



CENSUS • RECENSEMENT

2021 Census Fact Sheets

Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Education, labour, commuting, and Veterans

2021 Census of Population

Release date: July 17, 2020

How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, www.statcan.gc.ca.

You can also contact us by

Email at STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca

Telephone, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • Statistical Information Service | 1-800-263-1136 |
| • National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired | 1-800-363-7629 |
| • Fax line | 1-514-283-9350 |

Depository Services Program

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| • Inquiries line | 1-800-635-7943 |
| • Fax line | 1-800-565-7757 |

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under "Contact us" > "[Standards of service to the public.](#)"

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Industry, 2020

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

An [HTML version](#) is also available.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

Release date: July 17, 2020

Catalogue number 98-20-0001, issue 2020004

ISBN 978-0-660-35364-7



Updated content for the 2021 Census of Population: Education, labour, commuting, and Veterans

The census is the country's storyteller. Through good and difficult times, the census has been providing a detailed picture of Canada's changing mosaic—giving Canadians facts on where we came from, to where we are, and guiding decisions on where we want to be. To respond to the country's needs and write the next chapter of Canadians' data foundation, Statistics Canada conducted country-wide engagements. We also conducted a census test with over 135,000 households to determine whether new or revised questions under consideration can be easily understood and correctly answered. We listened to Canadians, because we know that this is about your census, your community, your future.

This series of fact sheets provides an overview of the changes in content for the 2021 Census of Population, as the census process is ever changing to reflect changes in the Canadian population and its demographic characteristics.

This fact sheet covers the theme of education, labour, commuting, and Veterans. This theme encompasses census content from the following topics: education, labour market conditions, commuting to work, and Veteran and military service.

For information on the broad social trends related to the specific topics within this theme, please see the respective sections below.



Education

Why are these questions asked?

The education questions provide information on the education, training and recent school attendance of residents of Canada. Governments use this information to develop training and other programs to meet the changing needs of the workforce and of specific groups such as immigrants, First Nations people, Métis, Inuit and youth.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

In addition to providing valuable information guiding government policy and service delivery, education data are widely used by researchers and other non-governmental organizations as educational attainment is closely linked with employment opportunities and social mobility.

Data on educational attainment that are consistent over time are valuable for providing a clear understanding of how Canadian society has changed over the years, and how the educational attainment of different groups (including immigrants, population groups designated as visible minorities, official language minorities, First Nations people, Métis and Inuit) has changed.

Census data on education are complemented by administrative data that provide additional information on annual enrolments and graduations, as well as trajectories through postsecondary education and apprenticeship training.

Approach for the 2021 Census

The education questions in the 2019 Census Test questionnaire were designed to take into account changes in the Canadian education system, such as the credentials offered at colleges. As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has modified the school attendance question.

Changes considered and tested successfully	Resulting approach for 2021
Statistics Canada tested improvements to the school attendance question. The 2016 question was divided into two parts, with minor modifications made to word order and verb tenses to improve clarity.	This modification was recommended for the 2021 Census, because of improvements in data quality in the 2019 Census Test.

What to expect in 2021

The 2021 Census education content will be similar to the 2016 Census content with some modifications to the school attendance question to align with current terminology, reduce response burden and ensure education is measured accurately in Canada.

For further information on education content, as well as a description of content that was tested but did not proceed to the 2021 Census questionnaire, see [Painting a Portrait of Canada: The 2021 Census of Population](#).



Labour market information

Why are these questions asked?

Canada's labour market is changing. The extent to which this is affecting individual Canadians and the broader society and economy is not fully understood. To better understand labour market issues such as underemployment (i.e., working part time or in short-term job positions despite wanting full-time or full-year employment), quality of employment, and labour market attachment, two questions have been added to the 2021 Census long-form questionnaire:

- the main reason an individual worked less than 49 weeks during the year preceding the census
- the main reason an individual worked mostly part time during that same year.

In addition, respondents who report being employees (as opposed to being self-employed) will be asked whether their job is permanent, fixed-term (one year or more), casual, seasonal or short-term (less than a year).

