



# FAQs

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *WHY?*

**Q. Why are we doing a Workforce Census?**

A. Our members are our greatest assets. It is important to have a clear understanding of who everyone is. We are conducting a Census that will benefit you in doing your job. With the Workforce Census we will better understand how to serve the current and future needs of our employees, their families, the community and the organization.

**Q. Have any other police organizations in Canada conducted a Workforce Census?**

A. No. Just like so many things, we are breaking new ground. This is new to policing – but is in fact standard practice in many medium and large public and private sector organizations. It is based on the Canadian Census to make it the most reliable way to obtain accurate information on characteristics of our workforce.

**Q. Why should I fill out the Census?**

A. Although it is voluntary, it is very important that all members complete the Census. The Census is linked directly to improving the operations of the police service. The information collected will allow us to better serve the needs of our members and organization. The more employees who respond to the census, the more accurate we can be to understand specific needs of the OPS workforce.

**Q. Why shouldn't I just treat this as a joke?**

A. Although it is voluntary, it is important that you treat the Census as a positive step to improve the workplace for everyone. Although there may be areas that do not apply to you, remember that we have an organization of many different employees with widely different skills and abilities and backgrounds. It is important to respect them – in order that you can also be recognized and respected.

**Q. Why are we collecting information such as age and location when we already have this information?**

A. Although this information is already captured in an OPS database, it is not linked with other information such as language, skills and education that will be essential in understanding the characteristics of our workforce.

**Q. Isn't this just another attempt to "do the right thing?"**

A. Yes, and more. Doing the right thing is good. The Census is the best way to gain a better understanding of the makeup of our workforce to make optimum use of the talents and perspectives of our members in order to meet the equally diverse requirements of the people we serve.

**Q. Why does the Census ask about sexual orientation?**

A. We know we have members who have different sexual orientations and we know that those who are of a minority sexual orientation face different challenges in the workplace. Understanding the scope of the diversity will allow us to create a work environment that is welcoming for all.

**Q. Is the real reason for this Census about diversity and employment equity?**

A. No. The reason for this Census is to collect information to be used to develop and implement specific programs, policies and practices that support all employees and address the needs of the community. As the police, we need to be ahead of the changes in our community – not following them.

**Q. Why spend the money?**

A. Conducting a Workforce Census is a significant investment, not only in money but also in time. However, the knowledge we will gain will be invaluable. Having a better understanding of our current workforce will answer important questions about our current state and emerging trends. The cost is an investment in our employees and worth it.

*WHAT?*

**Q. What will the Census data be used for?**

A. The information collected will be used to develop and implement specific programs, policies and practices that support our members. The Census results will also help the organization gain a better understanding of its workforce, improve the way we respond to our work, recruit new employees and conduct succession planning. The Census is completely anonymous.

**Q. What is the benefit of knowing that someone has a particular background or speaks a particular language, but you don't know who?**

A. Collecting the data is a good start — and it's certainly more information than we have now. As we collect data over time, we can identify trends in the workforce and respond to those trends in a more meaningful way. For example, if there is a decrease in members that speak a particular language over a period of time, the organization can make available specialized language training to those interested in learning that language. Only by collecting the data and knowing there may be a shortfall can the organization take steps to address the situation.

**Q. Is the Workforce Census mandatory?**

A. No. Completing the Census is voluntary and anonymous. However, it is critical to members as well as the organization that all employees of the Ottawa Police Service be counted. The more employees who respond to the census, the more accurate we can be in terms of understanding the composition and needs of the OPS workforce.

**Q. Do I have to answer all of the Census questions?**

A. No. But we will have the best results if everyone answers every question. Although there may be some questions that do not apply directly to you, they will affect your colleagues and the workplace. As an organization, we have a responsibility to consider all aspects of our entire workforce.

**Q. What if I decide that I don't want to complete the Census?**

A. The Workforce Census is voluntary and anonymous. However, we encourage all employees to be counted. If you are unsure of the anonymity or purpose of the Census, please speak with your Supervisor directly or contact S/Sgt. Syd Gravel at ext. 2905. If you decide you still do not wish to participate in the Census, please use the return envelope to mail your blank Census to TWI Inc. in Toronto anyways. We are handing out 1,695 Census forms – and we would like the exact number back for accuracy reasons.

**Q. What's the point of collecting all that demographic information?**

A. Like the Canadian Census, our Workforce Census questions aims to gain a better understanding of the people taking the Census. For the Ottawa Police Service, it will help answer the following questions:

- Does the Ottawa Police Service respect the needs of employees to balance work and home life (e.g., overtime hours acceptable to employees, ability to take annual leave)?
- Do employees require additional support or policies to manage things such as child-care or eldercare options?
- What is the educational mix of OPS employees and how can these varied skills be best utilized?
- What languages and cultural knowledge do employees possess and how can these skills be best utilized (e.g., victim services, investigations, witness statements)?
- What types of resources and training does the organization need to provide to develop its workforce?
- How well are the OPS outreach recruiting mechanisms working to attract a more diverse workforce, in terms of cultural background, gender, age, education, sexual orientation?
- How well is the OPS doing in terms of addressing gaps in equity, in terms of cultural background, gender, age, education, sexual orientation (e.g., distribution of all demographic groups across the various ranks and sections within the organization)?

- How well is the OPS doing in terms of addressing the needs of the community in terms of representing various communities and possessing the skills required to serve those communities?

