
Place of Birth, Generation Status, Citizenship and Immigration Reference Guide

Census of Population, 2021



Release date: February 8, 2023



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Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

Release date: February 8, 2023

Catalogue number 98-500-X, issue 2021007

ISBN 978-0-660-42455-2

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Definitions and concepts

The 2021 Census of Population includes information on place of birth, place of birth of parents, generation status, citizenship and immigration for persons living in private households.

The [place of birth](#) of person question is used to determine the Canadian province or territory or the country outside Canada in which the person was born. It provides information on the diversity of the Canadian population and on population movements within Canada and from other countries to Canada.

The question on [place of birth of parents](#) is used to determine the country in which each of the person's parents was born. When used in combination with the question on the place of birth of person, it helps to derive the [generation status](#) and thereby establish whether the person is in the first, second, or third generation or more. Generation status provides information on the diversity of Canada's population and makes it possible to study how the children of immigrants (second generation) are integrating into Canadian society. This information also helps us understand how Canada's immigration history has shaped the different generations of Canadians who make up today's population.

The [citizenship](#) question provides information on the legal citizenship status of Canada's population. This information is used to estimate the number of potential voters and to plan citizenship classes and programs. It also provides information about the population with multiple citizenships and the countries of citizenship outside Canada.

For the 2021 Census of Population, data on immigration were obtained from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) administrative records.

The [immigrant status](#) variable provides information on the number of [immigrants](#) and [non-permanent residents](#) with a [usual place of residence](#) in Canada at the time of the census.

Non-permanent residents

A **non-permanent resident** refers to a person from another country with a usual place of residence in Canada and who has a work or study permit or who has claimed refugee status (asylum claimant). Family members living with work or study permit holders are also included, unless these family members are already Canadian citizens or landed immigrants or permanent residents.

The inclusion of non-permanent residents in the census facilitates comparisons with provincial and territorial statistics (marriages, divorces, births and deaths), which include this population and provide information for planning services, such as health care, education and employment programs. Although every attempt has been made to enumerate non-permanent residents, factors such as language difficulties and the reluctance to complete a government form or to understand the need to participate may have affected estimates of this population.

Immigrants

An **immigrant** refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

Data on [year of immigration](#) provide information on the year in which the immigrant first obtained landed immigrant or permanent resident status. Single years of immigration can be collapsed to derive [period of immigration](#), which allows us to identify recent immigrants. A **recent immigrant** refers to a person who obtained landed immigrant or permanent resident status up to five years prior to a given census year. In the 2021 Census, this period is January 1, 2016, to May 11, 2021. Information on the [age at immigration](#) is derived from the immigrant's date of birth and year of immigration.

[Admission category](#) and [applicant type](#) variables provide information on the conditions under which immigrants have been granted the right to live in Canada (e.g., economic immigrants, immigrants sponsored by family, refugees). Applicant type is most often used in combination with admission category, particularly with the economic immigrant categories, in which principal applicants are selected based on their ability to contribute to the Canadian economy. These variables are available for immigrants who have been admitted since 1980.

New for 2021, additional immigration variables on year of arrival, pre-admission experience and province or territory of intended destination are integrated into the census for immigrants who have been admitted since 1980.

[Province or territory of intended destination](#) indicates the province or territory where the immigrant intends to live for the first time in Canada at the time of their admission. The variable is used to evaluate the migration patterns of the immigrant population within Canada.

Data on [year of arrival](#) provide information on the year in which the person first arrived in Canada to live. For persons who entered Canada more than once, their year of arrival is their first year they arrived in the country to live.

Year of arrival can be different from the **year of immigration**. For persons who first arrived as a non-permanent resident in Canada and later obtained their permanent resident or landed immigrant status, their year of arrival is different from their year of immigration. For persons who first arrived as a permanent resident or landed immigrant in Canada, their year of arrival is the same as their year of immigration.

The [pre-admission experience](#) variable indicates whether the immigrant held a work and/or study permit or claimed refugee status (asylum claimant) prior to admission as a permanent resident. These variables allow us to further understand the socioeconomic outcomes of immigrants with pre-admission experience in Canada and how they differ from those of immigrants without pre-admission experience.

Data on place of birth, citizenship and immigration are used to compare the social and economic conditions of immigrants over time; to evaluate employment and immigration policies and programs; and to plan education, health care and other services. This information is required by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as well as by provincial and territorial immigration departments, to develop and monitor immigration policies and programs. It is also used in support of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Citizenship Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

Please consult the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for more detailed information on the definitions of the place of birth, generation status, citizenship and immigration variables.

To better understand the relationship between the concepts of immigration, place of birth and generation status, please refer to [Figure 2.5](#) in the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

To better understand the relationship between the concepts of immigration, citizenship and place of birth, please refer to [Figure 2.6](#) in the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Questions

The 2021 Census of Population data on place of birth of person, place of birth of parents, generation status and citizenship were obtained from questions 19, 20 and 21 on the 2021 Census of Population [2A-L](#) questionnaire or the 2021 Census of Population [2A-R](#) questionnaire. For the 2021 Census, the [2A](#) short-form questionnaire was used to enumerate all usual residents of 75% of private dwellings. The 2A-L long-form questionnaire, which also includes the questions from the 2A short-form questionnaire, was used to enumerate a 25% sample of private households in Canada. For private households in First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas, the 2A-R questionnaire was used to enumerate 100% of the population.

