Housing Characteristics Reference Guide

Census of Population, 2021

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Canada

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Definitions and concepts

The 2021 Census of Population questions collected information on housing for all private households. Housing-related variables can be classified into three groups: (1) dwelling characteristics, (2) household characteristics related to shelter costs and (3) other household characteristics.

Dwelling characteristics refer to the physical attributes of the living quarters occupied by the household. The Census of Population collected the following information: number of rooms, number of bedrooms, period of construction, dwelling condition, condominium status and value (owner estimated) of dwelling. Information on dwelling characteristics, except the value of the dwelling, was collected for all occupied private dwellings. Information on the value of the dwelling was collected only for owner-occupied dwellings that were not located on an agricultural operation operated by a member of the household. This exception was made because households that rent their dwelling have difficulty assessing its value since they were not involved in the purchase. Furthermore, owner-occupied dwellings that were part of an agricultural operation were excluded because often the value of the dwelling cannot be separated from the value of the agricultural operation.

Shelter costs refer to the total average dwelling-related expenses paid by households. The Census of Population collected the following information related to shelter costs: whether a rented dwelling was subsidized (see subsidized housing) and whether an owned dwelling had a mortgage (see presence of mortgage payments). Information on shelter costs and the related variables was disseminated for owner-occupied and renter-occupied dwellings and dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. Information on shelter costs was not collected or disseminated for dwellings that were part of an agricultural operation operated by a member of the household because often the shelter costs of the dwelling cannot be separated from the shelter costs of the agricultural operation.

Household characteristics refer to characteristics of the person or group of persons occupying the private dwelling. These differ from the characteristics of individual persons, in that household characteristics are generally intended to describe all household members. Information on household characteristics collected by the Census of Population that is commonly used in housing analysis includes tenure, household size, household total income and household type. Information on household characteristics was collected for all private households. The Census of Population also collected information to identify household maintainers, i.e., which household members paid the shelter costs. A common approach in housing analysis is to examine the characteristics of the primary household maintainer (e.g., age) in relation to the dwelling, shelter costs and other household characteristics.

Housing adequacy, housing suitability, housing affordability, acceptable housing and **core housing need** are key household indicators and topics of interest for governments and housing organizations. Variables from the Census of Population are combined to create household indicators that help governments and organizations manage the state of housing in Canada.

An indicator of housing adequacy is the condition of the dwelling. An indicator of housing suitability (commonly used to measure "crowding") is whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household. Another indicator of crowding is the number of persons per room in a dwelling. An indicator of housing affordability is the proportion of household total income that is spent on shelter costs. Acceptable housing refers to housing that is adequate in condition, suitable in size and affordable. Core housing need is an indicator of a household's relative ability to afford the median market rent of a dwelling in its region that meets its needs.

For additional information, please see the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Questions

For the 2021 Census, the 2A short-form questionnaire was used to enumerate all usual residents of 75% of private dwellings. The 2A-L long-form questionnaire, which also includes the questions from the 2A short-form questionnaire, was used to enumerate a 25% sample of private households in Canada. For private households in First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas, the 2A-R questionnaire

was used to enumerate 100% of the population. On both the 2A-L and the 2A-R questionnaires, data on housing were collected in Step E. The first page of housing questions (E1 to E6) collected information on household and dwelling characteristics applicable to all private households, regardless of housing tenure. The second page of housing questions (E7 to E9 on the 2A-L questionnaire, E7 to E10 on the 2A-R questionnaire) collected shelter cost information. Skip patterns on the shelter cost questions were based on housing tenure, as the components of shelter costs vary based on this characteristic.

The main difference between the housing questions on the 2A-L and 2A-R questionnaires was that the 2A-R questionnaire asked whether the dwelling was provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band to establish skip patterns for the shelter cost questions. In addition, the examples presented in the question on the number of rooms and bedrooms were different on the 2A-R questionnaire so that the examples would be relevant for northern areas. The 2021 2A-R questionnaire also included a new question on user or occupancy fees for housing provided by local governments, First Nations or Indian bands. Otherwise, the housing questions were identical.

For more information on the reasons why the census questions are asked, please refer to the five fact sheets found on The road to the 2021 Census web page.

Note: Information on the historical comparability of the 2021 Census questions and those asked in earlier censuses is provided in the Comparability section of this document.

Classifications

Classifications used for indicators of housing adequacy, housing suitability, housing affordability and core housing need are based on generally accepted classifications used by governments and housing organizations such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Dwelling condition (an indicator of **housing adequacy**) is classified into three groups: needing regular maintenance only, needing minor repairs and needing major repairs. A need for major repairs is considered an indicator of inadequate dwellings by housing organizations. At the time of the census, to guide respondents in answering the question on the condition of the dwelling, examples were included in each response category. The examples of major repairs were intended to capture problems that compromised the dwelling's structure or major systems (i.e., heating, plumbing and electrical). Specifically, the questionnaire contained the following examples for major repairs: defective plumbing or electrical wiring, and structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings. Examples of regular maintenance and minor repairs were also included on the questionnaire. For minor repairs, the examples on the questionnaire were missing or loose floor tiles, bricks or shingles, and defective steps, railing or siding. For regular maintenance, the examples on the questionnaire were painting and furnace cleaning.

The housing suitability of a dwelling is based on the National Occupancy Standard (NOS) developed by CMHC. The housing suitability indicator classifies dwellings as not suitable if they do not have enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household, as calculated using the NOS. Dwellings that are not suitable are also further classified by the shortfall in the number of bedrooms when compared with the required number of bedrooms based on the NOS. The 2021 Census estimates of housing suitability are based on a derivation of the indicator which uses gender.

Persons per room is a measure of crowding that considers all rooms in a private dwelling and the number of members of the household. A higher number of persons per room indicates a higher level of crowding. Generally, housing research in Canada uses a threshold of more than one person per room to determine that a dwelling in Canada is crowded. The United Nations considers densities of three or more persons per room to be overcrowded under any circumstance, but states that this level may be raised or lowered for national use.

The shelter-cost-to-income ratio (an indicator of **housing affordability**) is classified into several ranges, as shown in the data tables. The classification related to housing affordability is whether the occupants of the dwelling paid 30% or more of household total income toward shelter costs. In 1986, CMHC and the provinces agreed to use the 30% threshold to measure affordability for the purposes of defining social housing need. This agreement

was reached during the development of federal and provincial social housing programs. Research on housing affordability in the territories often uses the same threshold.

