Census of Population 2026
Changes and updates to methodology

Ive Delahousse
Statistical Integration Methods Division
Statistics Canada
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New elements for the 2026 cycle

1. New Frame
   - The **Statistical Building Register (SBgR)** is the new frame defining the list of dwellings in the target population
2. Collection processes
   - **Collection wave methodology** – invitation letters, reminders, and follow up
   - There will be an **Alternate Secure Access Code (SAC)** option that respondents can use to access the Electronic Questionnaire (EQ)
   - **Early Enumeration** will take place again
   - Introduction of a **chatbot**
3. Expanded use of **administrative data** (through a small-scale Live Test)

The Statistical Building Register (SBgR)

- The **Statistical Building Register (SBgR)** is a new frame
  - The SBgR replaces the Address Register
  - About the SBgR
    - The SBgR covers the entire country
    - The SBgR is built from various administrative sources which collectively provide a comprehensive list of residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings
    - The SBgR contains building attributes, geo-location, occupancy and contact information
    - Approximately 91% of the residential buildings on the SBgR have mailable addresses
  - The 2026 Census will use the SBgR to identify the dwellings associated to residential building addresses that will receive invitation letters requesting respondents to complete their questionnaire online
  - For areas with non-mailable addresses, invitations will be dropped-off by field operations staff or will be enumerated though a list-leave approach

Collection Wave Methodology

NRFU – Non-response follow-up
VB – Voice Broadcast
MO – Mail-out
DD – Direct delivery (Drop-off)

CENSUS DAY
May 12

Mail-out 91%

Wave 1
MO Invitation Letter
May 4

Non-Response

Wave 2
Reminder Letter
May 13 – May 25

Non-Response

Wave 3
2nd Reminder Letter
May 25 – June 4

Non-Response

Text/VB
Reminder
June 1 – June 2

Non-Response

Field & Telephone NRFU
June 3 – July 31

Wave 4
Final NRFU Letter
July 9 - July 15

New Text Message
May 14 - May 15

Paper Questionnaire Request System/Process
Available to respondents from May 4 (automated system)

List Leave/ Drop-Off 8%

Wave 1
DD Invitation Letter
May 4 – May 11

Drop-Off

Non-Response

Text/VB
Reminder
May 23

Non-Response

Telephone NRFU
Starts May 22

Non-Response

Field NRFU
June 3 – July 31

List Leave

Non-Response

Non-Response

List Leave NRFU
May 22 – July 17**

Reserve / Remote * 1%

Wave 1
MO Invitation Letter
May 4

Wave 1
DD Invitation Letter
May 4 – May 11

Non-Response

NRFU
Non-Response Follow-up
May 15 - July 31

* Excluding Early Enumeration areas (Collection from February 2, to March 31, 2026)
** In mixed Crew Leader Districts, Non-Response Follow-Up in List-Leave & Seasonal Collection Units will be conducted between June 3rd and July 31st

Collection Initiatives

- **The Alternate Secure Access Code (SAC) is a new initiative**
  - Allows respondents to fill in the EQ without having their initial SAC that was mailed to them
  - Was tested in 2024
  - Aims to enhance the respondent experience and make self-response easier
  - The EQ portal allows the respondent to generate a new SAC
    - Respondents provide their address
    - The SAC request is matched to our systems, and a new SAC is generated
    - Unmatched SAC requests are set to be resolved posteriorly
    - Privacy and security are preserved
  - This response option should reduce the number of people calling the HelpLine because they cannot find their SAC
  - The linkage processes and resolution process for unlinked SAC requests are being optimized and under continuous improvement for 2026

Collection Initiatives

- **Early Enumeration returns**
  - Re-introduced for 2026; was cancelled in 2021 due to COVID
  - Aims to enumerate people in some northern reserve and remote areas when it is easier to access these areas (e.g. through ice road access)
  - Collection process
    - Pre-listing – Jan 2026 (where possible)
    - Collection – Feb 2, 2026 to Mar 31, 2026 (includes follow-up)
    - Collection will be done through listing and drop-off of invitation letters, online completions via the EQ where possible, and in-person interview enumerations
    - The alternate SAC portal will not be available
    - Census HelpLine support will be available

- **The chatbot is a new initiative**
  - Introduction of a Chatbot to help respondents get the information they need
    - Provides consistent, accurate and approved responses to common questions (e.g. “Why are you doing a census?”)
    - Provides automated support to census respondents with an option to transfer to live agent

Expanding the use of Admin Data

Background

- Research activities are ongoing for an increased use of admin data toward a **combined census** in 2031 where information collected directly from respondents will be integrated with administrative data that individuals have already provided to other government organizations and agencies, for the purpose of enumerating the population
- A combined census would leverage the **Statistical Demographic Database** (SDD) which is built from the integration of already-acquired federal and provincial government admin data sources, and includes demographic information at the person level
- Statistical models are used to create administrative households of in-scope people at a given administrative address

The 2026 Live Test

- Aims to test replacement using administrative data and the combined census model
- Administrative data would be used for a small volume of dwellings (approximately 130,000) with high quality admin data which are still unresolved at the time of the non-response follow-up
- The data replacement would be for a limited number of short form variables