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high-quality data, content changes were proposed for the 2021 Census. New questions, including the main reason for working part time and the main reason for not working the full year, will provide relevant information at a detailed level of geography, on the precarious work situation for groups such as low-income families, Indigenous peoples, population groups designated as visible minorities and immigrants, as well as for the on-reserve First Nations population.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has added two questions and modified the existing question on class of worker to help better understand underemployment and other issues related to labour. These questions will provide further information on issues such as involuntary part-time work and short-term job positions, particularly among sub-populations including Indigenous people, population groups designated as visible minorities and immigrants.

Changes considered and tested successfully

New content:

Requests for more information on the quality of jobs held by workers in Canada have increased over the past decade.

Statistics Canada tested questions on the main reason workers were working for only part of the year or mostly part time.

Modified content:

Statistics Canada tested an enhanced question on class of worker to provide additional information on job permanency.

Resulting approach for 2021

In 2021, two questions will be added to collect information on the main reason why some workers were not working full year in 2020, and why some were not working full time in 2020.

The question on class of worker has been modified to include a subcategory on job permanency (whether a respondent's position is permanent, fixed contract, short-term contract, seasonal work, casual contract, etc.) for respondents who report being an employee.



What to expect in 2021

The results of the 2019 Census Test indicate that the two new questions and the modified question on class of worker produced good-quality data. Therefore, these questions will be included in the 2021 Census.



Commuting to work

Why are these questions asked?

The questions on commuting to work gather information that supports numerous federal, provincial and municipal programs related to infrastructure and public transportation. These data are also used to measure Canada's sustainable development and environmental goals related to commuting to work. The census is the only national source of data on commuting to work, including data on mode of commuting, distance to work, time leaving for work and commuting time.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high-quality data, content changes were proposed for the 2021 Census. Data users in urban planning, transit and infrastructure have requested more information on how people commute to work. In 2021, the census commuting questions will expand and begin collecting data on the number of respondents using multiple modes of commuting to get to work. The results of the 2019 Census Test indicated that 12% of respondents that commute used more than one mode to get to work (e.g., car and bus or bus and subway).

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has introduced a question on multiple modes of commuting and modified the wording of the current question on vehicle occupancy.

Changes considered and tested successfully

New content:

As stated by numerous stakeholders, many commuters use multiple modes of transportation to get to work, on a daily or regular basis (e.g., walk and bus, bus and bike, car and bus).

Modified content:

Changes in wording were made to the questions on commuting to work.

Resulting approach for 2021

The 2021 Census long-form questionnaire will include a new question on multiple modes of transportation used to commute to work.

This new question will ask respondents to select all the modes they usually used to commute to work. Respondents will still be required to identify their main mode of commuting when using multiple modes.

The wording was changed for the question on vehicle occupancy to clarify that only workers in the car should be included; non-workers (e.g., students) should be excluded.

The commuting to work section was revised to remove concepts such as "from home" and "leave home to get to work." These concepts were replaced with "trip to work" since many people travel to work from locations other than home (e.g., some travel to work from school or from a second residence).



What to expect in 2021

In 2021, only people who are employed during the census reference week will be asked the questions on commuting to work. In previous censuses, people who had worked within the previous 18 months but were not currently working were also asked these questions. This change will reduce response burden by ensuring that non-workers are not asked the questions on commuting.

The results of the 2019 Census Test indicate that returning content for the 2021 Census produces results that are comparable to those of the 2016 Census. The new question on multiple modes of commuting produced good-quality results during the census test and will be implemented in the 2021 Census. Data collected for the main mode of commuting were not affected by the question on multiple modes of commuting and remain comparable to previous census data.

The results of the 2019 Census Test also indicate that the wording changes to the question on vehicle occupancy helped improve data quality by clarifying that only workers should be counted in the number of car passengers. The other wording adjustments (e.g., replacing “from home”) had no notable impact on the data but removed any concerns about respondents who do not commute from their principal residence.



Veteran and military service

Why is this question asked?

