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## **2021 Census Fact Sheets**

### **Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Income and expenditures, and housing**

#### **2021 Census of Population**

Release date: July 17, 2020



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## Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Income and expenditures, and housing

The census is the country's storyteller. Through good and difficult times, the census has been providing a detailed picture of Canada's changing mosaic—giving Canadians facts on where we came from, to where we are, and guiding decisions on where we want to be. To respond to the country's needs and write the next chapter of Canadians' data foundation, Statistics Canada conducted country-wide engagements. We also conducted a census test with over 135,000 households to determine whether new or revised questions under consideration can be easily understood and correctly answered. We listened to Canadians, because we know that this is about your census, your community, your future.

This series of fact sheets provides an overview of the changes in content for the 2021 Census of Population, as the census process is ever changing to reflect changes in the Canadian population and its demographic characteristics.

This fact sheet covers the theme of income and expenditures, and housing. This theme encompasses census content from the following topics: income and expenditures, and housing.

For information on the broad social trends related to the specific topics within this theme, please see the respective sections below.



## Income and expenditures

### Why are these questions asked?

Census income and earnings data serve to monitor the economic well-being of individuals, families and households. Different levels of government use these data to study the use and impact of income support programs. Businesses use income data in combination with other sociodemographic statistics to find locations for new stores and develop new products and services. Private and public sector researchers use information about earnings to study labour markets and industry patterns. These data also provide information at low levels of geography on subpopulations and particularly vulnerable groups, such as low-income families, Indigenous people (including the on-reserve First Nations population), population groups designated as visible minorities and immigrants.

The questions on child care expenses and child or spousal support payments support the production of low-income statistics based on the Market Basket Measure (MBM).

### Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and produces relevant, high-quality data, the 2021 Census will continue to use administrative files to produce data for detailed income sources, such as employment income and benefits from various government programs, including any emergency response funds. These statistics amongst others are central to policy-making, policy assessments, and labour market and economic well-being analyses.

Income data is also an essential input to tracking the progress of poverty reduction. In August 2018, the Government of Canada announced the Poverty Reduction Strategy and made the Market Basket Measure (MBM) Canada's official measure of poverty. Having the expenditure questions on the census enables MBM statistics to be reported in great geographic detail every five years.

Statistics Canada constantly engages with experts and stakeholders from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the Department of Finance Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), provincial and territorial governments, non-government organizations and academics to improve on our data coverage and quality.

### Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada will inform 2021 Census respondents that information on their earnings and income will be retrieved from personal income tax and benefits files provided by the Canada Revenue Agency, as in the 2016 Census. Questions on expenditures related to child care and support payments will remain in the long-form questionnaire.

Changes considered and tested successfully	Resulting approach for 2021
In the English questionnaire: in the question on child care expenses, the modifiers used in "his or her paid job(s)" did not reflect the current standard on sex and gender information practices.	The wording in the English language question has been changed to "their paid job(s)" to conform to the current standard.

### What to expect in 2021

The 2021 Census content on income and expenditures will be similar to the 2016 Census content.



# Housing

## Why are these questions asked?

The housing questions provide information on the housing stock in Canada. In addition, data on the number of rooms and bedrooms in homes and on housing costs are used to assess the economic situation of families. Governments use this information to measure levels of crowding in dwellings and develop housing programs. Information on the age of dwellings and the need for repairs is used by municipalities to develop neighbourhood improvement programs.

## Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and produces relevant, high-quality data, the 2021 Census will continue to track key housing indicators such as homeownership rates, housing affordability, etc. to provide updates on the housing needs of Canadians. Access to homeownership and rising rents are of high importance to Canadian households and the continuity of the housing content in the census will allow governments, business and Canadians to see how their local neighbourhoods have evolved over time.

New for 2021, the census has expanded its collection of shelter costs to include all housing on reserves in order to respond to the emerging needs of households in all areas across Canada. With the addition of the user and occupancy fees collected in band housing, complementing the rent and mortgage payments and property taxes concepts for renters and owners, nationwide housing affordability research can be conducted.

Changes made to the housing content on the census were carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Specifically in relation to on-reserve housing, Statistics Canada consulted with experts from Indigenous Services Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as well as Statistics Canada's Indigenous Liaison Advisors to identify the importance of collecting and disseminating these data for on-reserve communities.

## Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has modified the placement and wording of the question on household maintainers (which identifies who in the household pays the rent or mortgage, taxes, electricity, etc.) and introduced a question on user or occupancy fees for people living in band housing.

### Changes considered and tested successfully

The household maintainer question was moved from the household-level section to the person-level section, with a slight wording change, to conform to the layout of the online questionnaire.

To collect complete information on shelter costs for all on-reserve households, a new question was developed and refined through focus group testing.

### Resulting approach for 2021

Moving this question to the person-level section of the questionnaire results in more complete responses, including more frequent reporting of more than one individual in the household contributing to expenditures. This reflects a better understanding of the question.

For 2021, the 2A-R questionnaire, used for enumeration in on-reserve, northern and remote communities, will include a new question on user or occupancy fees for housing provided by local governments, First Nations or Indian bands.

## What to expect in 2021

The 2021 Census content will include returning content from the 2016 Census, with minor revisions, and a new question for some populations living on reserves.



## Additional information

The content of the 2021 Census questionnaire is the result of extensive engagement, discussions and testing, including comprehensive one-on-one interviews and a rigorous 2019 Census Test involving more than 135,000 households across Canada. Additional information on this can be found in the [2019 Census Content Test: Design and methodology](#) fact sheet.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

For further information on new and modified content, as well as a description of content that was tested but did not proceed to the 2021 Census questionnaire, see [Painting a Portrait of Canada: The 2021 Census of Population](#).