

# PCCF Files: What are they?

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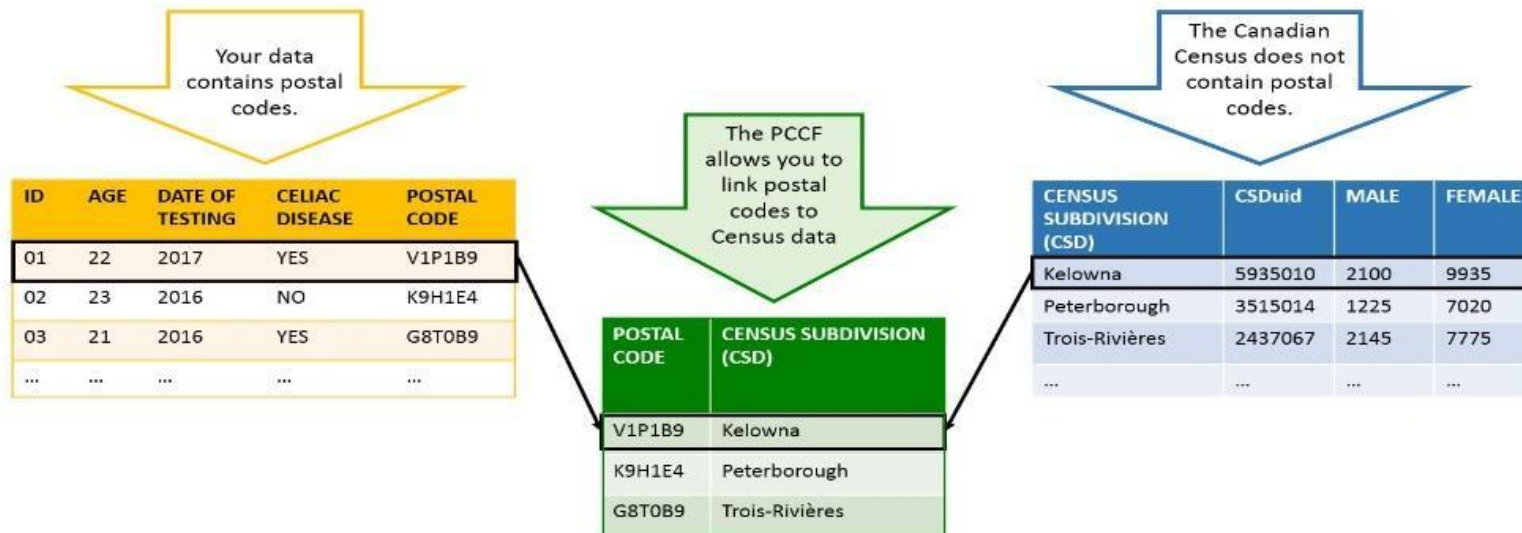
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# PCCF – What is it?

- PCCF = Postal Code Conversion File
- A shared product released between Statistics Canada and Canada Post that members of the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) have access to
- PCCF files connect data that contain postal codes to census data by linking six-character postal codes to standard geographic areas such as dissemination areas, census tracts, and census subdivisions
- PCCF also associates each postal code with a longitude and latitude coordinate to support mapping applications



# Getting Started: Linking your data to demographic data



Source: [https://gsg.uottawa.ca/data/fccp\\_pccf/2006CensusGeg/mar2008/eng/Getting\\_started\\_Mar2008.html](https://gsg.uottawa.ca/data/fccp_pccf/2006CensusGeg/mar2008/eng/Getting_started_Mar2008.html)



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# PCCF Retired File

- Available with the PCCF file
- Contains postal codes retired before January 1, 2016
- The record layout is the same as the standard PCCF file and they share the same reference guide

# Each record has:

- Six-character postal code
- First three characters equal FSA (Forward Sortation Area - stable, well-defined) – postal delivery area
- Last three characters equal LDU (Local Delivery Units)
- DAuid (Dissemination area unique identifier) = prov/territory code + CD code + DA code
- DB (Dissemination block) - where possible

- Latitude and longitude coordinates to which a postal code is linked
  - CSD name, code and type
  - Other higher level geo codes to which DAs and DBs line up with
  - FED code (Federal Electoral District)
  - CPC info about each postal code: birth date, retirement date, type of mail delivery, single link indicator, postal code type
- \*CPC = Canada Post Corporation

# Limitations:



- ONE postal code may be represented by > than one record
- Multiple records for a postal code when a postal code straddles more than one block-face, dissemination block, or dissemination area
- Some postal codes straddle multiple address ranges

# Single Link Indicator (SLI)

- The single link indicator (SLI) was created to assist users in dealing with postal codes with multiple records
- The method used to establish the SLI identifies the geographic area with the majority of dwellings assigned to a particular postal code
- Basically, creates a one-to-one relationship between postal codes and dissemination areas, dissemination blocks, or block-faces
- The SLI match is run as part of the syntax file



# PCCF Process

1. Create and run syntax on the raw PCCF file
2. Do any sub-setting you need in terms of geography as it is a National file
3. Extract Census data at DA or CT-level, preferably DA
4. Merge PCCF with Census data 
5. Merge PCCF with original postal code data 



# PCCF vs PCCF+

- The PCCF uses an SLI for matching which identifies the **geographic area with the majority of dwellings** assigned to a particular postal code
- The PCCF+ is a SAS program using **population-weighted random allocation for postal codes** that link to more than one geographic area

# PCCF+

- Includes:
  - neighborhood income quintile
  - immigrant tercile
  - health regions and alternate health regions
  - Airstage (isolated fly-in communities)
- Includes a problem file to identify postal codes for:
  - Hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, university residences, coroner's offices, children's aid societies, public trustees, government offices

# PCFRF File

- Postal Codes by Federal Ridings File (PCFRF)
- a subset of the PCCF
- provides a link between the six-character postal code and Canada's federal electoral districts (commonly known as federal ridings or FEDs)
- The "unique link" variable indicates if the postal code is linked to one or more FEDs
- When the postal code is linked to more than one FED, the "weight" variable estimates the proportion of the population of the postal code that resides within each FED.

# Some (older) context:

A 2011 literature review for publications using the PCCF and PCCF+ resulted in 622 publications

- Health Sciences 463 (74%)
- Social Sciences & Economics 93 (15%)
- Education, data, & statistics 34 (6%)
- Natural & applied sciences 12 (2%)
- Other 20 (3%)

Source: Peller P. An analysis of the Postal Code Conversion File's use in research. DLI research paper series, 2011. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary.

# External Resources:

DLI Training Repository - <https://cudo.carleton.ca/collection/dli/search/pccf>

Statistics Canada PCCF Reference Guide -  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-154-g/92-154-g2017001-eng.htm>

Data Services PCCF Page -v  
<https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/postal-code-conversion-files-pccf>

(links to all reference guides and the end-use license agreement required to access the files)