



PFC2014-0456

**THE CITY OF CALGARY  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**Application to the City of Calgary Council Innovation Fund**

**Date:** May 14, 2014

**Name of Project:** CENSUS ONLINE DATA CAPTURE

**Sponsor:** Naheed Nenshi – Mayor      **Phone Number:** (403) 268-5622

**Address:** 700 Macleod Trail S – Historic City Hall

**Affected Business Unit(s) and/or Departments:**

The project will have an impact on the operations of several City of Calgary Business Units, most importantly: City Clerk's, Land Use Planning and Policy, Transportation Planning, Development Building Approvals, Animal & Bylaw Services, Water Resources, Waste and Recycling Services as well as external partners: Calgary Public Library, Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic Board. The information is used by the Business Units listed for a wide array of purposes, such as: redesign of garbage and recycling collection routes, which can now be accomplished in 1 month as opposed to a year, Water Resources uses the data to locate and adjust low water pressure zones within the City, School Boards use it for forecasting school facility requirements and identifying locations for closure, as well as planning of bus transportation routes, the Public Library uses it to determine book stock for each location, to determine facilities where books for children and large print books for seniors need to be located.

**Amount of Funds Requested: \$250,000**

**Summary Description of Project (Max 1 page):**

The City of Calgary embarked on a project to modernize Census data collection in 2012. The Census Information Data Entry and Reporting (CIDER) system rewrite was the first step in the modernization of Census data collection in Calgary. CIDER houses the census data results, processes pay, as well as other administrative features related to data quality and reporting. The completion of this phase allowed the Census Data to be included in the City's Open Data Catalogue, managed by Infrastructure and Information Services, and has become the most often downloaded material to date.

In 2013, mobile data collection via iPad commenced for door-to-door census data collection (CEMobile). CEMobile is a web based application that securely transmits data at the point of contact with the resident to CIDER. These changes resulted in significant efficiencies, ease of collection and data entry. Election and Information Services, a Division of City Clerk's is currently seeking to take the next step in modernizing Census Data collection with this project, by introducing a public facing online touch point. The project will build a self-serve portal, where residents will be able to complete their Census online. The project is expected to utilize much of the same programming code already in place

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for the iPad based collection, seeking to further transform data collection into a public facing self-serve application.

This self-serve aspect is of great importance, as some resident's choose not to call back their Census Taker to provide information over the phone due to privacy implications. By completing the questionnaire online, through a secure City of Calgary portal, they will be reassured that their information will not fall into the wrong hands and jeopardize their privacy. The project is important for several reasons, most notably:

- To enable residents multiple avenues of data submission, with online collection being available for the first 3 weeks of the Census, followed by regular door-to-door canvassing for those households that did not complete their Census online.
- To accommodate collection regardless of time and place in keeping with residents busy lives, including snow birds, and individuals that are away from their homes for extended periods of time in April/May,
- To reduce the number of Census Takers required for door-to-door collection. Hiring Census Takers has been getting more difficult over the years. As the City continues to grow, so does the number of Census districts. Calgary currently has 897 Census Districts, which requires us to hire approximately 1100 Census Takers each year (factoring in cancellations and accidents).
- The ability for resident's to complete their census online by themselves is also important due to the growing number of secure residences which is making it difficult to access residential facilities by Census Takers.
- The City will also decrease its liability burden in terms of potential accidents and Workers Compensation Board claims by Census Takers involved in accidents. This will be accomplished in 2 ways, firstly by a reduction in the required workforce, but secondly also thanks to a later start time of door-to-door collection (May) at those households that did not take advantage of the online census data submission. The later start time will allow us to take advantage of more favorable weather conditions to conduct the door-to-door portion of the Census.
- Online data collection will create efficiencies in processing timelines which will allow the Election and Information Services Division of City Clerk's to devote more resources to data quality checks and processes.
- The project will also be of importance to the electoral process, as enumeration conducted in an election year is also completed by Census Takers. As a result of the previous method of collection, relying upon multiple visits to each household, there was always a certain percentage of electors that could not be contacted which meant that they could not be enumerated ahead of the election. This in turn means that we do not have the ability to make accurate eligible elector calculations and that electors face longer wait times at voting stations on Election Day, as they have to complete voter register cards manually on location.



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**Proposed Timeline (including proposed date of final report):**

In order to meet tight timelines, the project would begin in the summer of 2014, with an expected completion date to be December 2014, testing and implementation to be conducted January-February 2015, project launch for the public April, 2015. It has been confirmed that IT has the resources available to complete this project within the anticipated timelines. The final report for this project could be completed by July of 2015 which would include the new system's performance summary.

**How does this project meet the criteria of the fund as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Council Innovation Fund?**

The project requires one time funding to launch the Online Census Program which will contribute to making Calgary a better place to live and bolster many Council Priorities.

The project speaks directly to the most fundamental of Council's Priorities, helping to ensure that Calgary is a **well-run city**. In order for Council and Administration to run the City well, both rely on accurate and timely data to make informed decisions. We are seeking to introduce efficiencies in our processes to provide the same service in a timely fashion, without the need for additional funding to keep pace with the City's continued strong growth in the upcoming business plan cycle.

Online collection will be more efficient, transforming the Census program into a more citizen focused platform that seeks to engage people by creating a direct interface with residents for the collection of Census Data.

The project will lead to a more economical and sustainable method of Census data collection. As the City continues to grow, the cost to carry out Census and Enumeration continues to climb. This is despite a lack of pay increases for Census Takers over the past decade. As the City continues to grow, the workforce required to complete Census collection also increases. By introducing online self-serve Census collection, the City will require less Census Takers which in turn will result in better quality applicants being selected.

The Online Census project will transform the way in which Calgary collects census data and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, reducing costs and delivering greater value for money to residents while fulfilling Council's goal of providing more services to Calgarians online. A portion of the cost savings will be used to better compensate those Census Takers hired in a manner consistent with the difficulty and challenges they face during data collection efforts in their districts.



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**What does success look like and how will it be measured?**

The success of this project will be measured by the ability to launch the self-serve Census data collection prior to the 2015 Census and ensure that the public facing interface is user-friendly and self-intuitive thereby resulting in 30% uptake from resident's in the first year. This figure is realistic and in line with the experiences of other municipalities in Alberta.



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