Core housing need is a two-stage indicator that helps to identify who needs housing assistance. It has been used in Canada since the 1980s and was developed by CMHC in collaboration with the provinces and territories. Assessing a household for core housing need involves determining whether the household falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and whether before-tax income is sufficient to access acceptable local housing (i.e., that meets all three housing standards).

Classifications for housing variables are listed in the *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Concepts over time

For the 2021 Census, the shelter cost of private households includes user or occupancy fees for housing provided by local governments, First Nations or Indian bands. In previous cycles, these households were asked to report only payments for electricity, heat, water and other services. For historical and statutory reasons, the components of shelter costs related to owner households (mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees) and renter households (rent payments) do not always apply to dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. In consultations for the 2021 Census of Population, the consensus among stakeholders and data users was that there is a clear need to collect and disseminate information based on a complete shelter cost concept for all housing across Canada, including households living on reserve.

Collection and processing methods

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Canada in early 2020 and affected all steps of the 2021 Census process, from data collection to dissemination. Please refer to the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X for more detailed information on this topic.

Data quality

The 2021 Census of Population underwent a thorough data quality assessment. The different certification activities conducted to evaluate the quality of the 2021 Census data are described in Chapter 9 of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The data quality assessment was conducted in addition to the regular verifications and quality checks completed at key stages of the census. For example, throughout data collection and processing, the accuracy of specific steps such as data capture and coding was measured, the consistency of the responses provided was checked, and the non-response rates for each question were analyzed. As well, the quality of imputed responses was assessed during data editing and imputation.

During the data quality assessment, a number of data quality indicators were produced and used to evaluate the quality of the data. These indicators are briefly described below. Finally, resulting census counts were compared with other data sources and certified for final release.

The main highlights of this assessment of the data pertaining to housing characteristics content are presented below.

Variability due to sampling and total non-response

The objective of the long-form census questionnaire is to produce estimates on various topics for a wide variety of geographies, ranging from very large areas (such as provinces and census metropolitan areas) to very small areas (such as neighbourhoods and municipalities), and for various populations (such as Indigenous peoples and immigrants) that are generally referred to in this document as "populations of interest." In order to reduce response burden, the long-form census questionnaire is administered to a random sample of households.

This sampling approach and total non-response introduce variability into the estimates that needs to be accounted for. This variability also depends on the population size and the variability of the characteristics being measured. Furthermore, the precision of estimates may vary considerably depending on the domain or geography of interest, in particular because of the variation in response rates. For more information on variability due to sampling and total non-response in long-form census questionnaire estimates, please refer to the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Non-response bias

Non-response bias is a potential source of error for all surveys, including the long-form census questionnaire. Non-response bias arises when the characteristics of those who participate in a survey are different from those who do not.

In general, the risk of non-response bias increases as the response rate declines. For the 2021 long-form census questionnaire, Statistics Canada adapted its collection and estimation procedures to mitigate the effect of non-response bias to the extent possible. For more information on these mitigation strategies, please refer to the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

Data quality indicators

A number of quality indicators were produced and analyzed during the 2021 Census of Population data quality assessment. Four indicators are available to data users for long-form content: the total non-response (TNR) rate; the confidence interval; as well as the non-response rate and the imputation rate per question.

The **total non-response (TNR) rate** is the primary quality indicator that accompanies each disseminated 2021 Census of Population product, and is calculated for each geographic area. It measures total non-response at the dwelling level. Non-response is said to be total when no questionnaire is returned from a dwelling or when a returned questionnaire does not meet the minimum content. More information on the TNR rate is available in Chapter 9 of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X.

The confidence interval was selected as a variance-based quality indicator to accompany the 2021 Census of Population long-form estimates because it helps users easily make a statistical inference. This indicator provides a measure of the accuracy of the long-form estimates. Using a science-based approach, research and simulations were done to ensure that confidence intervals are constructed using adequate statistical methods for the Census of Population data and areas of interest.

A confidence interval is associated with a confidence level, generally set at 95%. A 95% confidence interval is an interval constructed around the estimate so that, if the process that generated the sample were repeated many times, the value of the interest parameter in the population would be contained in 95% of these intervals. The confidence interval consists of a lower bound and an upper bound. These two bounds accompany the long-form estimates in most data tables.

Further details on the different methods used to construct confidence intervals and their assumptions are provided in the *Sampling and Weighting Technical Report, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-306-X.

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The **non-response rate per question** is a measure of missing information due to non-response to a question. It measures only the non-response that is resolved through imputation during data processing (as opposed to weighting when a sample is used). For the long-form questionnaire, the non-response rate per question includes only partial non-response to the question, except for First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas where both partial and total non-response are taken into account. Partial non-response is when answers to certain questions are not provided for a respondent household.

The non-response rate per question for a question on the long-form questionnaire is defined as the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest who did not respond to the question divided by the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest. Here "units" refers to the statistical units for which data are collected or derived (e.g., persons or households, depending on whether the question is about a person-level characteristic or a household-level characteristic). A unit is considered to be in scope for a given question if the question is applicable to that unit and the unit belongs to the population of interest related to the question.

The **imputation rate per question** measures the extent to which responses to a given question were imputed. Imputation is used to replace missing data in the event of non-response or when a response is found to be invalid (e.g., multiple answers are provided when a single answer is expected). Imputation is conducted to eliminate data gaps and to reduce bias introduced by non-response. Imputation is generally done by identifying persons or households in the same geographical area with similar characteristics to the incomplete record and copying their values to fill in the missing or invalid responses.

The imputation rate for a question on the long-form questionnaire is defined as the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest for which the response to the question was imputed divided by the sum of the weights of in-scope units in the population of interest (see the definition of "units" provided in the above section on the non-response rate per question).

For long-form content, imputation for most areas is done to resolve partial non-response—not total non-response, which instead is treated by weighting. However, in First Nations communities, Métis settlements, Inuit regions and other remote areas, whole household imputation (WHI) is used to resolve total non-response. It first imputes the occupancy status of non-respondent dwellings and further imputes all the data for those dwellings resolved as occupied in the first step. WHI is included in the imputation rate per question, including the use of administrative data to impute non-responding households in areas with low response rates; see Appendix 1.7 of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X. As with the non-response rate, a unit is considered to be in scope if the question is applicable to that unit and the unit belongs to the population of interest related to the question.

