

# Tested and trusted statistical standards

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The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of considering inequitable impacts on Canadians from diverse population groups. Doing so requires collecting data and disseminating statistics disaggregated by such characteristics as ethnocultural group, immigrant status, sex at birth and gender, and Indigenous identity, to identify and understand the unique experiences of different population groups in Canada.

Statistics Canada's Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics was created with the goal of supporting evidence-based policy and program development by monitoring and reporting on gender, diversity and inclusion in Canada. The Centre's recent analyses of the impacts of COVID-19 have pointed to differences in economic outcomes and perceptions of personal safety by ethnocultural group.

It is impossible to have reliable information on gender, diversity and inclusion in Canada without strong statistical standards that clearly define the concepts being measured. Statistics Canada, as the national statistical agency, plays a leading role in ensuring that strong statistical standards are developed and adopted as part of the national statistical system. This includes making available statistical standards for collecting disaggregated data.

## National statistical standards are key to understanding, interpreting and comparing data

To provide information and insights on diverse population groups, data must first be collected in a standardized way to allow for meaningful comparisons. This is where having tested and trusted statistical standards comes into play. Statistical standards—that is, sets of rules used to standardize the way questions are asked to Canadians during data collection and the way statistics are disseminated—must be defined. Statistical standards ensure that information about a given characteristic is gathered and communicated in the same way every time.

## Statistical standards in action: Measuring diverse population groups

Statistical standards make it possible to report on diverse groups in a consistent way. For example, a 2019 article published for Black History Month used the [population group](#) standard (groups designated as visible minorities), along with [immigrant status](#), [ethnic origin](#) and language ([mother tongue](#)) standards, to document diversity within Canada's Black population in terms of ethnic and cultural origins, places of birth, and languages. The article indicated that long-established Black immigrants were mostly from the Caribbean, while recent immigrants were predominantly from Africa. Among the Canadian-born children of Black immigrants (the "second generation"), 40.7% reported more than one ethnic origin, as did 62.7% of the Canadian-born grandchildren of Black immigrants (the "third generation").

## Tested and trusted standards

Statistical standards reflect the evolution of Canadian society and the Canadian economy. As Canada's population, society and economy change, Statistics Canada revises standards to continue to serve Canadians by providing high-quality statistical information that matters.

Developing national statistical standards is a key part of Statistics Canada's mandate. To maintain a strong and coherent statistical system, Statistics Canada works with other organizations to ensure alignment with these national standards. Today, the [Canadian Institute for Health Information](#) released a [discussion document](#) on its proposed standards for collecting data on race in health care systems.

Developing strong statistical standards is the foundation of a solid statistical system and involves multiple phases of engagement with academics, subject-matter experts, community groups and community members. Before they can be used in official statistics, standards are tested and validated to ensure they are understood, reliable and usable.

Trusted statistical information supports evidence-based decision making in both the public and the private sectors. Access to national statistical standards is an integral part of Statistics Canada's commitment to making high-quality data available to all Canadians.



Today, Statistics Canada is releasing a new infographic, "[National Statistical Standards: Tested and Trusted](#)," which is part of the series *Statistics Canada – Infographics (11-627-M)*. Statistics Canada's national standards for diverse population groups can be found at the [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).