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Census Content Consultation Guide

Census year 2021

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Introduction

Canadians require trustworthy statistics to meet an array of data needs.

The Census of Population is an important source of demographic and social information for decision making and analysis on a large geographical scale and for small areas. Under the *Statistics Act* (R.S.C. 1985, c. S-19), Statistics Canada is responsible for conducting the Census of Population every five years.

In preparation for the 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada is consulting with census data users to

- assess census data users' needs and identify data gaps
- understand how census data are used
- identify other data sources that could supplement or replace current census content.

The 2021 Census of Population consultation will be conducted from September 11 to December 8, 2017. Invitations to participate will be emailed to individuals and organizations known to be census data users, and for whom Statistics Canada has contact information.

Statistics Canada is seeking feedback on census content from

- representatives of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders
- academics
- non-governmental organizations
- private businesses.

Statistics Canada will also reach out to the general public through its website, social media accounts and regional offices. All participants in this public consultation will be asked to complete the same electronic questionnaire. To determine the 2021 Census of Population content, Statistics Canada will evaluate the feedback using the content determination framework explained in this guide.

You are invited to convey your data needs and/or those of the organization you represent; to provide examples of how you and your organization use census data; to suggest content changes or additions for the 2021 Census of Population; to provide details about other data sources that could be used to supplement or replace current census content; and to comment on the relevance of the current census content.

Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is important in determining the content of the 2021 Census of Population.

2021 Census of Population content consultation: What I need to know

This guide explains the 2021 Census of Population content consultation process, and provides information to help you with your submission.

The consultation will be conducted by means of an electronic questionnaire, accessible to the general public and all census data users through the Statistics Canada website from Monday, September 11, 2017, to Friday, December 8, 2017. The questionnaire includes both questions on 2016 Census of Population topics and questions requiring detailed answers. For information about the content of the 2016 Census of Population questionnaire, please see the [2016 Census of Population questions by topic in Appendix A](#). You can respond to consultation questions about all census topics / questions, or you can respond only to the individual census topic(s) / question(s) relevant to you and/or your organization.

Why user consultation is important

The information gathered during the consultation will help Statistics Canada ensure that priority data needs of Canadians are met and that key emerging social and economic issues are reflected in the census. The information you provide will be carefully reviewed using the content determination framework, and will assist in determining the content of the 2021 Census of Population questionnaire.

Protecting your information

Statistics Canada is committed to respecting the privacy of its participants. All personal information collected by the agency is protected by the *Privacy Act*.

Comments collected during the consultation may be published anonymously in the 2021 Census of Population Content Consultation Report, which will be available on the Statistics Canada website in the fall of 2019.

How do I participate?

To respond to the 2021 Census of Population content consultation, please fill out the electronic questionnaire that will be available on the Statistics Canada website at <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/consultation/index-eng.cfm> as of September 11, 2017.

What is the deadline for submission?

To have your comments considered for the 2021 Census of Population content, please submit your consultation questionnaire by **Friday, December 8, 2017**. Note that Statistics Canada values your suggestions and opinions about census content at any time. You can provide your feedback on an ongoing basis at statcan.2021censusconsultation-consultationrecensement2021.statcan@canada.ca.

How do I obtain more information?

If you need assistance or further information about the 2021 Census of Population content consultation process, please email the census consultation team at statcan.2021censusconsultation-consultationrecensement2021.statcan@canada.ca.

Completing the 2021 Census of Population content consultation questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire asks participants to provide informed feedback about their census data uses, data gaps and alternative data sources. For information about the 2016 Census of Population content, and for links to the 2016 Census questionnaires, please see [2016 Census of Population questions by topic in Appendix A](#). Dates for the 2016 Census of Population data releases are provided in [Appendix B](#).

The first part of the consultation questionnaire focuses on census data users, and collects feedback about

- how current census data content is used
- the population groups explored when analyzing census data
- the balance between needs for new information and comparability over time;
- whether census data are combined with other data sources for analysis purposes (in which case further information about those other data sources is requested).

Participants are then asked more detailed questions about each census topic / question, and about how the related data uses are tied to

- statutory or regulatory uses by governments
- resource allocation for programs and policies
- service delivery for programs
- planning, development, monitoring, evaluation and performance reports related to programs and policies
- research
- any other purposes.

The questionnaire also asks about the following factors: what level of geography is required; how frequently the census data are required; the importance of comparability across Canada; and whether any known alternative data sources could be used to replace or supplement census data.

The second half of the consultation questionnaire asks participants to identify and prioritize any perceived data gaps, provide information on how new data would be used, and explain whether any alternative data sources provide similar information for the proposed data gap(s).

Participants can provide additional comments or feedback on the Census of Population in a comment box at the end of the questionnaire.

The time required to complete the consultation questionnaire will be different for each participant. Once the questionnaire is started, a progress bar in the top right corner will provide an indication of the completion status.