To assist people whose first language is neither English nor French, the census questions were translated into 25 other languages, including 13 Indigenous languages. Respondents could obtain the census questions in any of

these [other languages and alternative formats](#) by calling the Census Help Line. However, the census questionnaire was printed only in English and French and must be completed in either English or French.

The questions on the [2A-R](#) questionnaire were the same as those on the [2A-L](#) questionnaire; however, respondents living on reserves were not asked to answer the questions on citizenship.

The 2021 versions of the questions on place of birth and citizenship were as follows:

- Question 19, which collected information on the place of birth of person, asked: **Where was this person born?** Persons could select from the 13 provinces and territories if born in Canada or report the country according to present boundaries if born outside Canada.
- Question 20, which collected information on the place of birth of parents, asked: **Where were this person's parents born?** Persons could select "All parents born in Canada," "All parents born outside Canada," or "One parent born in Canada and one parent born outside Canada." The person was then asked to specify the country of birth outside Canada, if applicable, according to present boundaries.
- Question 21 collected information on Canadian citizenship status and countries of citizenship other than Canada. Part A of the citizenship question asked: **Is this person a Canadian citizen?** The person could select, "Yes, Canadian citizen by birth," "Yes, Canadian citizen by naturalization," or "No, not a Canadian citizen." Part B of the citizenship question asked: **Is this person a citizen of a country other than Canada?** If the person answered yes, the question then asked them to specify the country of citizenship.

For more information on the reasons why the census questions are asked, please refer to the five [fact sheets](#) found on The road to the 2021 Census web page.

More information on the wording and format of the questions, and on the instructions provided to respondents in order to assist them in answering those questions, can be found in the 2021 Census of Population [2A-L](#) questionnaire; the 2021 Census of Population [2A-R](#) questionnaire; the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X; and the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Data on immigration are obtained from [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's](#) administrative records and are not asked on the questionnaire.

Classifications

The 2021 Census uses Statistics Canada's standard classifications for all place of birth, generation status, citizenship and immigration variables. Data from the responses to the questions, or integration of immigration data from administrative records, are used to produce summary and detailed variables that provide a portrait of the population living in Canada.

The 2021 Census includes data for over 200 places of birth. The classification used to disseminate data for the variables on place of birth of person and place of birth of parents is based on the [Standard Classification of Countries and Areas of Interest \(SCCAI\) 2019](#). The complete list of places of birth disseminated in the 2021 Census can be found in [Appendix 2.6](#) of the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X. For additional information on the changes to country names and codes since 1970, please refer to [Current and Historical Countries and Areas of Interest 2019](#).

The classification of countries of citizenship disseminated in the 2021 Census can be found in [Appendix 2.7](#) of the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X. It is based on the [Classification of Country of Citizenship 2021](#).

The classification of the admission categories disseminated for the 2021 Census can be found in [Appendix 2.9](#) of the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X. For more information regarding admission category, please refer to the [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) website.

Please consult the [Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X, for more information on the classifications for each definition.

Concepts over time

The 2021 Census of Population questions on place of birth, citizenship and immigration have undergone modifications that should be considered when comparing concepts and data over time.

Place of birth, place of birth of parents and generation status

Data on a person's place of birth have been collected since 1871, and the content of the question has undergone little change. For 2021, the version on the paper questionnaire remains the same as 2016, whereas the electronic questionnaire version has undergone minor modifications (e.g., radio buttons have replaced the drop-down menu for the province or territory of birth).

Data on the place of birth of parents were first collected in 1891, but were not collected in every subsequent census. For the 2001 and 2006 censuses, the question on the place of birth of parents was asked only of persons aged 15 and over. For all other census years, including 2021, and the 2011 National Household Survey, the question was asked of the total target population for each year the question was available. In 1971, information on the detailed places of birth of parents outside Canada was not collected.

For the 2021 Census, the wording and format of the question on the place of birth of parents have been modified. The new version of the question will refer to the place of birth of each "parent," rather than the place of birth of the "mother" and "father" in order to better reflect all possible current family arrangements.

Citizenship

A question on citizenship has been included in the census since 1901, and there have been changes to the question over time. In the 1971 Census, respondents were asked to indicate specific countries of citizenship. For the 1981, 1986 and 1991 censuses, citizenship information for specific countries is available, but only for respondents who indicated the same country for their citizenship and their place of birth. Since 1996, the question on citizenship has remained relatively unchanged, with the exception of 2006, when a note was added to explain the meaning of "naturalization."

For the 2021 Census, the citizenship question changed from a single question (with a "select all that apply" format) to a two-part question to clarify the main concepts being measured. Part A now asks whether this person is a Canadian citizen (by birth or by naturalization) or not a Canadian citizen. Part B asks whether this person is a citizen of a country other than Canada. If they answer yes, the question then asks them to specify the country of citizenship other than Canada.

