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2011 Census Content Consultation Guide



Census year 2011



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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 cooperation and goodwill.

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Now available!

- The 2011 Census Content Consultation Guide can be downloaded from the Statistics Canada website at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/consultation/92-136/index.cfm>.
- *Your Guide to Data Sources on Census-related Topics* (Catalogue no. 92-135), a valuable resource that cross-references complementary socio-economic data sources by 2006 census-related topics, is accessible in PDF and HTML formats via the 2011 Census consultation website at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/consultation/92-135/index.cfm>.

Purpose of this guide

This consultation guide presents the 2011 Census context, proposed content directions and key milestones. It serves to:

- explain the factors influencing 2011 Census content determination;
- apprise you of activities related to content determination;
- introduce the 2011 Census content changes currently being contemplated;
- assist you in contributing your suggestions to Statistics Canada.

Consultations are an essential component in the census planning process. Your feedback helps to inform Statistics Canada of emerging social and economic issues and is considered during the development of the 2011 Census questionnaires and beyond.

How you can get involved

You can participate in the consultation process by sending your written submissions:

- ❖ by e-mail to: censusconsultation@statcan.ca
- ❖ by regular mail to: Marie Anderson
Census Marketing
Statistics Canada
9th Floor, R.H. Coats Building
100 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0T6
- ❖ by fax: 613-951-1134 (Attention: Census Marketing)

Deadline for submissions: Friday, November 30, 2007

What happens after you provide comments?

1. The views and recommendations you offer during census consultations and through written submissions are referred to by census subject-matter specialists throughout the 2011 Census content determination process. This information is also examined by subject-matter experts in other Statistics Canada socio-economic statistical programs.
2. Your comments are captured in a census consultation database. They help Statistics Canada identify and address client needs and expectations.
3. A report highlighting the results of 2011 Census content consultation activities will be prepared and disseminated to the general public via the Internet.

Introduction

The 2011 Census consultation process has been launched. Discussions on the 2011 Census content are underway.

The content determination planning stage of the 2011 Census of Population marks the beginning of the census cycle. The questionnaire you fill out in May 2011 will be the result of four years of effort dedicated to user consultations, testing, questionnaire development and more testing.

As Canada's population thrives and becomes more diverse, Statistics Canada is charged with keeping the census current. Remaining socially relevant while striving to meet the interests of data users is an ever-present challenge.

The 2011 Census content consultation objectives are threefold:

- present content changes currently being explored;
- receive your opinions on the proposed modifications;
- gather insight into emerging data requirements.

Although the focus of this wave of consultations is the 2011 Census content, we welcome your comments on any aspect of the census, including the products and services line, geography concepts and/or census communications.

Did you know?

Statistics Canada conducts comprehensive consultations on census content and dissemination strategies with:

- federal government departments and agencies
- provincial and territorial government departments
- local governments
- the general public
- libraries
- academia
- special interest groups
- the private sector
- licensed distributors of census data

2011 Census content determination: Influencing factors

During the 2011 Census content determination process, data users and interested parties across Canada will be consulted for their views on the type and extent of socio-economic information they believe the census should provide. Before revisions or additions are formally recommended, the results from consultations are reviewed in conjunction with the availability of alternative major data sources and other influencing factors.

Many elements are weighed during the content determination process including the requirement to:

- **Support legislation and government programs and policies**

Certain census data are used to monitor and administer government programs such as fiscal transfer payments and the *Employment Equity Act*. Similarly, the census facilitates, for example, a better assessment of the necessary health services and housing structures required to accommodate Canada's aging population.

- **Meet the widespread need for census data of geographically dispersed populations, small geographic areas and target populations**

Given the coverage of the census, it is the only reliable source of information on Canadians living in remote geographic areas and in small population groups. As such, it is widely used by community groups, businesses and governments.

- **Maintain high standards of data quality**

Extensive qualitative and quantitative testing is carried out prior to each census. The National Census Test (NCT) is conducted to measure the reliability and comparability of data, among other purposes.

- **Manage costs**

To justify the cost of introducing a new question, a clear necessity for the data must be demonstrated with supporting evidence that the census is the most appropriate vehicle for collecting this information.

- **Ensure historical comparisons**

Historical continuity must be balanced with the relevance of content. Data comparability over time is necessary for trend analysis.

- **Consider the burden to respondents**

Statistics Canada is very sensitive to the burden placed upon respondents. The length and complexity of the questionnaires are both considered in this respect. Such was the rationale for giving respondents the option of granting Statistics Canada access to income information from their income tax files in 2006.