**Q. What if I decide to answer only a portion of the Census, will my Census responses be included?**

A. Yes. All answers will be included in the results.

#### *WHEN?*

**Q. When is the Census being conducted?**

A. Census Day is October 28, 2005.

**Q. What if I don't work on October 28<sup>th</sup>?**

A. It may be necessary for OPS members who are not scheduled to work on the 28<sup>th</sup> to complete the survey a day or two beforehand. Supervisors will be able to make suitable arrangements.

**Q. What if one of the members I supervise is on sick leave, LTD or not at work for some reason?**

A. You should only ask those members who are reporting for work (including those who may be suspended but still reporting daily) to fill out the Census. Any other members on parental leave, sick leave or the like should be noted on your Workforce Census Distribution List and the Census allocated for them returned with your package.

**Q. What if I'm sick or unable to complete my Census on Census Day?**

A. As soon as it is appropriate, Supervisors will contact employees who have not completed the Census and ensure that they have the opportunity to do so.

**Q. Can I complete the Census at home?**

A. Yes. But remember, the Workforce Census is a high priority for our organization. All members are encouraged to complete their Workforce Census upon receipt. You will be provided time at work to complete it if you wish.

**Q. When will the Census results be released, and in what format?**

A. Census results will be released in the spring of 2006 to all members. Results will be presented to the Police Services Board, Executive Command and published on the both on our Intranet and ottawapolice.ca.

#### *WHO?*

**Q. Who are we asking to fill in the Census?**

A. All members of the Ottawa Police Service are being asked to complete the Census. Members are defined as sworn and civilian, full-time permanent, full-time term, part-time permanent and part-time term members.

**Q. Are volunteers and students being asked to complete a Census?**

A. No.

**Q. Who is administering the Census?**

A. To ensure it is accurate and anonymous, we have hired a Toronto firm that specializes in surveys to oversee the project. You will be receiving a paper copy of the Census from your Supervisor. Time will be provided to complete the Census during working hours if you wish. Once you have completed the Census and inserted it into the return envelope, it is to be mailed directly to TWI Inc. in Toronto. You can do this by simply dropping it in the OPS internal mail or a Canada Post mailbox.

**Q. Is the Association aware of this Census?**

A. Yes, and both the OPA and Senior Officers' Association support the Census.

*HOW?*

**Q. How long does it take to complete the Census?**

A. It takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the Census. The questions are answered by checking off the appropriate boxes.

**Q. How will the Workforce Census be conducted?**

A. On Census Day (October 28<sup>th</sup>) your Supervisor will provide you with the Workforce Census.

- Complete the Census and insert it into the return envelope.
- Seal the envelope and mail the Census to TWI Inc. – here you have two options:
  1. OPS internal mail and it will be batched and couriered to TWI Inc.
  2. Canada Post mailbox

**Q. How is the confidentiality of Workforce Census data being guaranteed?**

A. The Census is anonymous. No means of identifying respondents or linking data to individuals will be used. To ensure anonymity, the Census and return envelope have no identifiers and are returned to the company in Toronto. They will not share the individual responses with the Ottawa Police.

**Q. How will the data be kept secure, and under what privacy legislation?**

A. The information you provide will be analyzed by an external consulting firm. The information you provide is anonymous and there will be no means of identifying respondents or linking data to individuals. No individual results will be made available to OPS. Your responses will be combined with the responses of other OPS employees and reported in rolled up (aggregate) form only.

**Q. How often will we be required to conduct a Workforce Census?**

A. This is a baseline survey, the first in a practice that will occur again to ensure accuracy. Every two to three years, other OPS Workforce Censuses will be conducted to obtain an up-to-date snapshot of our employees and measure change. For example, current information needs to be captured for those members who update their education, acquire new languages or skills. As well, capturing data over time helps to confirm emerging trends and plan better for employees.

**Q. I seem to remember completing a survey like this before? Do I have to complete another survey?**

A. Yes. This is, in fact, considered a Census rather than a survey. That means that everyone needs to fill out his/her individual Census form in order to get an accurate picture of our workforce characteristics. The OPS Member Survey will again be rolled out in early spring 2006. The Member Survey is a much more detailed survey on a range of issues and has been conducted every three years since 1995.

**Q. Many of the questions are very basic. Wouldn't it be more helpful to the organization to have more information on subjects such as child/elder care?**

A. This Census is meant to provide the organization with data to be used as a baseline evaluation. You will be given the opportunity to provide more detailed information in our employee questionnaire as part of the Member Survey scheduled for spring 2006.

**Q. Will the information provided in the Workforce Census become part of my personnel file?**

A. No. Information gathered from individuals is anonymous and will not be provided back to the Ottawa Police. Filled out forms are sent to TWI Inc. in Toronto, and after the data is input and analyzed, the Census forms are destroyed. Census data is reported only in the form of statistical summaries. No individuals are identified.

**Q. Is the Census form available in French?**

A. Unfortunately not. As you know, the OPS does provide for all public materials and service to the community in French and English. Internally, we strive to make materials available whenever possible in both languages. When possible we make every effort to correspond with our members in both languages, however timing and cost often mean that for internal documentation and communication the working language is English. This Workforce Census is not only a first for us, but also a first for policing in Canada. The Census form and methodology were created by an external firm that produced the documentation in English. In the future when we conduct another Census, providing a French language Census form will be very seriously considered based on the feedback we receive this year.

**Q. How do I get more information?**

A. For further information, contact your immediate Supervisor or S/Sgt. Syd Gravel, Census Information Officer, by e-mail or at extension 2905. Additional information such as the explanation and rationale for Census questions,

testimonials (i.e., what your fellow members are saying about the Census) as well as Frequently Asked Questions, can also be accessed by visiting the *Census Zone* on the Intranet.