

Who is counted in the Census population?

Who is counted in the population numbers? This question is often asked when census information is released. The aim of the census is to count people “in their usual place of residence.” However, certain scenarios – like those outlined below – have special rules.

There are two types of dwellings in the Census:

- Collective dwellings are institutional, communal or commercial in nature. Examples include: hotels, nursing homes, group homes, correctional facilities, hospitals and military quarters.
- Private dwellings offer a separate set of living quarters with a private entrance such as a house or apartment

The total population, reported by Statistics Canada, includes all those residing in collective and private dwellings. Most of the detailed information from the census is based on the population in private dwellings.

Scenario	Are they counted in local population?	Explanation
Fred is serving a two-year sentence in a local federal institution. He is from a community 3 hours away.	Yes – member of a collective dwelling	Those living in an institution continuously for six months or more are counted in the community where the institution is located as part of a collective dwelling.
Claire has been living in long-term care for the past several years. Her husband and children live in another community.	Yes – member of a collective dwelling	
Pat is a homeless youth and was staying at the local youth shelter at the time of the census.	Yes – member of a collective dwelling	
Mary’s family home is here. She rents an apartment in another community where she attends university	Yes –member of a private dwelling household	Students who return to live with their parents are included at their parents’ address even if they live elsewhere most of the year while attending school or working a summer job. Students are counted if their permanent residence is here.
Chris calls our community home but works from April to August at a camp in northern Ontario.	Yes – member of a private dwelling household	
McKenzie attends university here and lives in residence. Parents’ home is in another part of the province.	No – counted as part of private dwelling household in parent’s community.	
Moira lives off campus in a house she rents while attending university full time. She resides here year-round and has no other address.	Yes – member of a private dwelling household	
Joe and Susie have a summer cottage here. They spend most of the year in their home in another community.	No – counted as part of a private dwelling household in home community.	The usual place of residence for those with more than one residence is where they spend the most time.
Peter is from another community and his partner still lives there. He has been renting an apartment in here most of the year working on a government contract.	No – counted as part of a private dwelling household in home community	Those who live away from their families while working are counted at the residence they share with their family even if they spend most of the year elsewhere.
Alex is in the military and was relocated to the local base in 2015. Alex is renting a house near the base.	Yes – member of a private dwelling household	Military personnel living “off base” in private accommodation who don’t have another residence are counted in the census as part of a private dwelling.