The data on citizenship reflect changes that have occurred over time in Canada's citizenship laws. A person in Canada may hold dual or multiple citizenships. Changes to citizenship statutes and regulations pertaining to citizenship may affect the tendency of the immigrant population to acquire Canadian citizenship (e.g., changes to the residency requirements to become a Canadian citizen by naturalization). Historical comparisons must take these legislative changes into account.

Changes to countries and areas of interest

Historical comparisons of place of birth, place of birth of parents and country of citizenship should consider the changes in boundaries and country names over time. For additional information on the changes to country names since 1970, please refer to [Current and Historical Countries and Areas of Interest 2019](#).

In addition, the 2021 and 2016 censuses included prompts in the electronic questionnaire for the place of birth and citizenship questions. For example, if a respondent provided an ambiguous response “Ireland,” the respondent was asked to specify the country according to present boundaries (Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland). These prompts resulted in an increase in the precision and quality of data related to several places of birth and countries of citizenship.

Immigration

Data on immigrant status and year of immigration have been collected on the census questionnaire since 1901. The 1971 Census and earlier censuses collected data only on **periods** of immigration, i.e., ranges of years. Data for **individual** years of immigration became available with the 1981 Census. Since 1991, a direct question on landed immigrant status has been used to identify the immigrant population. Previously, the immigrant population was defined as all persons who were not Canadian citizens by birth. Data are not available for the non-permanent resident population prior to 1991 because they were not part of the target population.

New for the 2021 Census, questions on immigrant status and year of immigration will no longer be asked on the questionnaire. This information will be obtained from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s administrative records. This change resulted in some differences for specific single years of immigration. These differences are the result of improved data quality for the year of immigration variable, as the data are more reflective of the concept measured.

Comparisons of individual years of immigration and age at immigration over time can be affected by a number of factors, such as emigration and mortality among the immigrant population, survey methodology, respondent reporting patterns, and increased use of administrative data.

Data on admission category and applicant type were included in the census for the first time in 2016. New for the 2021 Census of Population, year of arrival, pre-admission experience and province or territory of intended destination have been added to the census.

For more information on census questions and derived variables related to immigration, citizenship, place of birth and generation status since Confederation, please refer to [Appendix 2.1](#) of the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Information on the comparability of the 2021 Census data with previous censuses and other data sources is provided in the [Comparability over time](#) section.

Collection and processing methods

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Canada in early 2020 and affected all steps of the 2021 Census process, from data collection to dissemination. Please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X, for more detailed information on this topic.

Data on place of birth, place of birth of parents and citizenship were obtained from questions on the census questionnaire.

Data on immigration were obtained from [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s](#) administrative records. These administrative records contain information on the total number of immigrants who have been admitted to Canada each year as permanent residents since 1952 and non-permanent residents who have been issued a work or study permit or who have claimed refugee status (asylum claimants) since 1980.

These data were integrated with the census to derive immigrant status, year of immigration, age at immigration, admission category, applicant type, year of arrival, pre-admission experience and province or territory of intended destination.

Details on the scope and impact of processing are provided in the [Data quality](#) section.

For general information on the overall content, collection, design, processing and data quality for the 2021 Census of Population, please see the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Data quality

The 2021 Census of Population underwent a thorough data quality assessment. The different certification activities conducted to evaluate the quality of the 2021 Census data are described in [Chapter 9](#) of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The data quality assessment was conducted in addition to the regular verifications and quality checks completed at key stages of the census. For example, throughout data collection and processing, the accuracy of specific steps such as data capture and coding was measured, the consistency of the responses provided was checked, and the non-response rates for each question were analyzed. As well, the quality of imputed responses was assessed during data editing and imputation.

During the data quality assessment, a number of data quality indicators were produced and used to evaluate the quality of the data. These indicators are briefly described below. Finally, resulting census counts were compared with other data sources and certified for final release.

The main highlights of this assessment of the data pertaining to place of birth, generation status, citizenship and immigration are presented below.

Variability due to sampling and total non-response

The objective of the long-form census questionnaire is to produce estimates on various topics for a wide variety of geographies, ranging from very large areas (such as provinces and census metropolitan areas) to very small areas (such as neighbourhoods and municipalities), and for various populations (such as Indigenous peoples and immigrants) that are generally referred to in this document as “populations of interest.” In order to reduce response burden, the long-form census questionnaire is administered to a random sample of households.

This sampling approach and total non-response introduce variability into the estimates that needs to be accounted for. This variability also depends on the population size and the variability of the characteristics being measured. Furthermore, the precision of estimates may vary considerably depending on the domain or geography of interest, in particular because of the variation in response rates. For more information on variability due to sampling and total non-response in long-form census questionnaire estimates, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Non-response bias

Non-response bias is a potential source of error for all surveys, including the long-form census questionnaire. Non-response bias arises when the characteristics of those who participate in a survey are different from those who do not.

In general, the risk of non-response bias increases as the response rate declines. For the 2021 long-form census questionnaire, Statistics Canada adapted its collection and estimation procedures to mitigate the effect of non-response bias to the extent possible. For more information on these mitigation strategies, please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Data quality indicators

A number of quality indicators were produced and analyzed during the 2021 Census of Population data quality assessment. Four indicators are available to data users for long-form content: the total non-response (TNR) rate; the confidence interval; as well as the non-response rate and the imputation rate per question.