The non-response and imputation rates per question can be interpreted as the proportion of in-scope units in the population of interest for which information was not reported or was imputed, respectively. The long-form rates are weighted to reflect the fact that the long-form questionnaire is only distributed to a sample of the population, so in this case, the proportion is estimated.

The non-response and imputation rates for a question are often similar, but some differences can be observed for a given question because of additional data processing steps that may have been required. These rates were regularly checked during data assessment, and a detailed analysis was done if there was a difference between the two rates for a question, to ensure the appropriateness of the processing steps taken and the quality of the data. A difference between the non-response rate and the imputation rate for a question can generally be explained by one of the following two factors:

- Some responses were considered invalid or inconsistent during the edit stage and imputation was needed, which is why the imputation rate is higher than the non-response rate for a question.

- Some non-responses were resolved in a straightforward manner early during data processing because a single resolution was possible based on the answers provided to other questions, making imputation unnecessary. This may explain why the non-response rate is higher than the imputation rate for a question.

The non-response and imputation rates per question at lower levels of geography are also available in 2021 Census data tables presenting data quality indicators. This information is scheduled for release on August 17, 2022, for short-form questions and on November 30, 2022, for long-form questions.

The *2021 Census Data Quality Guidelines*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-26-0006 provides all the information required to understand and interpret the data quality indicators for the 2021 Census, along with guidelines to enable their proper usage. Data quality indicators are provided so that users are informed about the quality of the statistical information provided and can determine the relevance and the limitations of the data relative to their needs. In general, the quality of the 2021 Census of Population data is very good, but in some cases data have to be used with caution. It is strongly recommended that users consult all available data quality indicators to get a better sense of the quality of the data products in which they are interested.

Certification of final counts

Once data editing and imputation were completed, the data were weighted to ensure that estimates represent the total Canadian population living in private dwellings. Certification of the final weighted estimates was the last step in the validation process, which led to the recommendation to release the data for each level of geography and domain of interest. Based on the analysis of the data quality indicators and the comparison of long-form census questionnaire estimates with other data sources, the recommendation is for unconditional release, conditional release, or non-release (for quality reasons on rare occasions). For conditional release or non-release, appropriate notes and warnings are included in the products and provided to users. Moreover, other data sources were used to evaluate the long-form census questionnaire estimates. However, since the risk of error often increases for lower levels of geography and for smaller populations, and the data sources used to evaluate these counts are less reliable or not available at these lower levels, it can be difficult to certify the counts at these levels.

Long-form census questionnaire estimates are also subject to confidentiality rules that ensure non-disclosure of respondent identity and characteristics. For more information on privacy and confidentiality, please refer to Chapter 1 of the *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X. For information on how Statistics Canada balances the protection of confidentiality and the need for disaggregated census data, with specific attention to new 2021 Census content, please refer to *Balancing the Protection of Confidentiality with the Needs for Disaggregated Census Data, Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-26-0005.

For more information on data processing and the calculation of estimates and their level of precision, please refer to the *Sampling and Weighting Technical Report, Census of Population, 2021,* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-306-X.

Data quality for housing characteristics

The housing variables from the 2021 Census of Population are recommended for unconditional release based on the overall quality of the data. Considerable effort is made throughout the entire process to ensure high standards of data quality; however, the resulting data, particularly for smaller regions and populations, are accompanied by a degree of variability. The evaluation of the housing variables consisted of the following:

- examination of the non-response and imputation rates for the housing variables
- historical comparison with data from previous censuses
- comparison with other sources of data as applicable.

To assess the appropriateness of the 2021 Census of Population data for users' purposes, and to understand the risk involved in drawing conclusions or making decisions based on these data, users should be aware of the following data quality indicators for the housing variables.

Tables 1a, b and c and 2a, b and c below present the non-response and imputation rates per question for Canada and for each province and territory.

Question-level non-response rates

Non-response rates per question were quite low overall across the housing questions at the national, provincial and territorial levels. However, there were substantial differences in the non-response rates per question between the 2A-L and 2A-R questionnaires. The 2A-L collection methodology changed very little from the methods used

in 2016. At the same time, adjustments to the 2A-R collection methods were required to reduce in-person contact in response to public health guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes and the conditions experienced while collecting the data resulted in higher non-response rates per question, particularly for the housing questions, which are located at the end of the questionnaire.

Table 1a
Non-response rates per question, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
58	Household maintainer[1]	3.3	2.9	2.5	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.0	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.5	7.1	12.6	29.6
E1	Tenure[2]	3.0	2.4	2.2	2.5	3.1	2.7	2.7	4.0	4.2	3.8	3.1	7.3	12.5	36.0
E2	Condominium status[2]	3.0	2.3	2.3	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.9	4.4	3.8	3.1	7.6	13.6	37.8
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	2.9	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.9	2.5	2.6	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.0	7.6	12.3	36.5
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	2.9	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.9	2.5	2.6	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.0	7.6	12.4	36.2
E4	Period of construction[2]	3.7	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.4	4.8	5.0	4.5	3.6	8.8	14.1	39.5
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	2.9	2.3	2.2	2.4	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.0	7.4	12.4	36.2
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	5.4	4.3	5.0	4.7	5.6	4.5	5.1	7.0	8.1	7.1	5.5	11.2	14.6	38.9
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	5.8	5.1	5.3	4.9	6.2	5.2	5.3	7.6	8.4	7.4	5.8	11.4	14.7	39.4
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	5.8	4.9	5.4	4.9	6.1	5.3	5.3	7.2	8.4	7.4	5.8	11.4	14.7	39.4
E8(a)	Rent[4]	5.3	4.6	4.7	4.7	5.8	4.5	5.3	6.0	6.8	6.4	5.2	12.4	28.6	58.4
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	5.5	4.5	5.0	4.9	6.2	4.7	5.4	6.2	7.1	6.6	5.3	11.7	28.9	59.2
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	4.9	4.0	4.9	4.2	4.9	4.1	4.6	5.8	6.9	6.5	5.2	9.5	13.8	38.6
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	5.0	3.8	4.7	4.0	4.8	4.1	4.7	5.6	6.5	6.5	5.3	8.0	12.9	40.0
E9(c)	Property taxes[5, 7]	5.2	4.7	5.7	4.9	5.7	4.4	4.8	6.1	7.4	6.6	5.6	11.4	15.9	42.8
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	5.9	5.0	6.4	5.5	6.5	5.2	5.6	6.9	7.9	7.3	6.2	11.3	16.6	42.8
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	9.1	6.7	5.9	5.5	7.3	4.7	9.5	6.9	7.4	7.7	13.7	9.3	6.5	34.7
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	44.5	53.2	15.6	33.0	28.1	47.2	43.2	43.9	45.8	51.8	43.7	38.5	40.0	…