Please note that there is no option to save the questionnaire and continue later. Participants will be asked to complete and submit the questionnaire in a single session. Leaving the questionnaire inactive for more than two hours and/or closing the browser will terminate the session, and the information entered will be lost.

Your participation is important to Statistics Canada. A report summarizing the findings of the 2021 Census of Population content consultation will be published on the Statistics Canada website in the fall of 2019.

2021 Census of Population content determination framework: Overview

In determining the content of the 2021 Census of Population questionnaire, Statistics Canada will employ the same framework used to determine the 2016 Census questionnaire content. The framework was developed from a review of Statistics Canada's collection and processing methods following the 2011 Census. The findings of the review are presented in the [Final Report on 2016 Census Options: Proposed Content Determination Framework and Methodology Options](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/fc-rf/reports-rapports/r2_index-eng.cfm) (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/fc-rf/reports-rapports/R1_Part1-Partie1-eng.cfm), both of which are available on the Statistics Canada website.

The content determination framework includes three main steps that help prioritize Census of Population content: (1) Census data users' needs; (2) Canadian context; and (3) Statistics Canada's operational considerations. Each step comprises specific dimensions according to which potential content is evaluated.

The steps and dimensions of the content determination framework are summarized in Table 1, below.

Table 1
Summary of the content determination framework steps and their dimensions

Steps	Dimensions
Step 1: Census data users' needs (relevance and quality requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength of census data users' needs (e.g., legislative requirements; policy and program needs) • Size of population of interest (e.g., small area / domain data needs) • Suitability (and availability) of alternative sources • Comparability over time.
Step 2: Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burden on Canadians • Privacy concerns • Sensitivity of questions / topics. Balance of topics
Step 3: Statistics Canada's operational considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost • Ability to generate high-quality data • Operational feasibility. Balance of topics

2021 Census of Population content determination framework: Data needs

The extent to which census data users' needs are met is an important factor in the content determination framework, and thus, in determining the content of the 2021 Census of Population. Table 2 summarizes the dimensions of census data users' needs analyzed within the framework.

Table 2
Summary of the dimensions of census data users' needs

Dimensions	Description
<p>Strength of census data users' needs (e.g., legislative requirements, and policy and program needs)</p>	<p>In general, statutory and regulatory uses, being tied to a law, and information needs that serve a purpose that is national in scope will be given the highest priority.</p> <p>Uses related to resource allocation and service delivery will also be given high priority, given the direct impact on government spending and financial decisions.</p> <p>Planning, development, monitoring, evaluation and performance reports related to programs or policies will be assigned medium priority, because they measure accountability and inform Canadians about the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs. The remaining uses, such as academic and policy research, will be considered lower-priority uses.</p>
<p>Size of the population of interest (e.g., regional data needs)</p>	<p>A higher priority will be assigned to uses that require data for small geographic areas or small groups of interest. Needs for data by census subdivision or census tract will be assigned a higher priority than those at the census metropolitan area (CMA) level, and CMA-level needs will be prioritized higher than needs at the provincial / territorial level. Similarly, needs for smaller populations of interest, such as recent immigrants, will be assigned a higher priority than needs for larger groups, such as the employed population.</p>
<p>Suitability (and availability) of alternative sources</p>	<p>Topics for which no alternative sources exist will receive the highest priority, while those for which alternative sources are readily available will receive the lowest priority.</p>
<p>Comparability over time and relevancy</p>	<p>Trend analysis requires data to be comparable over time (continuity over time). However, comparability needs will be balanced with the need for new information. Highest priority will be assigned to uses for which comparability over time is essential and still relevant.</p>

2021 Census of Population content determination framework: Canadian context and operational considerations

The process of determining the content for the 2021 Census of Population will include a careful examination and evaluation of many criteria, some of which are in competition with each other. Furthermore, before the final recommendations for the 2021 Census of Population questions are submitted to the Government of Canada for approval, Statistics Canada must assess several important factors related to the Canadian context and allow for operational considerations.

The burden on Canadians is an important consideration in determining census content. Statistics Canada is sensitive to the burden placed upon respondents; therefore, the length and complexity of questionnaires are both considered in this respect. Societal privacy concerns have an impact on content determination as well.

Operational factors, such as cost, data quality and data collection feasibility, also play an important role in determining census content.

Lastly, Statistics Canada is dedicated to maintaining high standards of data quality. Qualitative and quantitative testing will help ensure that the results from the 2021 Census of Population are of the highest possible quality. The findings help determine which set of collection instruments best ensures quality.

Only once all these considerations are evaluated can Statistics Canada make an informed decision about the content recommendations to put forward for the 2021 Census of Population.

