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2026 Census Content Fact Sheets

Content changes for the 2026 Census of Population: Indigenous Peoples

2026 Census of Population

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Content changes for the 2026 Census of Population: Indigenous Peoples

Introduction

The next Census of Population will take place in May 2026. To maintain the relevance of the census, Statistics Canada evaluates and reviews the questionnaire content in preparation for each census cycle. This includes several stages of consultative engagement, as well as testing and data evaluation, to recommend questionnaire content for the census.

Approximately 222,000 households from communities across the country were selected to participate in the 2024 Census Test. The test helped to determine whether new or modified questions under consideration could be easily understood and answered by Canadians. Testing census content ensures that high-quality data will be available from the 2026 Census of Population to support a wide variety of programs and services in communities across the country.

A series of fact sheets provides an overview of the content changes for the 2026 Census of Population because the census process is always evolving to reflect changes in the Canadian population and its demographic characteristics.

This fact sheet offers a summary of content changes for the 2026 Census specific to the questions about Indigenous Peoples. The tested changes for each question are explained below, along with the resulting approach for 2026.



Indigenous Peoples

Changes evaluated in the 2024 Census Test	Resulting approach for the 2026 Census of Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor text changes were made to the questions to improve understanding and acceptability for respondents. Modifications were made to the logic of the questionnaire to allow respondents who reported being First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit) to also answer the question on population group, if applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term “North American Indian” has been removed from the Indigenous group question, and the help text has been modified to remove the term “Indians.” New help text is now included to explain the continued use of the term “Indian” in the question about Registered or Treaty Indian status. The term “Indian band” has been removed from the question about membership in a First Nation. New help text has been included to add clarification for self-governing First Nations, along with a revised example list. The terms “citizen” and “government” have been added to the question about membership in a Métis organization or Settlement, along with updated response category names and simplified help text. New help text has been included for the question on enrollment under an Inuit land claims agreement. The logic of the questionnaire now allows respondents who reported being First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit) to also answer the question on population group, if applicable.

Why are these questions asked?

These questions allow for consistent and comprehensive counts of Indigenous people. These questions provide detailed information regarding First Nations people, Métis and Inuit to support the development and implementation of policies, programs and services for Canada and for First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, organizations and governments. Statistics Canada also uses this information to sample respondents for the Indigenous Peoples Survey.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

In 2021, questions were added for Indigenous respondents to identify membership in a Métis organization or Settlement and enrollment under an Inuit land claims agreement. These questions have allowed for the release of high-quality disaggregated data in support of Statistics Canada’s Disaggregated Data Action Plan. The terminology used in all questions and response categories related to Indigenous people must be revisited each cycle to ensure it is appropriate and well understood as language surrounding Indigenous people evolves. Statistics Canada needs to ensure that language remains relevant and respectful while questions remain well understood.



Statistics Canada's Centre for Indigenous Statistics and Partnerships engaged with Indigenous communities, organizations and stakeholders from across Canada. This engagement led to the identification of minor changes for each census question to improve respondents' understanding of the questions; their experience in responding to the questions; and, in turn, the quality of the data collected. The importance of providing Indigenous people with diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to answer fully and be represented in national statistics was underlined. Removing a skip pattern between the Indigenous group question and the population group question in the 2026 Census cycle is expected to help resolve a data gap that has persisted over multiple cycles, as noted by users. For more information about this change, see the fact sheet [Content changes for the 2026 Census of Population: Population group](#).

The [Regional Discussion Report: Review of First Nations, Métis and Inuit questions for the 2026 Census of Population](#) also provides additional information, including a summary of the feedback heard in the regional discussions, which was used to prepare changes to the questions for the 2024 Census Test.