… not applicable
1. Non-response rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Non-response rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 1b
Non-response rates per question, 2A-L questionnaire, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
58	Household maintainer[1]	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.6	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.7	3.1	3.0	1.8	…
E1	Tenure[2]	2.7	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.9	3.4	2.7	2.8	1.8	…
E2	Condominium status[2]	2.6	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.4	2.7	3.0	1.7	…
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	2.6	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.4	2.6	2.8	1.4	…
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	2.5	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.3	2.6	2.8	1.6	…
E4	Period of construction[2]	3.4	2.5	3.0	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.6	4.2	3.2	4.0	2.3	…
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	2.6	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.3	2.6	2.6	1.5	…
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	5.1	4.0	5.0	4.5	5.4	4.3	4.9	5.8	6.7	6.7	5.1	6.2	3.6	…
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	5.4	4.8	5.2	4.7	6.0	5.0	5.2	6.5	7.0	7.0	5.3	6.5	3.5	…
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	5.5	4.6	5.3	4.7	5.8	5.2	5.2	6.0	6.9	6.9	5.4	6.5	3.6	…
E8(a)	Rent[4]	5.0	4.5	4.7	4.6	5.8	4.3	5.3	5.7	6.0	6.2	5.0	6.5	5.3	…
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	5.2	4.3	5.0	4.8	6.1	4.4	5.4	5.8	6.3	6.4	5.1	5.9	5.0	…
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	4.8	3.8	4.9	4.2	4.9	4.0	4.5	5.5	6.7	6.4	4.9	5.4	2.6	…
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	4.9	3.7	4.7	4.0	4.8	4.1	4.7	5.5	6.3	6.4	5.2	5.4	2.9	…
E9(c)	Property taxes[5,7]	5.0	4.4	5.6	4.8	5.7	4.4	4.7	5.8	7.1	6.5	5.2	6.9	2.8	…
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	5.8	4.8	6.4	5.4	6.5	5.2	5.5	6.5	7.6	7.1	5.7	6.7	2.6	…
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	9.1	6.7	5.8	5.5	7.2	4.7	9.5	6.9	7.4	7.7	13.6	8.9	5.3	…
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…

… not applicable
1. Non-response rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Non-response rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 1c
Non-response rates per question, 2A-R questionnaire, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
58	Household maintainer[1]	32.7	27.8	11.2	24.5	21.6	35.5	34.6	30.5	29.0	43.6	34.3	28.5	22.9	29.6
E1	Tenure[2]	36.2	27.6	14.3	28.8	25.5	38.8	36.0	38.5	38.4	47.5	34.1	28.5	22.6	36.0
E2	Condominium status[2]	38.1	28.3	19.0	29.7	26.2	41.3	37.9	41.0	40.1	49.5	35.7	29.2	25.0	37.8
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	36.5	27.4	16.7	28.6	25.8	38.8	36.3	38.8	38.7	47.8	34.6	30.3	22.7	36.5
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	36.4	27.4	16.7	28.7	25.8	38.7	36.2	38.8	38.5	47.4	34.5	30.3	22.7	36.2
E4	Period of construction[2]	38.3	28.1	14.3	30.1	26.2	41.2	37.3	41.9	41.1	48.7	35.5	31.3	25.3	39.5
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	36.5	27.5	17.1	29.1	25.8	39.2	36.2	38.9	38.5	47.4	34.5	29.6	22.7	36.2
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	39.4	29.6	15.0	30.9	26.9	42.2	38.7	44.0	41.4	50.0	37.2	34.2	25.1	38.9
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	40.1	29.8	15.0	31.3	27.3	43.6	39.6	45.1	41.7	50.7	37.6	34.4	25.3	39.4
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	40.5	29.5	15.0	31.6	27.5	43.5	40.0	44.8	42.6	53.0	38.1	34.4	25.3	39.4
E8(a)	Rent[4]	53.1	30.9	0.0	32.5	27.5	58.6	39.7	43.6	56.7	71.4	43.1	43.4	48.2	58.4
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	55.8	30.6	0.0	43.1	28.7	63.9	42.4	49.0	59.9	76.3	46.7	43.1	48.9	59.2
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	37.1	22.8	37.5	43.8	30.9	37.5	36.0	50.1	41.5	59.0	36.1	34.5	26.0	38.6
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	40.5	28.6	20.0	57.1	36.5	44.6	38.9	55.7	44.4	78.0	38.6	38.3	30.8	40.0
E9(c)	Property taxes[5,7]	39.4	23.7	26.8	45.0	33.3	41.1	37.3	53.3	45.5	58.5	37.9	34.7	29.5	42.8
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	46.2	25.1	37.5	56.2	37.2	47.4	42.6	70.8	50.3	70.5	47.1	39.0	31.8	42.8
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	37.6	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	66.7	37.5	65.4	47.5	86.7	30.4	71.4	32.5	34.7
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	44.5	53.2	15.6	32.6	28.0	47.2	43.2	43.9	45.8	51.8	43.6	37.1	40.0	…

… not applicable

1. Non-response rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Non-response rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Non-response rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Question-level imputation rates

Imputation rates per question largely reflect the non-response rates per question, and similar patterns are seen when differentiating between the 2A-L and 2A-R questionnaires. Overall, imputation rates per question were low for the housing content. The territories are an exception, where 2A-R questionnaires are used for collection in many areas.

