

Catalogue no. 98-502-X2016001

ISBN 978-1-100-21020-9

2016 Census Program Content Consultation Guide

Census year 2016

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Published by authority of the Minister responsible for
Statistics Canada

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Standard symbols

The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0 ^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
P	preliminary
r	revised
X	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i>
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Introduction

Canadians require trustworthy statistics to meet an array of needs.

The Census of Population is an important source of demographic and social information for decision-making and analysis at a large geographical scale and for small areas. Statistics Canada is responsible under the *Statistics Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. S-19) for conducting the Census of Population every five years.

The 2011 Census Program¹ consisted of two parts: a short questionnaire (census) with a basic set of questions distributed to 100% of households, and a long questionnaire (National Household Survey) distributed to a 33% sample of households.

Planning the Census Program starts early. In preparation for Census Day 2016, Statistics Canada is consulting with data users to:

- confirm information needs and identify data gaps
- establish data priorities
- understand how Census Program data are used.

In order to prioritize the 2016 Census Program content, Statistics Canada will evaluate consultation input using the content determination framework explained in this guide.

We invite you to convey your data needs and content suggestions for the 2016 Census Program, and provide examples of how you use Census Program data. We also welcome your comments on Census Program products and services and geography concepts.

1. The term 'Census Program' is used to refer in a general way to the Census of Population and, if applicable, any accompanying survey conducted at the time of the census, such as the 2011 National Household Survey.

2016 Census Program content consultation: What I need to know

This guide explains the 2016 Census Program content consultation process and provides information to help you with your submission.

How do I participate?

Please send us your responses to the consultation [Discussion points](#)K

- **by email to:** censusconsultation@statcan.gc.ca
- **by mail to:** Census Marketing
Statistics Canada
4th Floor, Jean Talon Building
170 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0T6
- **by fax:** 613-951-4210 (Attention: Census Marketing)

What is the deadline for submission?

To ensure your comments are considered for 2016, please submit your input by **Friday, November 16, 2012**.

What will Statistics Canada do with my submission?

Your comments will be captured in a census consultation database for use by Statistics Canada experts during the 2016 Census Program content determination planning process. Your ideas and suggestions will also be reviewed for other Statistics Canada socioeconomic statistical programs.

Your comments may be made public in documentation highlighting the findings of the 2016 Census Program content consultation.

How do I obtain more information?

Links to reference documents and other information can be found in this guide. If you have any questions about the 2016 Census Program consultation process, please contact us at censusconsultation@statcan.gc.ca

Your input is very important to us.

2016 Census Program content determination framework: Overview

As part of the review and evaluation of its statistical programs, Statistics Canada studied methodological options and content determination criteria for the 2016 Census Program. These findings are presented in the [Final Report on 2016 Census Options: Proposed Content Determination Framework and Methodology Options](#) and the compendium [2016 Census Strategy Project: Data Uses and Requirements Report](#), available from the Statistics Canada website.

The content determination framework for the 2016 Census Program builds on experience from previous Canadian Census Programs, the United Nations (UN) principles of census-taking (United Nations 2008), and approaches developed in other countries, in particular, the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics 2006).

This framework includes three main steps that would result in a prioritization of Census Program content. Each step comprises specific dimensions, as listed in Table 1, against which potential content will be evaluated.

Table 1 Steps of the content determination framework and their dimensions

Steps	Dimensions	
Step 1: Census Program information needs (relevance and quality requirements of users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strength of user need • size of population of interest • suitability of alternative sources • cross-classification of data / multivariate analysis² • comparability across Canada • continuity over time • frequency of outputs 	
Step 2: Canadian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respondent burden • societal privacy concerns 	Balance of topics
Step 3: Statistics Canada considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs • operational factors • safeguards against loss of Census Program data quality • safeguards against loss of efficiency and/or quality in other Statistics Canada programs 	

2. Multivariate analysis refers to the study of interrelationships among the different variables, such as age, education, income and immigrant status.

2016 Census Program content determination framework: Census Program information needs

Users' 2016 Census Program information needs will be evaluated in terms of the seven dimensions described in Table 2 (definitions copied from the [Final Report on 2016 Census Options: Proposed Content Determination Framework and Methodology Options](#) and the compendium [2016 Census Strategy Project: Data Uses and Requirements Report](#)).