The **total non-response (TNR) rate** is the primary quality indicator that accompanies each disseminated 2021 Census of Population product, and is calculated for each geographic area. It measures total non-response at the dwelling level. Non-response is said to be total when no questionnaire is returned from a dwelling or when a returned questionnaire does not meet the minimum content. More information on the TNR rate is available in [Chapter 9](#) of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The **confidence interval** was selected as a variance-based quality indicator to accompany the 2021 Census of Population long-form estimates because it helps users easily make a statistical inference. This indicator provides a measure of the accuracy of the long-form estimates. Using a science-based approach, research and simulations were done to ensure that confidence intervals are constructed using adequate statistical methods for the Census of Population data and areas of interest.

A confidence interval is associated with a confidence level, generally set at 95%. A 95% confidence interval is an interval constructed around the estimate so that, if the process that generated the sample were repeated many times, the value of the interest parameter in the population would be contained in 95% of these intervals. The confidence interval consists of a lower bound and an upper bound. These two bounds accompany the long-form estimates in most data tables.

Further details on the different methods used to construct confidence intervals and their assumptions are provided in the [Sampling and Weighting Technical Report, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-306-X.

The **non-response rate per question** is a measure of missing information due to non-response to a question. It measures only the non-response that is resolved through imputation during data processing (as opposed to weighting when a sample is used). For the long-form questionnaire, the non-response rate per question includes only partial non-response to the question, except for First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas where both partial and total non-response are taken into account. Partial non-response is when answers to certain questions are not provided for a respondent household.

The non-response rate per question for a question on the long-form questionnaire is defined as the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest who did not respond to the question divided by the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest. Here “units” refers to the statistical units for which data are collected or derived (e.g., persons or households, depending on whether the question is about a person-level characteristic or a household-level characteristic). A unit is considered to be in scope for a given question if the question is applicable to that unit and the unit belongs to the population of interest related to the question.

The **imputation rate per question** measures the extent to which responses to a given question were imputed. Imputation is used to replace missing data in the event of non-response or when a response is found to be invalid (e.g., multiple answers are provided when a single answer is expected). Imputation is conducted to eliminate data gaps and to reduce bias introduced by non-response. Imputation is generally done by identifying persons or households in the same geographical area with similar characteristics to the incomplete record and copying their values to fill in the missing or invalid responses.

The imputation rate for a question on the long-form questionnaire is defined as the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest for which the response to the question was imputed divided by the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest (see the definition of “units” provided in the above section on the non-response rate per question).

For long-form content, imputation for most areas is done to resolve partial non-response—not total non-response, which instead is treated by weighting. However, in First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas, whole household imputation (WHI) is used to resolve total non-response. It first imputes the occupancy status of non-respondent dwellings and further imputes all the data for those dwellings resolved as occupied in the first step. WHI is included in the imputation rate per question, including the use of administrative data to impute non-responding households in areas with low response rates; see [Appendix 1.7](#) of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X. As with the non-response rate, a unit is considered to be in scope if the question is applicable to that unit and the unit belongs to the population of interest related to the question.

The non-response and imputation rates per question can be interpreted as the proportion of in-scope units in the population of interest for which information was not reported or was imputed, respectively. The long-form rates are weighted to reflect the fact that the long-form questionnaire is only distributed to a sample of the population, so in this case, the proportion is estimated.

The non-response and imputation rates for a question are often similar, but some differences can be observed for a given question because of additional data processing steps that may have been required. These rates were regularly checked during data assessment, and a detailed analysis was done if there was a difference between the two rates for a question, to ensure the appropriateness of the processing steps taken and the quality of the data. A difference between the non-response rate and the imputation rate for a question can generally be explained by one of the following two factors:

- Some responses were considered invalid or inconsistent during the edit stage and imputation was needed, which is why the imputation rate is higher than the non-response rate for a question.
- Some non-responses were resolved in a straightforward manner early during data processing because a single resolution was possible based on the answers provided to other questions, making imputation unnecessary. This may explain why the non-response rate is higher than the imputation rate for a question.

Tables 1 to 7 present the non-response and imputation rates per variable for Canada and for each province and territory.

Place of birth and citizenship

Data on place of birth and citizenship were obtained from questions on the census questionnaire. At the national level, the 2021 Census imputation rate for the place of birth of person question is 0.9% (Table 1). The question on place of birth of parents has a slightly higher imputation rate of 1.7% for parent 1 and 2.6% for parent 2 (Table 2). For all place of birth and citizenship questions, the non-response rates are close to the imputation rate. For example, at the national level, the question on citizenship has a non-response rate of 0.6% and an imputation rate of 0.8% (Table 3).

Among the provinces, the imputation rate for the question on place of birth ranges from 0.5% in Prince Edward Island to 1.9% in Saskatchewan (Table 1). Similar trends were observed across the provinces for the place of birth of parents and citizenship questions.