Table 2a
Imputation rates per question, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
58	Household maintainer[1]	2.5	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.7	5.4	11.0	26.4
E1	Tenure[2]	2.8	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.8	2.4	2.5	3.9	4.1	3.6	2.9	7.7	12.5	36.0
E2	Condominium status[2]	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.7	2.2	1.9	3.3	3.9	3.2	2.4	6.9	13.2	37.6
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	5.0	4.5	3.8	4.0	4.6	3.9	4.8	5.7	5.8	6.1	6.6	11.1	14.6	39.1
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	3.2	2.5	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.7	3.0	4.2	4.4	4.1	3.6	8.0	12.9	36.6
E4	Period of construction[2]	3.7	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.4	4.8	5.0	4.5	3.6	8.8	14.1	39.5
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	2.9	2.3	2.2	2.4	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.0	7.4	12.4	36.2
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	6.8	5.4	5.8	5.6	6.6	5.5	6.8	8.4	9.8	8.5	7.1	12.6	16.2	40.7
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	6.5	5.6	5.8	5.6	6.6	5.5	6.3	8.4	9.6	8.3	6.7	12.7	16.0	41.3
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	6.7	5.7	6.0	5.6	7.0	6.1	6.3	8.1	9.4	8.4	6.9	13.5	16.0	41.2
E8(a)	Rent[4]	5.4	4.9	4.8	4.9	6.1	4.7	5.5	6.2	6.8	6.5	5.3	11.8	18.7	40.2
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	5.5	4.5	5.0	4.9	6.2	4.7	5.4	6.2	7.2	6.7	5.3	12.0	28.9	39.0
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	5.0	4.1	5.1	4.3	5.1	4.2	4.7	5.9	7.0	6.6	5.4	9.5	13.6	38.1
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	4.5	3.2	4.4	3.5	4.2	3.5	4.3	5.1	6.0	6.0	5.0	7.5	11.9	37.0
E9(c)	Property taxes[5,7]	7.4	8.9	7.3	6.6	8.0	7.1	6.7	7.8	9.3	8.7	8.2	14.8	27.9	51.4
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	7.1	5.7	7.4	6.5	7.6	6.6	6.7	7.7	8.9	8.4	7.5	12.6	17.6	43.3

Table 2a
Imputation rates per question, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	15.2	27.8	30.9	16.7	33.2	16.3	14.0	14.5	12.9	12.7	17.2	20.0	17.3	43.5
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	44.8	53.2	18.8	33.2	28.3	47.5	43.6	44.2	46.1	52.1	44.0	38.5	40.0	…

… not applicable
1. Imputation rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Imputation rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.
Note: The imputation rates refer to the weighted proportion of records for which missing responses were replaced with acceptable values from another record, in the same geographical area and with similar characteristics. Deterministic edits are not included.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 2b

Imputation rates per question, 2A-L questionnaire, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
								percent							
58	Household maintainer[1]	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.8	2.3	2.1	1.3	…
E1	Tenure[2]	2.4	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.5	2.5	1.6	…
E2	Condominium status[2]	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.8	2.0	2.2	1.3	…
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	4.7	4.2	3.7	3.8	4.4	3.7	4.6	4.6	4.4	5.7	6.2	6.6	3.9	…
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	2.9	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.8	3.2	3.2	2.1	…
E4	Period of construction[2]	3.4	2.5	3.0	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.6	4.2	3.2	4.0	2.3	…
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	2.6	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.3	2.6	2.6	1.5	…
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	6.5	5.0	5.8	5.4	6.3	5.3	6.7	7.2	8.3	8.1	6.7	7.4	5.5	…
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	6.2	5.3	5.8	5.3	6.4	5.3	6.2	7.2	8.2	7.9	6.3	7.5	4.9	…
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	6.4	5.4	6.0	5.3	6.7	5.9	6.1	6.9	7.9	7.9	6.5	8.6	4.8	…
E8(a)	Rent[4]	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.9	6.1	4.5	5.5	5.8	6.2	6.3	5.1	7.0	8.9	…
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	5.2	4.3	5.0	4.9	6.2	4.5	5.4	5.9	6.4	6.5	5.2	6.1	5.0	…
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	4.9	3.9	5.0	4.3	5.1	4.2	4.6	5.7	6.8	6.5	5.1	5.4	2.6	…
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	4.4	3.1	4.4	3.5	4.2	3.5	4.3	5.1	5.8	5.9	4.8	4.9	2.9	…
E9(c)	Property taxes[5,7]	7.3	8.5	7.3	6.5	8.0	7.0	6.6	7.4	9.0	8.6	7.9	9.1	5.1	…
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	6.9	5.5	7.3	6.4	7.5	6.5	6.6	7.3	8.6	8.3	7.0	7.8	3.6	…
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	15.2	27.8	30.7	16.7	33.2	16.2	14.0	14.5	12.8	12.7	17.1	19.6	15.8	…
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…

… not applicable

1. Imputation rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Imputation rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.

Note: The imputation rates refer to the weighted proportion of records for which missing responses were replaced with acceptable values from another record, in the same geographical area and with similar characteristics. Deterministic edits are not included.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Table 2c
Imputation rates per question, 2A-R questionnaire, Canada, provinces and territories, Census of Population, 2021

Question no.	Variable	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
							percent								
58	Household maintainer[1]	29.7	26.8	9.6	22.5	20.9	32.4	32.2	27.0	25.9	40.4	31.3	22.7	20.2	26.4
E1	Tenure[2]	40.3	28.3	21.4	31.3	28.4	41.8	38.8	49.2	43.5	51.5	38.8	31.8	22.9	36.0
E2	Condominium status[2]	37.7	28.0	19.0	29.1	25.8	40.9	37.1	40.7	40.1	49.2	35.2	29.1	24.5	37.6
E3(a)	Rooms[2]	38.4	28.9	16.7	29.7	26.6	40.7	37.6	41.3	40.1	49.1	36.9	32.1	24.7	39.1
E3(b)	Bedrooms[2]	36.9	27.6	19.0	29.1	26.2	39.1	36.5	39.4	39.0	48.0	35.4	30.6	23.2	36.6
E4	Period of construction[2]	38.3	28.1	14.3	30.1	26.2	41.2	37.3	41.9	41.1	48.7	35.5	31.3	25.3	39.5
E5	Condition of dwelling[2]	36.5	27.5	17.1	29.1	25.8	39.2	36.2	38.9	38.5	47.4	34.5	29.6	22.7	36.2
E7(a)	Electricity payment[3]	41.7	30.9	16.9	38.6	35.7	43.6	40.3	47.0	44.7	52.7	38.5	36.9	26.5	40.7
E7(b)	Fuel payment[3]	41.7	30.9	16.4	37.6	29.8	44.4	40.7	46.1	44.6	53.2	38.5	36.7	26.6	41.3
E7(c)	Water and other service payment[3]	42.2	30.8	15.0	37.2	35.1	44.8	41.0	46.7	44.6	55.1	38.9	36.8	26.6	41.2
E8(a)	Rent[4]	38.8	30.9	0.0	30.0	22.5	39.6	35.8	43.6	45.0	55.8	40.6	37.0	26.8	40.2
E8(b)	Subsidy status[4]	50.2	30.6	0.0	43.1	28.7	64.0	42.5	49.3	60.0	76.5	46.7	43.4	48.9	39.0
E9(a)	Mortgage payment[5]	37.0	22.8	37.5	42.7	30.9	37.5	36.0	50.1	41.3	57.8	36.1	33.9	25.7	38.1
E9(b)	Property taxes included in mortgage[5,6]	38.4	26.7	20.0	53.6	36.5	42.8	36.6	54.3	42.8	76.4	36.4	38.0	28.1	37.0
E9(c)	Property taxes[5,7]	44.4	38.8	26.8	45.0	34.8	42.1	38.5	53.7	50.0	78.8	38.7	43.8	51.6	51.4
E9(d)	Value of dwelling[5]	49.2	25.3	37.5	64.0	43.6	49.8	44.7	73.7	53.0	79.5	50.9	41.2	33.0	43.3
E9(e)	Condominium fee[5,8]	48.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.9	68.8	92.3	82.5	93.3	35.5	85.7	50.0	43.5
E10	Monthly use or occupancy payment for dwelling[9]	44.8	53.2	18.8	32.7	28.2	47.5	43.6	44.1	46.1	52.1	43.8	37.1	40.0	…