Table 2 Dimensions for prioritization of Census Program topics

Dimensions	Description
Strength of user need	<p>In general, statutory and regulatory uses, being tied to law, will be highest priority. Uses related to resource allocation and service delivery will also be high priority because of the direct impact on government spending and financial decisions. Planning, development monitoring, evaluation and performance reports related to programs or policies will be medium priority, as they measure accountability and inform Canadians about efficiency and effectiveness of government programs. The remaining uses, such as research, will be considered lower priority.</p> <p>Those information needs that serve a purpose which is national in scope will have the highest priority. Given the national role of the federal government, its uses will be assigned a higher priority than other government and non-government uses.</p>
Size of the population of interest	<p>A higher priority will be assigned to uses that require data for small geographic areas or small groups of interest. Needs for data by dissemination area or census tract will be higher priority than those at the census metropolitan area (CMA) level, which in turn will be higher than those at the provincial/territorial level. Likewise, needs for smaller populations of interest such as recent immigrants, will be higher priority than those for larger groups such as the employed population.</p>
Suitability of alternative sources	<p>Those topics for which no alternative sources exist will be highest priority while those for which alternative sources are readily available will be lowest.</p>
Cross-classification of data / multivariate analysis	<p>Multivariate analysis is the ability to examine the interrelationships among the different variables, for example, age, education, income and immigrant status. This type of analysis is possible using Census Program data because all variables derived from the questions are available for each individual, household and dwelling, with a common reference point (e.g., Census Day). It is a significant strength when used to examine complex relationships among variables. A higher priority will be assigned to uses that require the analysis of relationships between Census Program variables.</p>

2016 Census Program content determination framework: Census Program information needs

Table 2 Dimensions for prioritization of Census Program topics (continued)

Dimensions	Description
Comparability across Canada	Highest priority will be assigned to uses for which comparability is essential and lowest priority to those for which there is no need.
Continuity over time	For trend analysis, there is a need for data to be comparable over time (continuity over time). Highest priority will be assigned to uses for which comparability over time is essential and lowest priority to those for which there is no need.
Frequency of outputs	Highest priority will be assigned to topics that are needed every five years, i.e., to be collected in 2016, followed by those that are needed every ten years, i.e., not before 2021. Those that are needed only once or more frequently than every five years would be lowest priority as the Census Program is likely not the appropriate collection instrument.

The extent to which a user's information need meets the above criteria will play an important role in determining whether or not it will be collected by the 2016 Census Program.

2016 Census Program content determination framework: Canadian context and Statistics Canada considerations

Determining the content for the 2016 Census Program includes the careful examination and evaluation of many, sometimes competing, criteria. Before the final recommendations for the 2016 Census Program questions are submitted for approval, Statistics Canada must also assess a number of important factors related to the Canadian context and its statistical programs.

Table 3 Factors related to the Canadian context and Statistics Canada programs

Factors	Description
Respondent burden	Statistics Canada is very sensitive to the burden placed upon respondents. The length and complexity of the questionnaires are both considered in this respect.
Societal privacy concerns	In addition to the feedback received through collection (i.e., from respondents), consultation and content testing, Statistics Canada seeks guidance from external advisory bodies such as the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the National Statistics Council to determine the appropriateness of the content as it relates to societal privacy concerns.
Costs	Statistics Canada determines whether collecting the information significantly increases the length of the questionnaire and the processing costs. Before introducing a new question or modifying an existing one, a strong justification for the related expenditure is required. A sound rationale must be provided to support the decision on the most appropriate source for this information.
Operational factors	Certain data needs may not arise during user consultation but must be examined during the planning process. For example, to ensure that collection operations are performed efficiently and that quality data are collected, there may be a requirement to collect names, telephone numbers and addresses.
Safeguards against loss of Census Program data quality	Statistics Canada is dedicated to maintaining high standards of data quality. Data evaluation and qualitative testing are critical to help ensure that the results from the 2016 Census Program are of the greatest possible quality. The findings of these evaluations and tests may dictate which sets of collection instruments are the most appropriate to ensure quality.
Safeguards against loss of efficiency and/or quality in other Statistics Canada programs	Canada's statistical system comprises censuses, surveys, registers and administrative files, among other sources of data. Statistics Canada uses Census Program data, collected at regular intervals, as the benchmark for population counts at various levels of geography. They are also used by Statistics Canada for social and household surveys and by its Economic Statistics Program for verification and other purposes.

2016 Census Program content determination process: Key activities

Careful and thorough planning helps ensure the ongoing success of the Census Program. Statistics Canada has already begun gathering information on data uses and requirements. The following activities, which are customary to the content determination process, will take place prior to Census Day in May 2016:

Table 4 2016 Census Program content determination process: schedule of activities

Activities	Description	Date
User consultation	Statistics Canada will build on the data uses collected in 2011 and undertake a nationwide consultation inviting users and interested parties to convey their data needs and share their views and suggestions for the 2016 Census Program content. In-person meetings and teleconferences may also be held with clients and stakeholders.	Until November 16, 2012
Qualitative content testing	Qualitative testing takes place through focus groups and in-depth one-on-one interviews. Through qualitative tests, Statistics Canada obtains feedback from respondents to the proposed questionnaire and tests their ability and willingness to answer the questions.	Fall 2013
Census test for content	The larger more extensive census content test takes place after qualitative testing and provides Statistics Canada an opportunity to assess the impact of content changes on data quality.	May 2014
Submission to Cabinet	Statistics Canada submits recommendations for the 2016 Census content to Parliament for review. Cabinet is responsible for approving the final content for the Census of Population.	December 2014

For more information on the census, see [Overview of the Census](#).