- **Assess alternative data sources**

Not all topics are appropriate for a census therefore non-census data sources are also examined. Together with the census, Statistics Canada's complementary data sources offer greater flexibility than the census alone in meeting data users' needs.

2011 Census context: Opportunities and challenges

While 2011 Census content consultations are still in the very early stages, the 2006 Census provides a solid starting point. (Refer to **Appendix A** for the 2006 Census release topics and dates.) As well, comments from previous consultations and those received during the 2006 Census collection are feeding into the 2011 Census content determination process.

With each census, certain imperatives and opportunities predominate. For 2011, the following goals have been set, some in direct response to user feedback:

- **Respond to societal changes**

Ensuring the 2011 Census continues to portray societal changes is of primary interest. As part of the process, Statistics Canada will be reviewing the current content to assure it reflects the changes in Canadian society.

- **Encourage Internet response**

For the first time in 2006, respondents used the Internet to complete their questionnaire online. At the national level, the Internet response rate was 18.5%. Statistics Canada will once again promote the Internet response option, looking to increase the usage to at least 40% nationally in 2011.

- **Refine operational processes**

Many operational advances were successfully introduced in 2006 such as optical mark recognition and intelligent character recognition which facilitated data capture. Leading up to the 2011 Census, collection and processing mechanisms will be refined.

- **Meet impending timelines**

Tight deadlines and fiscal constraint pressures continue to surface. 2007 will be crucial to the development of the 2011 Census content with user consultations, focus testing and the production of draft questionnaires occurring between April and December.

- **Accelerate the release of census results**

The census builds a demographic, social and economic profile of the population. It collects a wealth of data on family characteristics, language, mobility, immigration, ethnocultural characteristics, Aboriginal peoples, labour market activities, education, income, housing and shelter costs. Given its importance in supporting research and program and policy development, every possibility of releasing the results sooner while preserving quality must be explored.

Did you know?

In Canada, a census of population is legally required every five years under the *Statistics Act*.

2011 Census content determination process: Key milestones

A wide range of activities take place prior to Census Day. The 2011 Census of Population questionnaires will be the culmination of the following steps:

- **User consultation**

Consultations on the 2011 Census content will take place between April and November 2007, in many formats and through different channels. Inviting written submissions, organizing dedicated meetings, attending conferences and initiating working groups continue to be highly effective ways to engage with users. As with the 2006 Census, the Internet will be the primary dissemination vehicle for consultation material.

- **Qualitative and quantitative testing**

Testing census questions (qualitative content testing) with focus groups and in-depth one-on-one interviews is scheduled for fall 2007.

Quantitative testing is planned for May 2008 with a small number of households being selected to test the short 2A and long 2B questionnaires. Pre-tests are used to assess the quality of information that would result from changes made to the questions and questionnaire design.

- **Census test**

A census test, to be carried out in a number of communities, is planned for May 2009. The National Census Test serves to confirm the suitability of a new or modified question or the introduction of innovative procedures such as the Internet response option.

A new question will be added to the census questionnaires only after testing clearly demonstrates it to be effective and shows Canadians' willingness and ability to answer it.