… not applicable

1. Imputation rate is calculated for the population of people who could be household maintainers (person aged 15 years and older who is neither an employee of Person 1 nor a member of an employee's census family).
2. Imputation rate is calculated for all private households.
3. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households.
4. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
5. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm owner households.
6. Excludes households without a mortgage.
7. Excludes households with property taxes included in the mortgage.
8. Excludes households with standard ownership (not a condominium).
9. Imputation rate is calculated for non-farm households living in a dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band.
Note: The imputation rates refer to the weighted proportion of records for which missing responses were replaced with acceptable values from another record, in the same geographical area and with similar characteristics. Deterministic edits are not included.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Higher levels of non-response and imputation per question are largely concentrated in remote areas, including reserves, rural communities and regions in the territories. Users are encouraged to consult the data quality indicators when conducting housing analysis at lower levels of geography where the population counts are small and there were substantial collection methodology changes from 2016.

Comparability

Processing changes

When the shelter cost and value of dwelling components of the housing content are processed, responses that are not considered to be part of the true distribution in the population are flagged as improbable, invalidated and imputed with a different response. These situations can occur because of erroneous responses or data capture errors. Each variable has its own range of values corresponding to the varying levels that are acceptable. The 2016 Census set maximum value thresholds for the shelter cost and value of dwelling variables by adjusting thresholds from the 2011 National Household Survey according to the corresponding Consumer Price Index basket component. These thresholds were applied nationally, except for the utility variables, which used separate thresholds to reflect higher costs in the territories.

This method of setting maximum value thresholds was changed for the 2021 Census to adopt a data-driven approach of defining regional distributions and thresholds. Nearly 8,000 regions with an acceptable number of responding households were assessed for outliers, from census tracts to provincial and territorial regions outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations. For the value of the dwelling, for example, the upper threshold was set much higher in Vancouver or Toronto census tracts than in rural areas, where the values of dwellings were lower. This new approach with regionally appropriate thresholds will allow for responses that were above the previous national threshold in neighbourhoods where house values are high, such as in Toronto and Vancouver. In regions where the prices are typically lower, this will allow responses below the previously used national threshold to be invalidated if they do not follow the local distribution.

Overall, the percentage of records that were flagged as outliers in 2021 was similar to that in 2016, but some places in Canada have more outliers than before, and others have fewer. As a result, the 2021 regional distributions are closer to what was reported. The change had little to no impact on the medians of the shelter cost and value of dwelling variables. However, when the mean is used, especially for the value of dwelling variable, growth from the 2016 Census for a small number of census subdivisions or census tracts may appear to be larger than expected.

Comparability of concepts over time

Most of the housing information in the 2021 Census of Population was collected in previous long-form census questionnaires. Over time, there have been differences in question wording, format, examples, and instructions given to enumerators and respondents. As a result, the historical comparability of some components of housing data has been affected by these factors.

Although the 2021 Census of Population housing questions were essentially the same as those from the 2016 long-form questionnaire, there were some differences and additions. The differences include the following.

2016 Census of Population

In 2021, on the 2A-R questionnaire, the first question collecting information on the tenure status of a household was modified to remove the response category of "band housing" and asked directly whether the dwelling was provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. This update reflects a change to the terminology, as Statistics Canada no longer uses the term "band housing."

Overall, the proportion of households whose dwelling was provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band rose by 9.5 percentage points. Growth in the share of this tenure category occurred in nearly every province, except Prince Edward Island, and users should consider the changes to the way the question was posed when making historical comparisons of the composition of dwellings on reserves by tenure.

Figure 1
Tenure questions, 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2021

A **dwelling** is a separate set of living quarters with a **private entrance** from the outside or from a common hallway or stairway inside the building. This entrance should not be through someone else's living quarters.

E1 a) Is this dwelling provided to you or a member of this household by the local government, First Nation or Indian band?

    Yes → **Go to question E2**
    No → **Continue with question E1 b)**

   b) Is this dwelling:

    Mark "Ⓧ" one circle only.

    ○ owned by you or a member of this household (even if it still being paid for)?
    ○ rented (even if no cash rent is paid)?

Source: 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2021.

Figure 2
Tenure questions, 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2016

F2 Only ask question **F2 a)** if you are in a First Nations community, an Indian reserve or an Indian settlement. Otherwise, **go to question F2 b)**.

   a) **Is this dwelling band housing, or rented, or owned by you or a member of this household?**

    ○ Band housing
    ○ Owned (even if it is still being paid for)
    ○ Rented (even if no cash rent is paid)
    → **Go to Question F3**

   b) **Is this dwelling rented or owned by you or a member of this household?**

    ○ Owned (even if it is still being paid for)
    ○ Rented (even if no cash rent is paid)

Source: 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2016.

Shelter cost for households living in dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band

Starting in 2021, information about monthly payments for the use or occupancy of dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band was collected. The shelter cost for households living in these dwellings can now be derived using responses from the new Question E10 on the 2A-R questionnaire (see Concepts over time). In previous census cycles, only information about utility payments was collected for these households.