2016 Census Program content consultation: Discussion points

- 1) The topics for the Census Program are listed below. Considering the following definitions and your data needs, how important is each topic?

Essential implies that the topic is required to fulfil a legislative requirement or the needs of a regulation, policy or program. **Strong need** implies that the topic is not required but is used to fulfil the needs of a regulation, policy, program or other application. **Some need** implies that the topic could be used to fulfil the needs of a regulation, policy, program or other application. **No need** implies that the topic is not used.

Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for a list of 2011 Census Program questions by topic.

Table 5 Importance of Census Program topics

Census Program topics	Importance of topic			
	Essential	Strong need	Some need	No need
Basic demographics (age, sex, marital status and common-law status)				
Families and households				
Activity limitations				
Place of birth, citizenship and immigration				
Language				
Ethnic origin				
Aboriginal Peoples				
Visible minorities				
Mobility and migration				
Education				
Labour				
Place of work and commuting to work				
Income and earnings				
Housing and shelter costs				

Note: The question on religion is asked every 10 years. The last time was in 2011.

2016 Census Program content consultation: Discussion points

- 2) For topics considered 'essential,' please indicate which [2011 Census of Population](#) or [2011 National Household Survey](#) questions you intend to use and provide examples of their application.

- 3) Would you recommend any changes to the existing questions from the [2011 Census of Population](#) or [2011 National Household Survey](#) for consideration during the planning of future Census Programs? For each suggested change, please:
 - indicate the level of priority (low or high)
 - provide a rationale (and include references to the Statistics Canada socioeconomic data source(s) you use, if applicable). You may wish to consult [Your Guide to Data Sources on Census-related Topics](#)
 - suggest ways respondent burden can be managed by editing or eliminating questions in the same grouping.

- 4) Do data gaps exist that could be addressed through the 2016 Census Program? If yes, please describe the information that should be included in the 2016 Census Program along the seven dimensions listed below (please refer to [Table 2](#) for an explanation of each dimension) and explain why.

Note: The extent to which an information need meets the seven dimensions of the proposed framework will be a main consideration in determining whether or not it will be collected by the 2016 or future Census Programs. In your response, please address as many of the following dimensions as possible:

- Strength of user need
- Size of the population of interest
- Suitability of alternative sources
- Cross-classification of data / multivariate analysis
- Comparability across Canada
- Continuity over time
- Frequency of outputs

2016 Census Program content consultation: Discussion points

Geography needs

- 5) Which of the standard geographic areas do you currently use, or intend to use in the future?

- 6) Do you consider the ongoing process of aligning the Statistics Canada geographic boundaries with provincial/territorial digital road networks worthwhile?

For more information on the standard geographic area concepts, hierarchy and spatial data infrastructure, consult the 'Geography' section in the 2011 Census Dictionary at:
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/univ-index-eng.cfm>.

- 7) Do you have any other comments, for example, on geography concepts or the dissemination strategies for the Census Program?

Please note that your responses may be made public in the documentation highlighting the findings of the 2016 Census Program content consultation.

Conclusion

This consultation guide serves to assist you in communicating your information needs as well your ideas and suggestions for the 2016 Census Program. It also presents a content determination framework which will be used to assess the content that will meet users' priority data needs.

Comments received during consultation have influenced past and present Census Program content. In 2011, the following changes were implemented as a result of feedback received from data users:

- new response categories for stepfamilies and foster children
- new terminology for questions on Aboriginal Peoples
- new questions on the time taken to commute to work and vehicle occupancy
- new questions on subsidized housing and renters in condominiums.

A report presenting the 2016 Census content consultation findings will be posted on the Statistics Canada website following the official consultation period.

Your ongoing support is appreciated. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix A

2011 Census and National Household Survey release topics and dates

2011 Census of Population

The 2011 Census of Population offers a wide range of analysis and data according to topics that paint a portrait of Canada. Information on various related subjects are released by topic:

Population and dwelling counts – February 8, 2012

Age and sex – May 29, 2012

Families, households and marital status – September 19, 2012

Structural type of dwelling and collectives – September 19, 2012

Language – October 24, 2012

2011 National Household Survey

Complementing the data collected by the 2011 Census of Population, the National Household Survey (NHS) will provide information about people in Canada by their demographic, social and economic characteristics as well as the dwellings in which they live.

