

Road to the 2021 Census of Population: The questionnaire

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Statistics Canada is pleased to announce that the [2021 Census of Population questionnaire](#) has been published on the Statistics Canada website.

"As Canada continues to grow and evolve as a nation, it is important to understand its makeup to respond to its ever more diverse needs. Over the past 100 years, Statistics Canada has captured the changing portrait of Canada through the census, and Canadians have relied on census data to tell them about how the country is changing and about what matters to them. We all depend on key socioeconomic trends and analysis from the census to make important decisions that affect our families, our neighbourhoods and our businesses." – Anil Arora, Chief Statistician of Canada.

With census data, we learned that we are an aging society, with the population aged 65 and older outnumbering the population younger than 15 in 2016, for the first time. We also learned that in 2016, also for the first time, one-person households were more common than households composed of couples with or without children.

Big changes have also happened in commuting patterns in our country, with a 30% increase in the number of commuters between the 1996 and 2016 censuses. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, having an up-to-date understanding of the diversity of our communities has never been more important to ensuring that all Canadians are equitably served.

Statistics Canada will conduct the next census in May 2021, and the questions being asked reflect our needs for information and were rigorously tested. Extensive engagement with stakeholders and communities across the country took place to ensure that the 2021 questionnaire would be relevant to the evolving data needs of Canadians. The content of the 2021 Census questionnaire is what Canadians have asked us to prioritize. New and updated questions will provide the accurate data needed to support Canadian communities as they evolve, adapt and continue to recover from the pandemic.

Providing governments, businesses, organizations and Canadians with important information on the country's rich cultural and ethnic background, linguistic profile, and diversity of families is but a sample of how the census informs all Canadians. Understanding the changing nature of the labour market and the skills people bring to it is critical for Canada to remain competitive in a global market economy. Through the census, we have seen how the nation remains one of the most highly educated in the world, while at the same time we have shone a light on areas of the country where overcrowded and poor housing conditions and poverty remain a challenge.

How has the country evolved over the past five years? Will the population continue to become increasingly diverse? Will First Nations people, Métis and Inuit continue to be among the youngest populations? Will we see fewer Canadians living in crowded conditions? And to what extent has COVID-19 already impacted the labour force, communities and commuting patterns? The 2021 Census was shaped to provide important insights to answer these questions and many more.

The 2021 questionnaire will have returning content from 2016 to allow for ongoing trend analysis and, importantly, it will include new questions to continue to measure Canada's growing diversity. Questions related to gender, the rights of citizens to have their children educated in their first official language and Veteran status have been added, in addition to new questions that will ensure First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are identified using a distinctions-based approach. These questions were added so that everyone can see themselves in the census—a key message heard from Canadians.

Statistics Canada has adapted its approach to the reality of COVID-19 to ensure that every Canadian has an opportunity to be heard and that the 2021 Census is conducted in the best and safest way possible. We anticipate nearly 100% participation by all Canadians, and 80% of them are expected to complete the questionnaire through



an efficient, secure and user-friendly online application. Census processes have been redesigned to ensure that Canadians and census enumerators are safe by limiting the amount of contact needed to participate in this important exercise.

Over the course of the next year, we look forward to continuing to work with our key partners, stakeholders and Canadian communities to build momentum, create thousands of census jobs across the country and strengthen participation—all to ensure that high-quality data are available to make decisions that matter to Canadians. As we move forward, not fully knowing what the pandemic will bring, the health and safety of our staff and all Canadians will always be the priority.

Learn more

To learn more about the 2021 Census, please consult our census book, [Painting a Portrait of Canada with Data: The 2021 Census of Population](#). This document outlines the planned approach for the 2021 Census of Population and provides a clear explanation of the processes behind this important undertaking.

[The road to the 2021 Census](#) web page contains a series of supporting documents that explain content changes, the methodology and the decision-making process.

The [2021 Census of Population questionnaire](#) is now available.

For information, contact Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).