Figure 3
Monthly use or occupancy payment question, 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2021

E10 For **dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band** only:
What is the **monthly payment** paid by you or members of your household to use or occupy this dwelling?

    ○ Used or occupied without payment
    OR $ ☐☐☐☐.00 per month

Source: 2A-R questionnaire, Census of Population, 2021.

Household maintainer status

In 2021, the household maintainer question was asked for every member of the household aged 15 years or older. Previously, in 2016, the question had a mark-all-that-apply format for the first five persons listed on the paper questionnaire. This alteration to the paper questionnaire brings better visual resemblance between the electronic and paper questionnaires. The wording was also modified to include a qualifying statement of "partly or entirely" when referring to the payments. The result of these changes is the capture of more household maintainers who are not the primary household maintainer.

The growth rate of the number of primary household maintainers since the 2016 Census of Population was 6.4%, the same as the growth rate of private occupied dwellings, because every private occupied dwelling has one primary maintainer. At the same time, the growth rate of other household maintainers over the same period was 34.1%, indicating more comprehensive coverage of all household maintainers. This has not affected the characteristics of the primary household maintainer, which are often used to derive statistics such as the homeownership rates of different generations. However, the more complete coverage of other maintainers will allow for future analysis of the characteristics of these other household members contributing to housing payments.

Figure 4
Household maintainer question, Census of Population, 2021

Source: 2A-L questionnaire, Census of Population, 2021.

Figure 5
Household maintainer question, Census of Population, 2016

Source: 2A-L questionnaire, Census of Population, 2016.

Comparability with other data sources

Statistics Canada produces a range of housing data from various sources for different uses. Comparability of housing data across data sources is affected by differences in survey target populations or administrative sources, survey sampling and collection methodologies; survey objectives, question wording, format, examples and instructions; approaches to data processing; the social and political climate at the time of data collection; and other factors.

As with every survey, the quality of the Census of Population housing information released was evaluated internally prior to publication. The data were compared, as much as possible, with alternative data sources. The main Statistics Canada sources of comparison were the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), the Canadian Housing Survey (CHS), the Canadian Housing Statistics Program (CHSP) and the Survey of Household Spending (SHS).

2021 Canadian Housing Survey, 2020 Canadian Income Survey and 2019 Survey of Household Spending

Like the census, the CHS, CIS and SHS also include questions on housing. Generally, statistics from these three surveys and the census are comparable, taking into account sampling variability. However, differences in question wording, question order, collection method, target population and reference period (resulting from different collection times within the year) mean that the results are not expected to be identical. Furthermore, where differences were observed, comparisons of data from the CIS and SHS with data from the 2016 Census of Population showed similar differences—suggesting an impact because of methodological differences that have been present throughout the years. Table 3 below contains selected housing statistics at the national level for each of the surveys.

The CHS, CIS and SHS also collect data on the condominium status of the dwelling. However, estimates of the proportion of condominiums based on these surveys have high sampling variability. Furthermore, the CIS captures the condominium status for owner-occupied dwellings only, while the SHS captures it for owner-occupied and tenant-occupied condominiums.

Shelter costs, shelter-cost-to-income ratio groups and core housing need statistics are comparable across the three sources. While owners' shelter cost payments are higher in the SHS, the estimate does not follow the same pattern as the other three sources, indicating that these differences may have been introduced by differences in the reference periods or data quality issues unique to the 2019 SHS. The census and CHS rates for subsidized rental housing are comparable, while the CIS rate is lower owing to high sampling variability.

Table 3
Selected statistics from the 2021 Census of Population, 2020 Canadian Income Survey, 2019 Survey of Household Spending and 2021 Canadian Housing Survey

Housing indicator	2021 Census	2021 Census, adjusted[1]	2021 Canadian Housing Survey[1]	2020 Canadian Income Survey[1]	2019 Survey of Household Spending
Count of households	14,978,940	14,817,770	15,067,800[2]	15,056,000[2]	14,707,000
Percentage of owner households	66.5	66.8	67.8	67.1	66.8
Percentage of households in core housing need	10.1	10.1	9.8	10.1	…
Percentage of households that paid 30% or more of household total income towards shelter costs	20.9	21.0	19.5	20.9	19.6
Owner households	14.8	14.8	14.3	14.1	12.4
Renter households	33.2	33.2	30.3	34.6	34.1
Percentage of households in unsuitable housing	5.4	5.3	4.8	5.4	5.7
Percentage of households in dwellings in need of major repairs	6.1	5.9	7.4	6.1	7.9
Average owner-estimated value ($)	617,500	619,000	..	..	523,230
Average shelter cost ($/month)	1,394	1,402	1,370	1,400	1,683
Owner households ($)	1,494	1,498	1,470	1,500	1,923
Renter households ($)	1,209	1,210	1,160	1,200	1,199
Percentage of households in condominiums	15.0	15.1	13.7	12.2	..
Percentage of households in subsidized housing[3]	11.7	11.6	11.3	5.4	..

.. not available for a specific reference period
… not applicable
1. Estimates exclude territories and reserves.
2. The census does not adjust for net undercoverage, while the Canadian Housing Survey and Canadian Income Survey estimates are based on the number of households that is adjusted for census undercoverage.
3. Rate is calculated for non-farm renter households.
Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, 2021 Canadian Housing Survey, 2020 Canadian Income Survey and 2019 Survey of Household Spending.

2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program and 2021 Multiple Listing Service©

Two other sources that report on values of dwellings are Statistics Canada's CHSP and the Canadian Real Estate Association's Multiple Listing Service© (MLS). The 2021 MLS reported similar average values of dwellings as the 2021 Census of Population, with slightly lower average values in the Prairie provinces and slightly higher values in the rest of Canada. A key conceptual difference to consider is that the MLS data represent dwellings that were sold over the reference period, while the Census of Population takes a broader scope and asks all homeowner households to report the expected price they would receive if they were to sell their dwelling. That the estimates are close is an indication that homeowners are aware of their local real estate market conditions.

The CHSP average values were consistently below average sale prices from the MLS and average owner-estimated values in the Census of Population, except in the Northwest Territories, owing mainly to conceptual differences. These CHSP values are based on property assessment rolls for the purpose of taxation, and the frequency of reassessments is based on provincial and territorial legislation. As a consequence, these values may be updated yearly or less frequently depending on the jurisdiction.