Nunavut recorded the highest imputation rate among the territories, with 23.8% for place of birth of person (Table 1), 23.7% for place of birth of parent 1 and 24.2% for place of birth of parent 2 (Table 2), and 23.3% for citizenship (Table 3). In the territories, as well as in First Nations communities, Metis Settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas in the provinces, COVID-19 presented challenges for conducting the 2021 Census of Population. Some challenges, such as travel restrictions and unavailability of local staff, affected in-person enumeration.

Place of Birth, Generation Status, Citizenship and Immigration Reference Guide

Table 1
Non-response rate and imputation rate for place of birth of person, Canada, provinces and territories,
Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	0.8	0.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.7	0.8
Prince Edward Island	0.4	0.5
Nova Scotia	0.6	0.7
New Brunswick	0.7	0.8
Quebec	0.6	0.7
Ontario	0.6	0.7
Manitoba	1.6	1.7
Saskatchewan	1.7	1.9
Alberta	1.1	1.2
British Columbia	0.9	1.1
Yukon	4.2	4.3
Northwest Territories	9.0	9.1
Nunavut	23.7	23.8

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 2
Non-response rate and imputation rate for place of birth of parents, Canada, provinces and territories,
Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Place of birth of Parent 1		Place of birth of Parent 2	
	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent			
Canada	1.4	1.7	1.3	2.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.1	1.1	1.2	2.2
Prince Edward Island	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.8
Nova Scotia	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.8
New Brunswick	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.7
Quebec	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.7
Ontario	1.4	1.6	1.1	2.7
Manitoba	2.1	2.4	2.0	3.2
Saskatchewan	2.1	2.3	2.1	3.2
Alberta	1.7	2.1	1.5	3.3
British Columbia	1.7	2.0	1.6	2.9
Yukon	4.9	5.1	4.9	6.5
Northwest Territories	9.4	9.6	9.3	10.7
Nunavut	23.6	23.7	23.7	24.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 3
Non-response rate and imputation rate for citizenship, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	0.6	0.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.5	0.7
Prince Edward Island	0.4	0.4
Nova Scotia	0.5	0.6
New Brunswick	0.6	0.7
Quebec	0.5	0.6
Ontario	0.5	0.6
Manitoba	0.7	1.6
Saskatchewan	1.0	1.7
Alberta	0.7	1.1
British Columbia	0.6	1.0
Yukon	7.5	4.3
Northwest Territories	24.9	10.2
Nunavut	23.7	23.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Immigration

Data on immigration were obtained from IRCC's administrative records. These administrative records contain information on the total number of immigrants who have been admitted to Canada each year as permanent residents since 1952 and non-permanent residents who have been issued a work or study permit or who have claimed refugee status (asylum claimants) since 1980. To (partially) resolve the absence of administrative records prior to 1952, the administrative files were supplemented to include records from past censuses (2001, 2006 and 2016) and the 2011 National Household Survey for those who responded with a year of immigration prior to 1952.

The administrative data and the census question on Canadian citizenship (question 21a) were used to derive immigrant status to determine whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant or a non-permanent resident. A person who is linked to an administrative record are considered an immigrant or non-permanent resident based on the status on May 11, 2022. For example, a person linked to a permanent resident (landed immigrant) record are considered an immigrant if the date of immigration was on or prior to May 11, 2022.

The responses to the citizenship question were used to determine which individuals required imputation to the immigrant status variable due to missing links. For those who were not linked and who gave a citizenship response of Canadian citizen by birth were considered to be non-immigrants and required no imputation for immigration status. Canadian citizens by naturalization and non-Canadian citizens were considered in-scope and required imputation if not linked to administrative records.

The non-response rates for the immigration variables largely measures the proportion of immigrants and non-permanent residents for whom an administrative value was not available because the record was not linked to an administrative record. It also includes some inconsistencies between the census responses to the other questions and the linked administrative values. For example, immigrants may have reported a birth year on the census questionnaire that was before their year of immigration.

At the national level, the immigrant status variable had an imputation rate of 2.2% and a non-response rate of 12.1% (Table 4). The difference between these two rates is because non-responses were resolved early during data processing because a single resolution was possible based on the answers provided to other questions, such as the citizenship question, making imputation unnecessary.

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The administrative data for admission category, applicant type, year of arrival, pre-admission experience and province or territory of intended destination variables are available only for immigrants who were admitted since 1980. These variables have similar non-response rates and imputation rates across all variables at the national level. For example, the admission category has a non-response rate of 8.5% and an imputation rate of 8.6% (Table 6).