The question on Veteran and military service is used to determine the number of Canadians who have previously served or are currently serving as members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). The main purpose of the question is to fill a significant Veteran-related data gap to help better serve this population by informing various policies and programs administered by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and other Veteran support organizations. Data sources that currently exist include historical census records from 1951, 1961 and 1971, as well as a variety of incomplete administrative data. To fill this gap, a question on Veteran and military service is included on the census short-form questionnaire, which will enumerate the total number of CAF members and Veterans living in Canada.

Enumerating Veterans and those who are currently serving in the CAF as a one-time collection using the 2021 Census could backfill the known data gaps in historical administrative records to help build a complete listing of Canadian Veteran cohorts. Integrating administrative records prospectively in agreement with the CAF and VAC would keep this listing up to date and meet the needs of VAC, DND, CMHC and other stakeholders. The list of Veterans will be retained by Statistics Canada only and will not be released to stakeholders. The list will be used for analytical and statistical purposes only, where no individual Veterans could be identified.

Current trends and data gaps for this topic

To ensure that the census measures important trends in society and continues to produce relevant, high quality data, content changes were proposed for the 2021 Census. Recently, there has been an increased focus on the mental and physical health and well-being of Canadian Veterans with an emphasis on the quality of their transition from military to civilian life, and how this has an impact on their family life. The Veteran population has unique needs, having been identified as a vulnerable sub-population in the Federal Government's most recent National Housing Strategy. Statistics Canada has responded by working closely with Veterans Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other stakeholders through our data collection and development efforts pertaining to Canadian Veterans, looking at their overall health and well-being. The scope of these efforts are frequently limited to contemporary Veterans who were released from military service after 1998. The data gap that exists for the older cohort of Veterans, those released prior to 1998, is what the 2021 Census aims to fill. This older cohort of Veterans includes numerous World War 2 Veterans, Veterans from the Korean War and NATO missions, and those who served in support of the Canadian mission in the former Yugoslavia conflict in the early 1990's. Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is mandated to care for every Veteran, we aim to support this mandate by providing a robust and evergreen portrait of Canadian Veterans.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met. Expert advisors on the Veteran and military service census initiative include researchers from the Veterans Affairs Canada Research (VAC) Directorate, the Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Approach for the 2021 Census

As a result of its consultations and testing, Statistics Canada has decided to include a question on the 2021 Census asking people to self-identify as a Veteran or as a currently serving CAF member.



Changes considered and tested successfully

There is currently no comprehensive data source available that provides a complete listing of Veterans to ensure that the money allocated by the federal government for Veterans, their families and other program recipients is targeted to those who are eligible.

Resulting approach for 2021

The 2021 Census short-form questionnaire will include a question that asks people to self-identify as a Veteran or as a currently serving CAF member.

The short-form questionnaire is the best tool with which to reach all Veterans and military personnel, as it is used to enumerate residents of collective dwellings, which include military bases, as well as hospitals and seniors' residences, where many Veterans and military personnel are likely to reside. The short-form questionnaire is also used to enumerate residents who are temporarily residing overseas at the time of the census, including members of the CAF and their families.

What to expect in 2021

The results of the 2019 Census Test indicate that the new question on Veteran and military service for the 2021 Census tested well. The results were compared with external sources. The proportion of people responding that they were Veterans was within the range estimated by VAC using a data modelling approach. The proportion of male and female CAF Veterans, as well as their average age, was also within this range.

Additional information

The content of the 2021 Census questionnaire is the result of extensive engagement, discussions and testing, including comprehensive one-on-one interviews and a rigorous 2019 Census Test involving more than 135,000 households across Canada. Additional information on this can be found in the [2019 Census Content Test: Design and methodology](#) fact sheet.

Any changes made to census content are carefully analyzed and discussed with stakeholders and guided by expert advice to preserve data relevance, overall quality, coverage and comparability over time, as well as to ensure that legislative and policy requirements continue to be met.

For further information on new and modified content, as well as a description of content that was tested but did not proceed to the 2021 Census questionnaire, see [Painting a Portrait of Canada: The 2021 Census of Population](#).