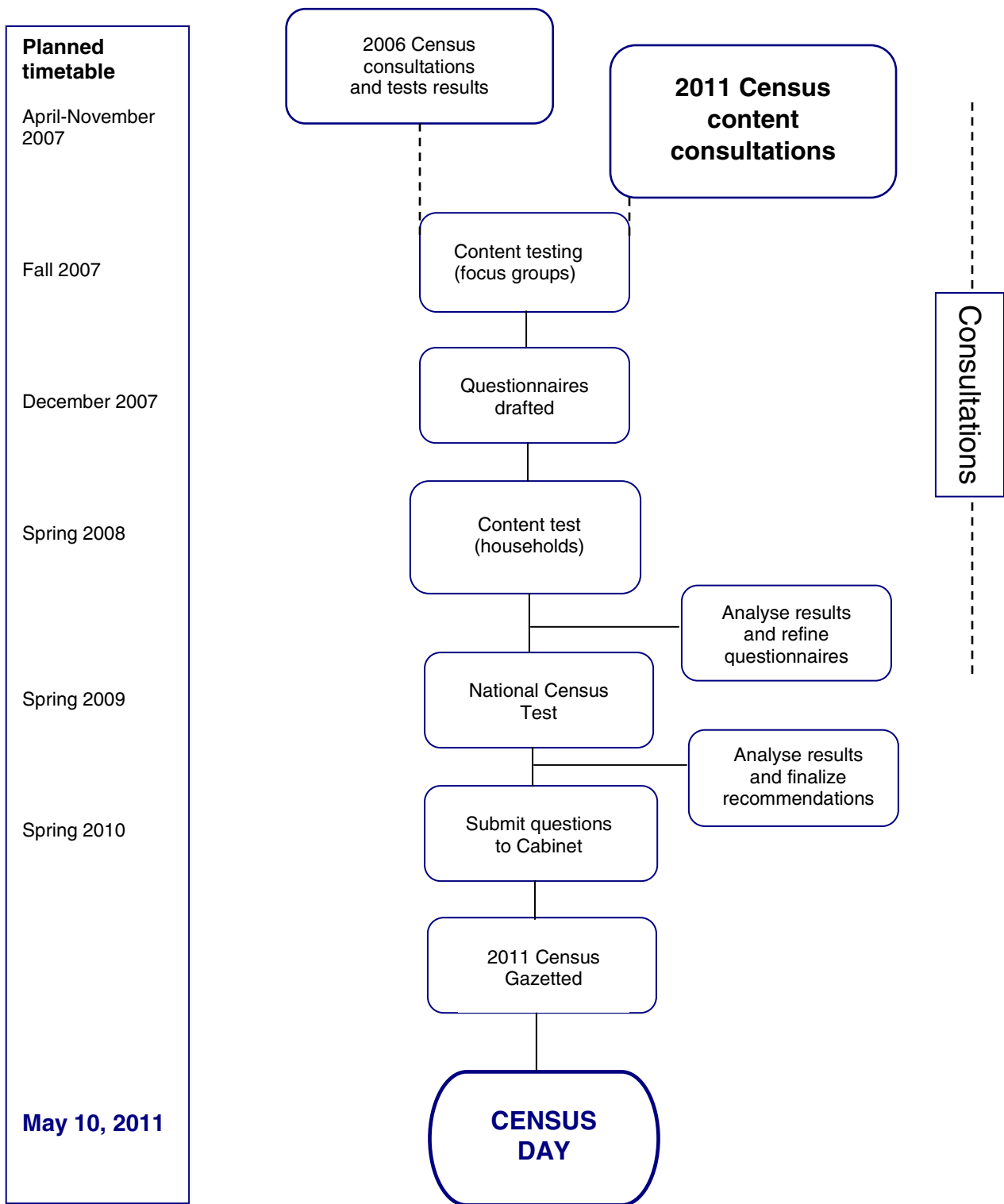
- **Approval by Cabinet**

It is planned that the final recommendations for the 2011 Census questionnaires will be submitted to Cabinet for review and approval in spring 2010. The census content options developed by Statistics Canada are influenced by the results from the National Census Test, qualitative and quantitative testing and feedback gathered throughout the consultation process.

Census reference material

For more information about census content and history, click on the **Reference material** link from the census website <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>.

2011 Census content determination process: Calendar of activities



2011 Census content: Changes presently being considered

Census content has traditionally remained relatively stable from one census to the next. This stability ensures historical comparability of demographic and socio-economic characteristics. At the same time, these same characteristics must remain relevant in a changing society. Consequently, from time to time, certain census questions are modified in response to feedback from census stakeholders and data users.

Statistics Canada is currently reviewing the following sections of the questionnaire. (Refer to **Appendix B** for a list of 2006 Census questions by category.)

- **Relationship to Person 1**

In 2003, same-sex marriage legislation was adopted. Results of the 2004 National Census Test indicated that, for the 2006 Census, the use of write-in boxes provided the most accurate information on the number of same-sex married couples. The introduction of a 'Same-sex married couple' check box will be tested for 2011.

- **Family structure**

A continuing challenge for census-taking is the measurement of complex and evolving family structures. For example, there are no current response categories for stepchildren. The addition of this option would better reflect the characteristics of blended families and is being proposed for the 2011 Census.

- **Ethnocultural characteristics**

The examples associated with these questions will be examined to assure they reflect today's society. The choice and order in which they appear are determined by ranking the most frequent responses while ensuring they continue to represent Canada's diversity.

- **Aboriginal questions**

During the past year, discussions were held with governments and Aboriginal organizations to consider the concepts and terminology which identify First Nations, Inuit and Métis in the census and in Statistics Canada surveys. It was suggested, for example, that the term 'First Nations' might be better suited than 'North American Indian'.

