

# PRASC



**Project for the Regional  
Advancement of Statistics  
in the Caribbean**

**Projet régional pour  
l'avancement de la statistique  
dans les Caraïbes**

**Example: StatCan Survey of Household Spending Respondent Relations  
QAs 2017  
Prepared by Statistics Canada**

2017



In partnership with

**Canada**



# Survey of Household Reference Card

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### What is the survey about?

The Survey of Household Spending asks questions about the spending patterns of Canadian households. Basically, the survey looks at how much money households spend on various items such as food, clothing, rent, entertainment, health expenses, car repairs and other items.

### What will this information be used for?

The data from this survey is used to measure the economic well-being of the country, to determine the need for income support programs, child care programs etc. and products and services needed by consumers. The survey answers such questions as:

- What are the costs of the basics: food, shelter, clothing, etc.?
- Are incomes keeping pace with expenses?
- How much do households spend on health care or education?
- To what extent are households using the Internet and cell phones?

### Why should I participate in this survey?

The information you provide is an investment that benefits all Canadians. All levels of government rely on household spending information when developing policies on essential programs (health, education, etc.). Businesses also rely on this information to provide convenient and suitable goods and services for your community. As well, many respondents say that the survey actually gave them a useful snapshot of their spending.

### Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. However, it is important in order to create a complete and accurate picture of the spending patterns of households in all regions of Canada. Your responses ensure that your type of household - single individuals, lone - parent families, retired couples, etc. - is well represented in the survey results and in the decisions that are made using those results.

### Why should I give you my time for free?

We conduct surveys so that Canadians can make more informed decisions about things like socio-economic policy and support programs. Many Canadians offer their time because of the important uses of the survey results.

### Can't you pick another household?

No. For results to be accurate, Statistics Canada must interview only households which are selected for the sample. If Statistics Canada were to include only households who wanted to participate in a survey, rather than use the method of sampling, the results would not be considered reliable.

### What happens if I refuse?

Because you cannot be replaced as a respondent, the results of this survey will be less accurate. This will affect the quality of information available to make informed policy, resource and business decisions that affect us all.

Reference no: 75411-2282.1 2017

*Remember to refer to the **Diary Checklist** when following-up with all accepted diaries*



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### **Is my information kept confidential?**

Yes. All information collected by Statistics Canada is strictly confidential and is protected by the *Statistics Act*. Statistics Canada cannot release any information to others that would identify you or any member of your household. Furthermore, this information cannot be made available under any other law, not even the *Access to Information Act*.

### **Why do you need information about income if this is a survey about spending?**

We collect income information to help us study how households at various income levels spend differently. For instance, the cost of essentials such as food, shelter, and clothing is a concern for everyone but for some low-income families, slight changes in income could affect their ability to pay rent or buy food. The income information helps identify the needs of different types of households.

### **Why do you want access to my information collected under the *Income Tax Act*? Don't you already have that?**

Accessing your income tax file shortens the length of the interview by about 10 minutes per household member over 15 years of age.

### **How often do you do this survey?**

This is an annual survey which collects data over a 12-month period. This way, expenses that are specific to each period of the year are shown.

### **Do other countries do this?**

Yes. Most countries collect household spending information. Some countries, like the United States and Great Britain, do a similar survey with an interview and detailed diary of expenditures, while the Japanese ask their respondents to keep a "Family Account Book" where they list all income and expenditures every day for 6 months.

### **Why do I need to complete a diary?**

The diary focuses on the large variety of frequent or less important expenses that are made by households. These expenses are more easily forgotten. A diary that is filled in daily is a better way of collecting these types of expenditures. A two week period provides the best representation of household spending.

### **How I spend my "pocket" money is private. I don't want it recorded!**

Information collected using the diary – whether receipts or transcription – are confidential.

### **I just gave you an hour (or more) of my time, why should I spend more time completing a Diary?**

The diary is used to collect information on detailed food expenses as well as frequently purchased items that are easily forgotten. Answering these questions in an interview would be difficult. The diary represents about 25% of household expenditures. Without the diary we would not have a complete picture of household spending.

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