Table 4
Non-response rate and imputation rate for immigrant status, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	12.1	2.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	11.3	3.6
Prince Edward Island	11.8	3.6
Nova Scotia	12.3	2.8
New Brunswick	11.7	3.8
Quebec	8.7	1.6
Ontario	12.9	2.1
Manitoba	11.5	2.6
Saskatchewan	9.0	3.2
Alberta	11.4	2.6
British Columbia	13.5	2.3
Yukon	13.2	5.3
Northwest Territories	12.3	5.3
Nunavut	27.9	20.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 5
Non-response rate and imputation rate for year of immigration, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	12.2	10.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	11.5	9.7
Prince Edward Island	12.0	9.9
Nova Scotia	12.5	10.2
New Brunswick	11.9	9.8
Quebec	8.8	7.7
Ontario	13.0	11.2
Manitoba	11.7	10.4
Saskatchewan	9.1	8.3
Alberta	11.6	10.4
British Columbia	13.6	11.7
Yukon	13.2	11.2
Northwest Territories	12.5	11.2
Nunavut	28.3	27.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

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Table 6

Non-response rate and imputation rate for admission category, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	8.5	8.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	9.0	9.1
Prince Edward Island	8.4	8.4
Nova Scotia	8.3	8.4
New Brunswick	7.9	8.0
Quebec	5.9	6.1
Ontario	8.7	8.8
Manitoba	8.4	8.5
Saskatchewan	7.2	7.3
Alberta	9.1	9.3
British Columbia	9.9	10.0
Yukon	10.4	10.4
Northwest Territories	10.9	10.9
Nunavut	26.9	26.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 7

Non-response rate and imputation rate for applicant type, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Geography	Non-response rate, weighted	Imputation rate, weighted
	percent	
Canada	8.5	8.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	9.0	9.4
Prince Edward Island	8.4	8.5
Nova Scotia	8.3	8.4
New Brunswick	8.0	8.1
Quebec	6.0	6.1
Ontario	8.7	8.9
Manitoba	8.4	8.5
Saskatchewan	7.2	7.4
Alberta	9.2	9.4
British Columbia	9.9	10.1
Yukon	10.5	10.9
Northwest Territories	10.9	11.4
Nunavut	26.9	26.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The non-response and imputation rates per question at lower levels of geography are also available in 2021 Census data tables presenting data quality indicators. This information is scheduled for release on August 17, 2022, for short-form questions and on November 30, 2022, for long-form questions.

The [2021 Census Data Quality Guidelines](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-26-0006 provides all the information required to understand and interpret the data quality indicators for the 2021 Census, along with

guidelines to enable their proper usage. Data quality indicators are provided so that users are informed about the quality of the statistical information and can determine the relevance and the limitations of the data relative to their needs. In general, the quality of the 2021 Census of Population data is very good, but in some cases, data have to be used with caution. It is strongly recommended that users consult all available data quality indicators to get a better sense of the quality of the data products they are interested in.

Certification of final counts

Once data editing and imputation were completed, the data were weighted to ensure that estimates represent the total Canadian population living in private dwellings. Certification of the final weighted estimates was the last step in the validation process, which led to the recommendation to release the data for each level of geography and domain of interest. Based on the analysis of the data quality indicators and the comparison of long-form census questionnaire estimates with other data sources, the recommendation is for unconditional release, conditional release, or non-release (for quality reasons on rare occasions). For conditional release or non-release, appropriate notes and warnings are included in the products and provided to users. Moreover, other data sources were used to evaluate the long-form census questionnaire estimates. However, since the risk of error often increases for lower levels of geography and for smaller populations, and the data sources used to evaluate these counts are less reliable or not available at these lower levels, it can be difficult to certify the counts at these levels.

Long-form census questionnaire estimates are also subject to confidentiality rules that ensure non-disclosure of respondent identity and characteristics. For more information on privacy and confidentiality, please refer to [Chapter 1](#) of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X. For information on how Statistics Canada balances the protection of confidentiality and the need for disaggregated census data, with specific attention to new 2021 Census content, please refer to [Balancing the Protection of Confidentiality with the Needs for Disaggregated Census Data, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-26-0005.

For more information on data processing and the calculation of estimates and their level of precision, please refer to the [Sampling and Weighting Technical Report, Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-306-X.

Comparability over time

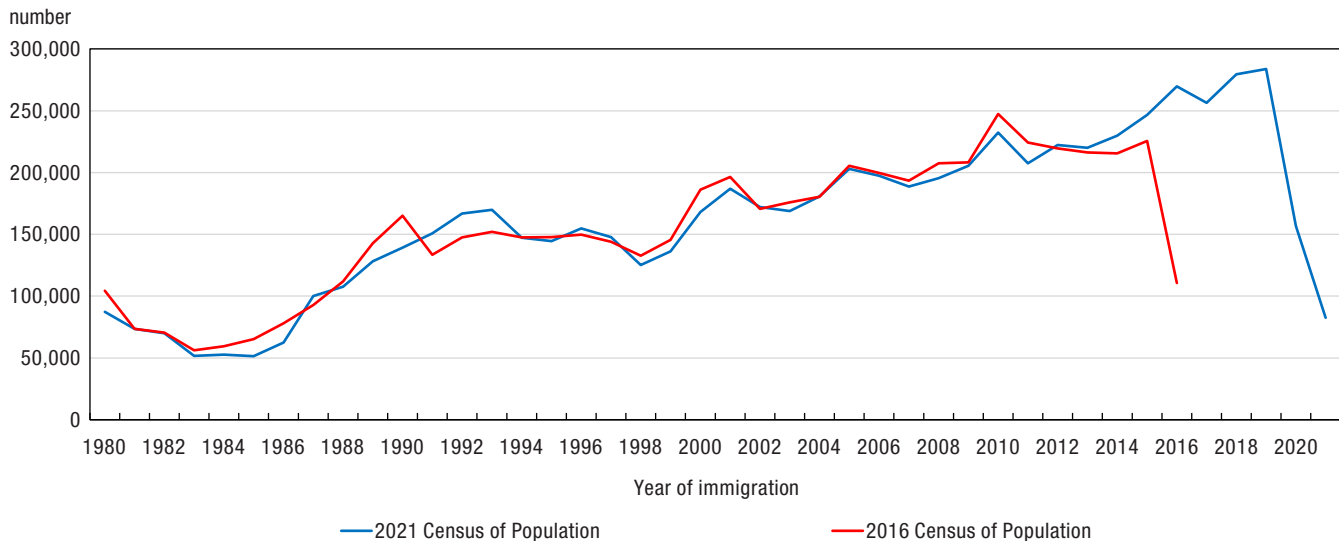
Immigrant status and year of immigration

