipality in Halton. Its median age was 36 years in 2021. However, the base of the pyramid has contracted. The share of the 0-9 years age group old has decreased from 18% to 16%. Although the share of its senior population has increased, especially in the 65 to 79 age groups, the pyramid still has a relatively narrow top in comparison with the bottom.

## **Town of Halton Hills**

Its median age was 42 years in 2021. To some extent, the shape of the pyramid resembles that of Oakville. All the above 55 years age groups had increased their shares of the total population.



## Population Pyramids, 2011 and 2021



Community Development Halton/Statistics Canada, 2011 & 2021 Censuses