- **Education**

Major changes were introduced in 2006 to make education data more pertinent to the education issues of today. Given the new questions, the data will be analyzed for quality assurance. For 2011, the addition of a 'Journeyman's Certificate' response category to the trades questions and a slight modification to the durations in the college question are possible.

2011 Census content: Changes presently being considered (continued)

- **Place of work (POW)**

Initially introduced in 1971, place of work questions have not changed since 1996. Compared to other countries, Canada does not capture as much detail on this topic. The information provided by the place of work questions is used to plan essential infrastructure, i.e., roads and public transit (buses), and analyze commuting behaviour. Content being explored for 2011 include questions on travel time and vehicle occupancy.

- **Dwelling characteristics**

Seniors residences are increasingly combinations of nursing homes and independent apartments. This allows seniors to make the transition from independent living to full care without leaving the facility. Further, it permits couples to remain in the same facility should one need additional care. Statistics Canada will examine how to better classify private and collective dwellings in these new structures.

Contact us at censusconsultation@statcan.ca if you require more information on these proposed changes.

How Statistics Canada helps users manage change

The focus in developing the census questionnaires is to include relevant questions and obtain high quality results. When changes are adopted, where possible, Statistics Canada helps users to manage the transition by:

- **Back-coding data using an earlier reference base**
In order to facilitate the comparison of multi-year data over time, a variable might be coded according to both current and historical structures.
- **Providing concordance tables**
Concordance tables are produced to assist users determine if the new and historical variables are comparable either in whole, in part or not at all.
- **Developing derived variables**
In certain circumstances, interim variables are created in order to facilitate trend analysis.
- **Harmonizing questions with other socio-economic surveys/data sources**
Data users are becoming better acquainted with the broad array of available socio-economic data from Statistics Canada. When change is introduced to the census, an attempt is made to harmonize questions across different surveys to permit comparability.

2011 Census content consultation: Discussion points

Your answers to the following questions are greatly appreciated. **Note:** You can complete and submit a '2011 Census content consultation: Discussion points' PDF writable template available online at http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/consultation/92-136/pdf/2011_Census_Discussion_Points_E.pdf.

1. What are your views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes presented in the previous section of this document? Please specify the topic(s) for which your comments apply.

2011 Census topics currently being reviewed

- Relationship to Person 1
- Family structure
- Ethnocultural characteristics
- Aboriginal questions
- Education
- Place of work
- Dwelling characteristics

2. What additional changes to the questionnaires would you recommend? For each suggested modification:
 - indicate the level of priority (low or high);
 - provide a rationale (Please include references to the Statistics Canada socio-economic source(s) you use, if applicable.);
 - if possible, suggest ways respondent burden can be managed by editing or eliminating questions or examples in the same grouping. (The 2006 Census 2B questionnaire (long form) can be viewed at http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/instrument/3901_Q2_V3_E.pdf.)
3. Could any existing question(s) in the census questionnaires be eliminated? Which one(s)? Why?
4. Which existing question(s) in the census questionnaires would you consider essential? Why?
5. The question on religion is asked every 10 years, the last time was in 2001. Should the question be asked again in 2011? Why? / Why not?
6. Do current standard geographic areas meet users' needs? Are the criteria used to define these areas appropriate? Are there other geographic areas or structures that should be included in the geographic frame?

For further information about geographic concepts, consult the *2006 Census Dictionary* available free of charge at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/dictionary/index.cfm>.

7. Do you have other comments, for example, on census dissemination strategies and/or census communications activities? (**Note:** A second round of consultations on census dissemination and geography products and services is being planned later in this census cycle.)

In conclusion

The census must be a reflection of Canada's changing reality and as such ensures users are informed of the ongoing transformation in our society.

Modifications to the census content are made only after careful consideration. Every change must be validated and evaluated before being adopted. Each question is ultimately judged in light of its importance and potential utilization in relation to the additional costs and respondent burden eventually incurred as a result of its inclusion.

This consultation guide has been developed to help users convey their ideas and suggestions to Statistics Canada. It presents information related to the influencing factors evaluated prior to recommending the addition or modification of a question.

Submissions should provide a clear rationale for any suggested changes. They should also demonstrate an understanding of Statistics Canada's broader socio-economic statistical program and why it cannot meet the data user's needs from sources other than the census. For this purpose, you may wish to consult *Your Guide to Data Sources on Census-related Topics* (Catalogue no. 92-135), an informative reference document detailing various complementary census data sources available at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/consultation/92-135/index.cfm>.

Consideration should be given on how to manage respondent burden when additional questions are requested. Other questions or examples in the same grouping may have to be edited or eliminated in order to minimize the length of the census questionnaires.