For the 2021 Census, information on immigrant status and year of immigration was obtained from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's administrative records for the first time, while in the past censuses, it was collected directly in the census questionnaire. Because the methods used to collect data for immigrant status and year of immigration are different (response vs. administrative value), historical comparability with previous censuses will be affected. In particular, there may be shifts in the distribution of year of immigration, as perceived year of immigration (e.g., year of arrival) is replaced with actual year of immigration. A comparison of the number of immigrants by year of immigration between the 2021 Census and the 2016 Census (Chart 1) shows these shifts.

For the period from 1989 to 1993, Chart 1 shows that 2016 Census data (responses) were more heavily distributed in 1989 and 1990, while 2021 Census data (from administrative data) were more heavily distributed from 1991 to 1993. This is caused by respondents providing their year of arrival or asylum claim (in the 2016 Census), as opposed to their year of immigration (in the 2021 Census).

Chart 1

Year of immigration for the immigrant population who were admitted between 1980 and 2021, Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021



Note: The 2016 Census produced data for immigrants who were admitted on or before Census Day, May 10, 2016. The 2021 Census produced data for immigrants who were admitted on or before Census Day, May 11, 2021.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Citizenship

For the 2021 Census of Population, the citizenship question changed from a single question (with a “select all that apply” format) to a two-part question to clarify the main concepts being measured. The change to the question resulted in an increase in the number of responses for people who hold more than one citizenship, particularly those who hold Canadian citizenship (by birth or by naturalization) and citizenship of a country other than Canada. The results are in line with what was expected from the 2019 Census Test and indicate improved data quality for multiple citizenships.

Since 1977, Canada has recognized multiple citizenships, that is, Canadian citizens have the right to hold citizenship of more than one country. Immigrants who obtain Canadian citizenship also have the right to retain their previous citizenship. However, multiple citizenships are not allowed or recognized by all countries. The census provides information on Canadian citizenship and up to two countries of citizenship outside Canada as reported by the person. It does not take into account the rules and laws regarding multiple citizenships for countries outside Canada.

Because of the change to the citizenship question, historical comparability will be affected for multiple citizenships. Table 8 shows the percentage changes of citizenship responses for the 2011 National Household Survey and the Census of Population for 2016 and 2021. The 2021 Census data are still comparable to those of the previous censuses for key measures such as Canadian citizenship status.

Table 8
Citizenship, Canada, National Household Survey, 2011, and Census of Population, 2016 and 2021

Citizenship	2011 NHS	2016 Census	2021 Census	% change	
				2011 to 2016	2016 to 2021
Total, citizenship	32,852,320	34,460,065	36,328,475	4.9	5.4
Citizens of Canada only	29,962,640	30,592,180	29,418,555	2.1	-3.8
Citizens of Canada and one other country	920,855	1,420,145	3,644,990	54.2	156.7
Citizens of Canada and two other countries	11,810	22,255	79,685	88.4	258.1
Citizens of one other country only	1,944,990	2,404,790	3,122,870	23.6	29.9
Citizens of two other countries	12,025	20,685	62,380	72.0	201.6

NHS = National Household Survey

Sources: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011, and Census of Population, 2016 and 2021.

Comparability with other data sources

Many statistical sources provide information on immigration to Canada, covering different reference periods and different subpopulations, thereby meeting different informational needs. These factors need to be taken into account when comparing the 2021 Census of Population data with other sources, such as the [Longitudinal Immigration Database \(IMDB\)](#) and the administrative data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The 2021 Census of Population estimates the immigrant population living in private households in Canada on Census Day, May 11, 2021.