Table 4
Average value of dwellings from the 2021 Census of Population, 2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program and 2021 Multiple Listing Service©

Geography	2021 Census Average value of dwelling ($)	2021 Multiple Listing Service© Average sale price ($)	2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program Average assessed value ($)
Canada	618,500	688,113	..
Newfoundland and Labrador	246,800	273,350	..
Prince Edward Island	313,200	341,623	..
Nova Scotia	295,600	358,607	186,000
New Brunswick	207,800	246,467	139,000
Quebec	376,800	447,952	..
Ontario	807,000	871,876	450,000
Manitoba	338,800	333,841	260,000
Saskatchewan	324,400	301,469	..
Alberta	448,800	428,195	..
British Columbia	983,000	927,558	740,000
Yukon	488,800	521,439	197,000
Northwest Territories	385,200	442,953	..
Nunavut	410,800	..	..

.. not available for a specific reference period
Note: Current dollars.
Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population and 2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program; and Canadian Real Estate Association, 2021 Multiple Listing Service©.

2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program

Counts of condominiums reported in the Census of Population are usually larger than the CHSP counts of condominium apartments. While the definitions of these two variables are very similar, there are conceptual differences that cause the counts in the two sources to differ.

Table 5
Condominium households and condominium apartments, Canada, 2021 Census of Population and 2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program

Geography	2021 Census of Population		2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program
	Total—condominium households	Condominium households in apartments[1]	Condominium apartments
St. John's[2,3]	3,130	2,160	2,025
Nova Scotia	16,135	11,330	11,905
New Brunswick	13,170	7,130	2,100
Ontario	822,775	577,870	557,630
Manitoba	41,705	28,030	22,810
British Columbia	482,760	391,395	366,270
Yukon	2,055	570	480

1. Apartments refer to dwellings with one of the following structural types: apartment in a building with fewer than five storeys, apartment in a building with five or more storeys, or apartment in a duplex.
2. Refers to the census subdivision of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.
3. The Canadian Housing Statistics Program reports counts of condominium apartments in Newfoundland and Labrador only for the census subdivision of St. John's.
Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population and 2020 Canadian Housing Statistics Program.

Notes

The *Guide to the Census of Population, 2021*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X, describes the data quality assessments that all variables underwent. Generally, the numerous indicators used to evaluate the quality of the housing data supported the reliability of the data at the national, provincial and territorial levels, but they also identified the following items.

Question E1 on housing tenure

When the 2021 Census and the 2020 CIS were compared, it was observed that the homeownership rate is lower for the census, with statistical significance, in all provinces except Prince Edward Island. Differences in estimates range from 0.3% to 0.8%, except for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The difference is 2.1% for Manitoba (67.4% for the census versus 69.5% for the CIS) and 2.5% for Saskatchewan (70.7% for the census versus 73.2% for the CIS).

When the 2021 Census and the 2020 CHS are compared, the estimates of the homeownership rate are very similar. There are no statistical differences in estimates nationally, provincially and territorially.

Question E2 on condominium status

The national rate of owner households in condominiums for the 2021 Census, at 14.3%, is higher than the CIS rate of 11.5%, a statistically significant difference. The condominium ownership rate is higher in the census than in the CIS in Quebec (13.0% for the census versus 10.1% for the CIS), Ontario (14.9% for the census versus 11.4% for the CIS), Manitoba (7.7% for the census versus 6.0% for the CIS) and Alberta (14.8% for the census versus 11.6% for the CIS). Other provinces did not have statistically different rates between the census and the CIS.

The 2021 Census estimate for the rate of owner households in condominiums was higher nationally compared with the CHS estimate, with statistical significance (14.3% for the census versus 12.3% for the CHS). This was also the case in Saskatchewan (9.6% for the census versus 7.7% for the CHS). Other provinces and territories had no statistical differences in estimates between the census and the CHS.

Question E3 on the number of rooms and bedrooms

A large proportion of dwellings with a small number of rooms and bedrooms, most often dwellings with one or two rooms, were affected by respondent reporting errors. The respondent reporting errors appeared in the form of inconsistencies between answers to two questions: the number of rooms and the number of bedrooms. These inconsistencies account for 2.4% of all households.

Respondent errors could occur for any number of reasons, such as forgetting to include bedrooms in the count of rooms or erroneously counting some rooms as bedrooms. These errors were resolved during data processing using rules that ultimately chose one of the two conflicting variables and then imputed the other variable.

The level of inconsistency between the number of rooms and bedrooms prior to processing was approximately 51% of responses for one-room dwellings and 7% for two-room dwellings. These rates are lower than the levels observed for the 2016 Census (62% for one-room dwellings and 9% for two-room dwellings) and the 2011 National Household Survey (80% for one-room dwellings and 20% for two-room dwellings). The electronic questionnaire has soft edits and prompts in place that signal whether responses are invalid to help reduce reporting errors. Households that reported their dwelling had more than one or two rooms were not significantly impacted by the data processing edits. This was also the case in prior censuses.

Question E4 on the period of construction

The Building Permits Survey (BPS) provides data on building permits by year, which can provide a good indication of the period of construction. However, BPS and census housing data are not always expected to be exactly coherent. Data on new residential units from the BPS account only for growth in dwellings, while the census reports period of construction data for occupied private dwellings.

Question E5 on the condition of the dwelling

When owners and renters were examined together, the proportion of households living in dwellings that required major repairs estimated by the 2021 Census of Population was similar with 2021 CIS estimates. A comparison of the two surveys did not show any statistically significant differences nationally or for any province. However, some statistically significant differences exist when looking at owners or renters individually.

For owners, the 2021 Census estimate was lower, with statistical significance, nationally (5.3% for the census versus 6.0% for the CIS) and for Ontario (4.7% for the census versus 5.4% for the CIS) and British Columbia (5.1% for the census versus 7.0% for the CIS). For renters, the 2021 Census estimate was higher, with statistical significance, nationally (7.2% for the census versus 6.2% for the CIS) and for Prince Edward Island (8.3% for the census versus 5.8% for the CIS) and Manitoba (7.3% for the census versus 4.6% for the CIS).

When the 2021 Census estimates were compared with the 2020 CHS estimates, no statistical differences existed at the provincial and territorial level. The census estimates were lower than the CHS estimates, with statistical significance, at the national level for all households (5.9% for the census versus 7.4% for the CHS), owner households (5.3% for the census versus 6.5% for the CHS) and renter households (7.2% for the census versus 9.3% for the CHS).