2021 Census of Population content determination process: Key activities

Careful and thorough planning helps ensure the ongoing success of the Census of Population. The following activities, which are customarily part of the content determination process, will take place prior to the 2021 Census of Population:

Table 3

2021 Census of Population content determination process: Schedule of activities

Activities	Description	Date
Census data user consultation	Statistics Canada will undertake a nationwide consultation, inviting census data users and interested parties to convey their data needs and share their suggestions for 2021 Census of Population content. In-person meetings and teleconferences may also be held with some users.	September 11 to December 8, 2017
Qualitative content testing	Qualitative testing is carried out through focus groups and in-depth one-on-one interviews. Through qualitative tests, Statistics Canada obtains feedback from respondents about proposed questions and questionnaires, and tests respondents' ability and willingness to answer the questions.	Spring / summer 2018
Census of Population content test (quantitative testing)	A larger, more extensive quantitative census content test takes place after qualitative testing. It provides Statistics Canada an opportunity to assess the impact of content changes on data quality.	Spring / summer 2019
Submission to Cabinet	After testing, Statistics Canada will submit recommendations for 2021 Census of Population content to Parliament for review. Cabinet approves the final content of the Census of Population through an Order in Council.	Fall 2019 / winter 2020

For more information on the census, see the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2016](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm) (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-304/index-eng.cfm>).

Conclusion

This consultation guide is designed to assist you in communicating your or your organization's census data needs and suggestions for the 2021 Census of Population. It also presents the content determination framework that serves to assess census data users' priority data needs and helps determine the content for the next census cycle.

If you need any assistance or require further information about the 2021 Census of Population content consultation process, please email the census consultation team at statcan.2021censusconsultation-consultationrecensement2021.statcan@canada.ca.

A report summarizing the content consultation findings will be posted on the Statistics Canada website in the fall of 2019.

Your ongoing support is appreciated. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix A - 2016 Census of Population questions by topic

The following are the 2016 Census of Population topics and related question themes.

For the detailed questions, consult the [2016 Census of Population questionnaires](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvInstrumentList&Id=152274) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvInstrumentList&Id=152274>).

Basic demographics

- Name
- Sex
- Date of birth, age
- Marital status
- Common-law status.

Families and households

- Relationship to Person 1
- Presence of children.

Activities of daily living

- Difficulties seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses)
- Difficulties hearing (even when using a hearing aid)
- Difficulties walking, using stairs, using his / her hands or fingers, or doing other physical activities
- Difficulties learning, remembering or concentrating
- Emotional, psychological or mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, anorexia, etc.)
- Other health problems or long-term condition that has lasted or is expected to last for six months or more.

Place of birth, citizenship and immigration

- Place of birth
- Citizenship
- Landed immigrant status
- Year of immigration
- Place of birth of parents.

Language

- Knowledge of English and French
- Knowledge of language(s) other than English or French
- Language(s) spoken at home
- First language learned at home in childhood and still understood
- Language of work.

Ethnic origin

- Ethnic origin.

Aboriginal peoples

- Aboriginal group
- Registered or Treaty Indian status
- Membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

Visible minorities

- Visible minorities.

Religion (not asked in 2016 Census)

- Religion (**Note:** This question is asked every 10 years.)

Mobility and migration

- Place of residence 1 year ago
- Place of residence 5 years ago.

Education

- Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalent
- Registered apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma
- College, CEGEP and non-university certificate or diploma
- University certificate, diploma or degree
- Major field of study
- Province, territory or country where diploma was obtained
- School attendance.

Labour market activities

- Hours worked for pay or in self-employment
- Layoff or absence from job
- New job arrangements
- Recent search for paid work
- Availability for work
- Last date of work
- Name of employer
- Kind of business, industry or service
- Occupation or work
- Main activities at work
- Class of worker
- Incorporation status
- Weeks worked in 2015
- Full-time or part-time work.

Place of work and commuting to work

- Place of work
- Mode of transportation to work
- Journey to work (travel time).

Income and earnings

- Amount paid for child care
- Amount paid as child or spousal support
- Total-income (from linked data)
- Employment income (from linked data)
- Government transfers (from linked data)
- Low-income status (from linked data).

Housing and shelter costs

- Who pays the rent or mortgage, taxes, electricity, etc., for this dwelling?
- Owned or rented?
- Part of a condominium development?
- Number of rooms and bedrooms
- Period when built
- Need of repairs
- Is the dwelling on an agricultural operation?
- Yearly payments
- Monthly rent
- Owner costs.

Appendix B - 2016 Census of Population release schedule

The 2016 Census of Population produces a wide range of analyses and data, by topic, which paint a portrait of Canada. Related information is released by topic on the following dates:

Release topic	Release date
Population and dwelling counts	February 8, 2017
Age and sex Type of dwelling	May 3, 2017
Families, households and marital status Language	August 2, 2017
Income	September 13, 2017
Immigration and ethnocultural diversity Housing Aboriginal peoples	October 25, 2017
Education Labour Journey to work Language of work Mobility and migration	November 29, 2017

Visit the [Census Program](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm?HPA=1) module at <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm?HPA=1> for the latest data releases.