



# Municipal Census Training Question and Answer Summary

On Thursday, February 8, 2024, Municipal Affairs provided training on how to conduct a municipal census in accordance with the [Municipal Census Regulation](#) and [Municipal Census Manual](#). During the live session, opportunities were provided for questions. This document summarizes the questions and answers from the live session.

## Tools and Resources

Where can we find resources for how to conduct a municipal census?

The resources for a municipal census can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-census>, including legislated forms, worksheets and presentation materials.

Will the presentation and/or recording be made available?

Yes, the presentation slides and a recording will be made available to participants after the training, additional details can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-census>.

Do you know where we can get grant dollar information?

Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) funding allocations can be found online at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/local-government-fiscal-framework-allocations>.

If you have any questions about your funding amounts, the calculation, or the formula, please contact [ma.lgffoperating@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.lgffoperating@gov.ab.ca).

Are there any grants to help pay for conducting a municipal census?

We are not aware of any provincial grants available for conducting a municipal census.

## Getting Started

Is it mandatory to do a municipal census?

Municipalities are not required to conduct a municipal census. Under the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* a municipality may conduct a census. However, a municipality must follow the [Municipal Census Regulation](#), and [Municipal Census Manual](#) if they want their population results to be included in the [Municipal Affairs Population List](#).

Who decides if a municipality should conduct a municipal census and what the questions should be?

The role of Council is to decide whether a municipality should undertake a municipal census. Council may direct administration to explore the possibility of asking specific census questions. Page 13 of the [Municipal Census Manual](#) provides additional information around the role of council, while page 40 provides examples of some questions that were asked in the 2021 federal census.

Are municipalities required to notify the Minister and receive approval before undertaking a municipal census?

Municipalities are required to inform Municipal Affairs on or before February 28<sup>th</sup> of the municipal census year if their municipality will conduct a municipal census. Notification can be emailed to [ma.updates@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.updates@gov.ab.ca).

Key items to include in the email are if the municipality intends to conduct only a municipal census, a municipal census with shadow population, the enumeration period of the census, and the census day.

What do we do if we notified the Minister of our intent to conduct a municipal census, but were unable to proceed?

Municipalities can email [ma.updates@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.updates@gov.ab.ca) to inform the ministry that they cannot proceed with the census.

Can you have multiple census coordinators or just one?

Municipalities should have one census coordinator, the person who is ultimately responsible for the municipal census. Municipalities are free to delegate tasks to other staff, such as supervisors or enumerators.

Is our municipality allowed to conduct a municipal census during a federal census year?

Municipalities can conduct a municipal census during a federal census year; however, the results of the municipal census will not be recognized by the ministry.

Some municipalities conducted a census in 2023. Will their results be in the 2024 population list?

The Minister approved the 2023 [Municipal Affairs Population List](#), and included the 2023 municipal census results submitted by municipalities. If these municipalities do not undertake a municipal census in 2024, the results of the 2023 census will be carried forward.

## Collective Dwellings

How do you count persons in collective dwellings?

Collective dwellings include nursing homes, senior citizen homes, hotels, and prisons. The appropriate official of the collective dwelling should be consulted to determine the number of usual residents in that dwelling. Only those persons who do not have a separate residence outside the collective dwelling are included in the count. Methods may include:

- **A headcount only:** Only a headcount is required for residents who satisfy the requirements of being a usual resident.
- **Administrative records:** Obtain administrative records with a printout of the required information. Administrative records are electronic records that contain information about residents who live in the facility.
- **Face-to-face interviews:** A census representative can conduct an interview with the census contact or the usual residents of the facility, if more detailed information is required of the residents.
- **Self-enumeration:** A census representative can drop off questionnaires with a census contact to distribute to residents and arrange a time to pick up the completed questionnaires.

## Shadow Population

What is shadow population?

Shadow Population is the temporary residents of a municipal authority who are employed by an industrial or commercial establishment in the municipal authority, and who have worked at least 120 hours for that employer in the three month period immediately preceding Census Day.

These persons must reside temporarily in the municipality, but do not consider it to be their usual residence. Seasonal residents in summer villages are not considered to be a shadow population.

Where are residents counted if they commute to jobs outside of their municipality?

Permanent residents are counted at their place of usual residence, and are not counted in the municipality in which that they commute to work.

How should you enumerate the shadow population in collective dwellings (i.e., workers residing in camps)?

Standardized approaches for counting shadow population can be found on page 66 of the [Municipal Census Manual](#). To enumerate shadow population in remote locations like work camps, contact the businesses in the work camps to obtain a population count or distribute Shadow Population Counts at the camp.

## Homeless Population

How are homeless persons in shelters and unsheltered locations counted?

Contact an administrator at the shelter to obtain a count of persons who spent the night on Census Day. For unsheltered locations, please refer to page 68 of the [Municipal Census Manual](#).

How would a refugee family living in a hotel be considered?

Similar to Statistics Canada's procedures, the family would be enumerated in the hotel as they have no other place of usual residence.

## General Questions

What are municipalities' typical online municipal census response rates?

During the call, some municipalities noted their approximate online response rates:

- The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo was around 30 per cent;
- Strathcona County was around 70 per cent;
- The City of Airdrie was around 75 per cent;
- The City of Fort Saskatchewan was about 68 per cent; and
- The City of Spruce Grove was about 39 per cent.

How can we make sure that the municipal population statistic we find online for Statistics Canada is correct?

Except for municipalities that had amendments to their 2021 population and dwelling counts, the data tables for Alberta municipalities on the Statistics Canada website are correct. For those with amended counts, Statistics Canada will not make changes to the 2021 census data in the municipal profiles.

Why are municipalities with fewer dwellings required to complete Quality Assurance (QA) on a larger per cent of households, while larger municipalities are required to complete QA on a much smaller per cent of households?

Information on quality assurance checks can be found on page 33 of the [Municipal Census Manual](#). The required number of residents to contact for quality assurance checks were based on a 95 per cent confidence interview with a 5 per cent margin of error.

Can we preload the dwelling types and not ask this as a question?

The dwelling types can be preloaded as this information may be included in the property tax information. If this information is not available, it is recommended that it be included as a census question, or have it included in the questionnaire and completed by an enumerator visiting the residence.

If you *know* the number of refusals and non-contacts, do you still have to do the form that *estimates* those numbers?

All municipalities must follow the enumeration procedures outlined in the [Municipal Census Manual](#).

A refusal is when a household declines to participate in the municipal census. If a member of the household responds to the census question on the number of usual residents living in the household, and not to other questions in the census, the household is not classified as a “refusal”.

Could you clarify the difference between non-contact and refusal?

Municipalities should review the section “Important Terms for Municipal Census” on page 9 prior to conducting a municipal census. These terms are referenced throughout the manual.

A non-contacted dwelling is a dwelling where a census worker has not been able to make contact with a member of the household and the enumerator believes the dwelling was occupied by its usual residents on Census Day. Reasons why contact was not made include “not at home,” “incapacity,” and “refusal to come to the door” on an enumerator visit to the dwelling.

**If you have questions, or require support, please email [ma.updates@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.updates@gov.ab.ca) for assistance.**