Adjusting the Census of Population for COVID-19

October 2020
Change of Environment

• Scenario planning for:
  – No vaccine available by May 2021
  – COVID-19 present during the conduct of the census enumeration phase
  – Restrictions on mobility of people or movement of materials
  – Behavioural requirements
Goals in adaption to COVID-19

• To ensure the health and safety of Canadians, as well as the staff working on the Census

• To maintain response rates which are amongst the highest in the world
Minimize face to face contact and movement of staff

- New emphasis on self-response, and avoidance of face to face contact with enumerators
- Elimination of canvasser activity (2% of population, North and Reserve)
- No travel teams to North and Reserves
- All early enumeration planned for February-March 2021 (northern regions) moved to April-July 2021
- Introduction of “no-contact NRFU” (non-response follow-up)
- No enumerator will visit a seniors residence or other facility where vulnerable Canadians live
- Personal Protective Equipment for all enumerators
Minimize group activities

• All office staff will work remotely.
  – Available leased space (30 offices) will be fitted-up as “barebones” facilities for
    distribution of materials and equipment or for recruitment activity only.
• All training for new employees will be done via videoconferencing

Maintain data quality

• Creation of a statistical contingency, as was done in 2016 for Ft McMurray
Non-response Follow-up

• Scenario
  – COVID limits close, face-to-face contact with respondents

• Adaptations:
  – Begin NRFU with a large-scale telephone operation
  – Dual approach for respondent contact.
    • Early strategy: encourage self-response, but active offer at the doorstep
    • Later strategy: do not encourage self-response, active offer at doorstep only
  – Establishment of social distancing protocol (“no-contact” NRFU)
    • No dwelling entry
    • Six feet apart
  – Provision of personal protective equipment to enumerators for in-field activities,
  – Provision of piece of identifying uniform (vest, cap etc.)
Early Enumeration and Canvasser

• Scenario
  – COVID leads to restrictions on travel to remote communities

• Adaptations:
  – Employ List/Leave collection methodology
    • Enable self-response
  – “No-contact” NRFU with 100% local staff, through partnership with First Nations and Territorial Focal Points
  – Move operation to April-July 2021
    • Increase efforts on community engagement – participation, tailoring plan, staffing
    • Time to develop L/L and self-response approach, recruit and develop local staff
    • Weather more amenable to “No-contact” NRFU
Collective Dwellings

• Scenario
  – COVID prevents enumerators from visiting facilities at higher risk of transmission (e.g. seniors residences, corrective institutions)

• Adaptation:
  – Contact only with collective administrator
  – Introduce E-questionnaire for administrator
  – “No-contact” NRFU for all, telephone contact only for most collective types
  – Build special database of 2021 Census results, supplemented by other sources
Temporary Census Offices and Call Centres

• Scenario
  – COVID prevents office operations for our offices (30) and call centres (5)

• Adaptations:
  – All office-based staff to work from home
  – Boost VPN capacity for Statistics Canada
  – Purchase of IT and telephony equipment
  – Complete “barebones” fit-up of offices, to be used as potential recruitment and distribution of materials.