The census permits users to assess our country's socio-economic conditions and stimulates broad public debate on social issues.

We look forward to hearing from you.

How your comments have influenced past and present censuses

1. The question regarding 'Place of birth of parents' was introduced in 2001 and allows the study of second generation Canadians (that is, the Canadian-born children of immigrant parents). There is a growing interest in the characteristics of this population group who are entering the labour market in large numbers.
2. In 2006, broad-based interest in where individuals obtained their education resulted in the introduction of question 31, *In what province, territory or country did this person complete his/her highest degree, certificate or diploma?* This information is important in analyzing the national and international movement of highly qualified workers.

Who uses Census data?

Census results are important to a wide array of users.

Government	Hospitals	Community organizations
Lawyers	Doctors	Food banks
Planners	Teachers	Retirement homes
Banks	Students	Multicultural groups
Universities	Professors	Librarians
School boards	YOU	Social services providers
Religious groups	Media	Vendors
Market analysts	Emergency services	Police
Fire departments	Farmers	Advocacy groups
Researchers	Real estate agents	Public servants
Museums	Businesses and associations	Aboriginal groups
International bodies	Genealogists	Day care facilities

Appendix A 2006 Census release topics and dates

Beginning March 13, 2007, the 2006 Census will offer a wide range of data tabulations that will paint a portrait of Canada based on various topics, that is, on groups of variables for related subjects. The 'topic-based' approach was initiated for the 2001 Census and was deemed a popular and meaningful way of grouping our data tabulations. Based primarily on user feedback following the 2001 Census, the topics for the 2006 Census major releases are presented below.

2007

Release no. 1: Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Population and dwelling counts

Release no. 2: Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Age and sex

Release no. 3: Wednesday, September 12, 2007

Marital status (including common-law status)

Families and households

Housing and shelter costs (including dwelling characteristics)

Release no. 4: Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Language

Mobility and migration

Immigration and citizenship

2008

Release no. 5: Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Aboriginal peoples

Release no. 6: Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Labour (including labour market activity, industry and occupation)

Place of work and commuting to work (including mode of transportation)

Education (including school attendance and educational attainment)

Language (including language of work)

Release no. 7: Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Ethnic origin and visible minorities

Release no. 8: Thursday, May 1, 2008

Income and earnings

Housing and shelter costs

Source: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/release/index.cfm>

Appendix B 2006 Census questions by category

2A (SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE)

Basic population information

- Name
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Marital status
- Common-law status
- Relationship to Person 1
- Mother tongue

Public release in 2098 (92 years after the census)

2B (LONG QUESTIONNAIRE)

Basic population information

- Name
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Marital status
- Common-law status
- Relationship to Person 1

Activities of daily living

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

Ethnocultural information

- Place of birth
- Citizenship
- Landed immigrant status
- Year landed immigrant status obtained
- Knowledge of English and French (spoken)
- Knowledge of other language(s) (spoken)
- Languages spoken at home
- Mother tongue
- Ethnic origin
- Aboriginal self-reporting
- Population group
- Indian Band/First Nation membership
- Treaty/Registered Indian

Appendix B 2006 Census questions by category (continued)

2B (LONG QUESTIONNAIRE)

Mobility

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

Place of birth of parents

Education

- High school diploma attainment
- Registered apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma attainment
- Attainment of non-university certificate or diploma
- Attainment of a university degree or diploma
- Major field of study of the highest degree
- Location of highest degree, certificate or diploma
- School attendance

Household activities

- Doing unpaid household work, yard work or home maintenance
- Looking after children without pay
- Providing unpaid care to seniors

Labour market activities

- Hours worked for pay or in self-employment
- Absence from job/business
- New job arrangements
- Recent search for paid work
- Availability to work
- Last date of work
- Name of the employer
- Kind of business
- Occupation
- Main activities at work
- Class of worker
- Incorporation status
- Place of work
- Transportation to work
- Language at work
- Weeks worked in 2005
- Full-time or part-time work

Appendix B 2006 Census questions by category (continued)

2B (LONG QUESTIONNAIRE)

Income

- Permission to use information from income tax files
- 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 and Spouse's Allowance
 - 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
 - Retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities, including those from RRSPs and RRIFs
 - Other money income
- Total income in 2005 from all sources
- Income tax paid on 2005 income

Public release in 2098 (92 years after the census)

Housing

- Household maintainer
- Owned or rented
- Number of rooms and bedrooms
- Period when built
- Need for repairs
- Yearly payments for services
- Monthly rent
- Owner costs