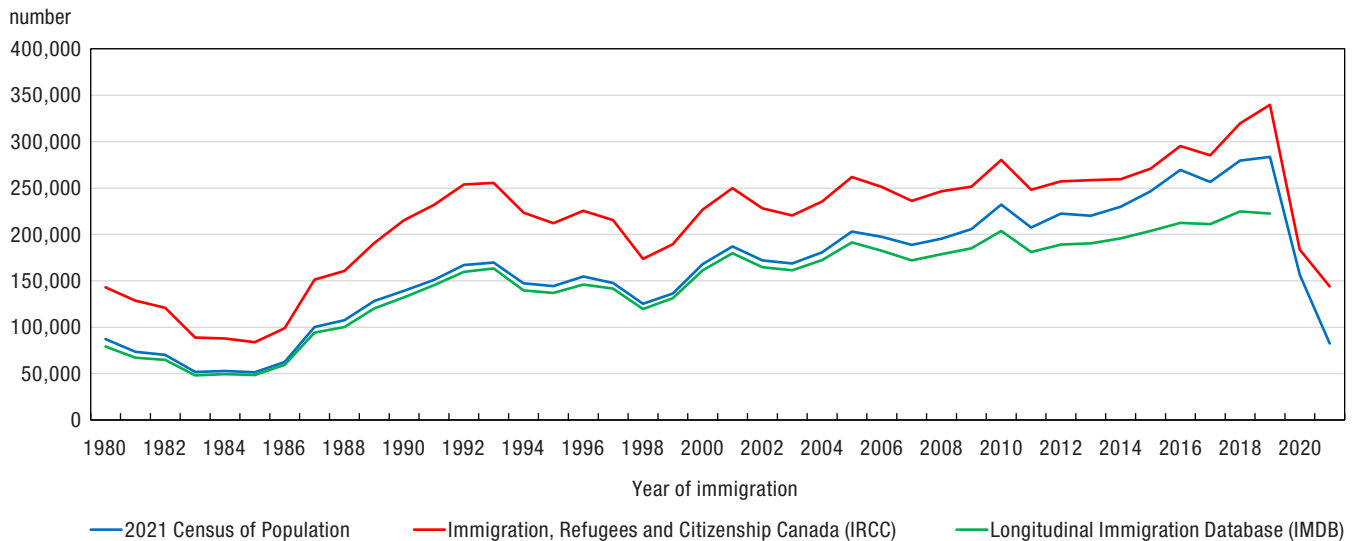
In comparison, the administrative data from IRCC provide information on the total number of immigrants admitted to Canada each year as permanent residents. The IRCC data cannot be used to estimate the population of immigrants living in Canada as they do not account for any outflows, such as deaths or emigration. Since they provide the total number of all those who have ever been permanent residents in Canada, the IRCC administrative data counts are higher than the census estimates of immigrants living in Canada at a given point in time.

To some extent, the counts from the IMDB consider deaths and emigration. The 2019 IMDB combines linked administrative data from IRCC with tax data files. The counts presented in Chart 2 are for those immigrants who filed tax returns in 2019. Since not all immigrants living in Canada would have filed tax returns, because of age or other factors, counts from the IMDB are expected to be lower than the estimates from the 2021 Census.

The number of immigrants by year of immigration in the 2021 Census data, the IRCC data and the IMDB data (Chart 2) shows similar trends in all three sources. In the earlier years of immigration, the census estimates are closer to the IMDB counts, as immigrants who landed between 1980 and 2005 would most likely be taxfilers still living in Canada at the time of the census. As the year of immigration moves towards 2021, the census estimates start to move closer to the counts from IRCC, as the number of non-taxfilers, such as children, increases, while the number of deaths and emigrants would be lower.

Chart 2

Year of immigration for the immigrant population who were admitted between 1980 and 2021, from different immigration data sources, Canada



Note: IRCC produced data for all immigrants who were admitted before July 1, 2021. The 2021 Census produced data for immigrants who were admitted on or before Census Day, May 11, 2021. The IMDB includes data for immigrants who filed tax returns in 2019; no data are currently available for 2020 and 2021.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021, and IMDB, tax year 2019; and IRCC.

In addition to the Census of Population and the IMDB, Statistics Canada produces other key data sources on the immigrant population, such as the [Labour Force Survey](#) and the [General Social Survey](#).

Statistics Canada has also produced projections on place of birth, generation status, citizenship and immigration under specific scenarios in the [Population projections on immigration and diversity for Canada and its regions, 2016 to 2041: Overview of projection assumptions and scenarios](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 17-20-0001. When comparing generation status from the census of population with the population projections users should consider the differences in the definition of generation status.

When place of birth, generation status, citizenship and immigration data are compared across data sources, additional factors should be considered. These include differences in survey target populations; reference periods; sampling and collection methods, e.g., question wording, questionnaire format, examples and instructions; approaches to data processing; increase use of administrative data and differences in the social and political climate at the time of data collection. For additional information, please see the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Citizenship and immigration data on reserves and settlements

People living on reserves and settlements who were enumerated with the 2021 Census of Population [2A-R](#) questionnaire were not asked the questions on citizenship (Question 21). Consequently, citizenship, immigrant status, year of immigration, admission category, applicant type, year of arrival, province or territory of intended destination and pre-admission experience data are not available for reserves and settlements at the census subdivision level and lower levels of geography. In these areas, the majority of the population was enumerated with the 2A-R questionnaire rather than the 2A-L questionnaire, which was administered to the off-reserve population. Citizenship and immigration data are, however, included in the totals for larger geographic areas, such as census divisions and provinces.

For more information on citizenship and immigration data on reserves and settlements, see the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.