



## Example: Media Lines Census and COVID-19

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### Media Lines

#### COVID-19 and the reasons to carry out the 2021 Census

#### Key Messages

- Census data are used every day by all levels of government, businesses, and individuals to make important decisions, such as planning community services (e.g., schools and emergency services), determining consumer and market demand, and the purchase of a house.
- Statistics Canada is ready to conduct a safe Census that will enable Canadians to tell their story and provide vital information that contributes to the strength of our country and our communities.
- Statistics Canada has adapted to the reality of the pandemic and has redesigned the census approach to ensure that all Canadians and our employees remain safe while participating in this vital national exercise.
- The census is the primary source of socioeconomic data for specific population groups (e.g. First Nations people, Métis and Inuit, immigrants, language groups) and for detailed or small geographies.
- The 2021 Census will assist us to better understand the impacts of the pandemic for different population groups and communities across the country and how their situation has changed since the last census in 2016.

#### Conducting the census during the pandemic

- It is essential to gather the data this year to assist in assessing the impacts of COVID-19 in communities across Canada and in charting a path to recovery.
  - Census data are commonly used for emergency response and preparedness purposes.
  - Federal and provincial governments use local-level Census population, age, income and housing data to determine who is most vulnerable to the current health and economic crisis.
  - Furthermore, vaccine allocations have been conducted on a per capita basis, based on Census data.

#### How the Census will be conducted safely:

- Statistics Canada has undertaken major changes to its operations to ensure the safety of Canadians and census employees, while retaining the highest standard for data quality.

- Statistics Canada is striving for a contact-free approach, as every reasonable attempt will be made to collect the information without coming into contact with respondents.
- The safest way to respond to the census will be to do so online, or by completing it on paper or over the phone. In-person visits will take place only when other options (e.g., online, by phone) are not available.
- In 2016, close to 9 Canadian households out of 10 completed their Census returns without the assistance of an enumerator (self-completion rate of 88%) and we expect a similar rate in 2021.
- Collection through self-response will be available in remote, northern and First Nations communities for the first time in 2021. Enumerators will be hired locally first, then from neighbouring communities as necessary, to minimize risks.

Protecting the health of Canadians at their homes:

- If it is not possible to obtain census information online or over the phone, a census employee may, as a last resort, go to residents' dwellings to offer assistance in completing the census.
- In such cases, a new no-contact protocol will be followed. Under this protocol, no interviews will be conducted inside the respondent's dwelling.
- These interviews will instead be physically distanced and census employees will be required to wear masks, in accordance with guidelines from public health authorities.
- Hand sanitizer will also be provided to employees so they may frequently wash their hands.
- No census employee from Statistics Canada will be permitted to visit or enter institutional collective dwellings, especially the dwellings housing residents who are most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Ensuring high-quality data in challenging circumstances

- Statistics Canada has taken steps to ensure the 2021 census provides high quality data.
- Self-response by Internet or by completing the census over the phone or on paper will enable most responses to be gathered without in-person contact.

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