May 8, 2013

- Immigration
- Citizenship
- Place of birth
- Language
- Ethnic origin
- Visible minorities
- Religion
- Aboriginal Peoples

June 26, 2013

- Labour
- Education
- Place of work
- Commuting to work
- Mobility and migration
- Language of work

August 14, 2013

- Income
- Earnings
- Housing
- Shelter costs

Appendix B

2011 Census Program questions by topic

Following are the 2011 Census Program¹ topics and related questions by theme. Consult the [2011 Census of Population](#) and [2011 National Household Survey](#) questionnaires for the detailed questions.

Basic demographics

- Name
- Sex
- Date of birth, Age
- Marital status
- Common-law status

Families and households

- Relationship to Person 1
- Presence of children

Activity limitations

- Difficulties with daily activities
- Reduction in activities due to physical or mental conditions or health problems

Place of birth, citizenship and immigration

- Place of birth
- Citizenship
- Landed immigrant status
- Year of immigration
- Place of birth of parents

Language

- Knowledge of English and French
- Knowledge of language other than English or French
- Language(s) spoken at home
- First language learned at home in childhood and still understood
- Language of work

Ethnic origin

- Ethnic origin

1. The term 'Census Program' is used to refer in a general way to the Census of Population and, if applicable, any accompanying survey conducted at the time of the census, such as the 2011 National Household Survey.

Appendix B

2011 Census Program questions by topic

Aboriginal Peoples

- Aboriginal group
- Registered or Treaty Indian Status
- Membership in a First Nation or Indian band

Visible minorities

- Visible minorities

Religion

- Religion (**Note:** This question is asked every 10 years.)

Mobility and migration

- Place of residence 1 year ago
- Place of residence 5 years ago

Education

- Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalent
- Registered apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma
- College, CEGEP, and non-university certificate or diploma
- University certificate, diploma or degree
- Major field of study
- Province, territory or country where the diploma was obtained
- School attendance

Labour

- Hours worked for pay or in self-employment
- Lay-off or absence from job
- New job arrangements
- Recent search for paid work
- Availability for work
- Last date of work
- Name of the employer
- Kind of business, industry or service
- Occupation or work
- Main activities at work
- Class of worker
- Incorporation status
- Weeks worked in 2010
- Full-time or part-time work

Appendix B

2011 Census Program questions by topic

Place of work and commuting to work

- Place of work
- Mode of transportation to work
- Time of travel to work

Income and earnings

- Amount paid for child care
- Support payments
- Tax permission option
- Income in 2010
- Paid employment income
 - Total wages and salaries
- Self-employment income
 - Net-farm income
 - Net non-farm income from unincorporated business, professional practice, etc.
- Income from government
 - Child benefits
 - Old Age Security Pension, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Allowance and Allowance for the Survivor
 - Benefits from Canada or Quebec Pension Plan
 - Benefits from Employment Insurance
 - Other income from government sources
- Other income
 - Dividends, interest on bonds, deposits and savings certificates, and other investment income
 - Capital gains or losses
 - Retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities, including those from RRSPs and RRIFs
 - Other money income
- Total income in 2010 from all sources
- Income tax paid on 2010 income

Appendix B

2011 Census Program questions by topic

Housing and shelter costs

- Who pays the rent or mortgage, taxes, electricity, etc., for this dwelling?
- Owned or rented
- Part of a condominium development
- Number of rooms and bedrooms
- Period when built
- Need of repairs
- Dwelling on an agricultural operation
- Yearly payments
- Monthly rent
- Owner costs

Permission for responses and family history to be part of the historical record of Canada

Appendix C

Reference documents

Statistics Canada

- *Your Guide to Data Sources on Census-related Topics* (Catalogue no. 92-135) – complementary socioeconomic data sources by 2006 Census-related topics.
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/consultation/92-135/index-eng.cfm>
- *Final Report on 2016 Census Options: Proposed Content Determination Framework and Methodology Options* – findings from the 2016 Census Strategy Project.
http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/fc-rf/reports-rapports/r2_index-eng.cfm
- *2016 Census Strategy Project: Data Uses and Requirements Report* – findings obtained during an information gathering exercise on Census Program data uses and requirements. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/fc-rf/reports-rapports/R1_Part1-Partie1-eng.cfm
- For information about **2011 Census of Population**, including questionnaires:
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/index-eng.cfm>
- For information about **2011 National Household Survey**, including questionnaires:
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/NHS-ENM/index-eng.cfm>

International

- Office for National Statistics (ONS). 2006. *Information paper: Assessment of initial user requirements on content for England and Wales*.
- United Nations. 2008. *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/REV.2. United Nations Publication.