

Version 1.2

Collection of Data

Issued: 05 Jan 06

Census Bureau Principle

Authored for:

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Document Management & Control ¹

Version	Issue Date	Approval	Description
1.0	06 Aug 02	M&S Council	Initial Release
1.1	11 Jun 03	Associate Directors	Initial Concurrence
1.2	05 Jan 06	Configuration Mgr	Reformat

¹ **The most current version of this document is maintained on the Census Bureau Intranet and may be accessed from the [Quality Management Repository](#).**

Census Bureau Principle: Collection of Data

Introduction

The Census Bureau assumes responsibility for determining methods of data collection, while minimizing respondent burden and ensuring quality, for all Census Bureau operations, regardless of data collection mode, medium, respondent universe, or subject. In so doing, the Census Bureau seeks advice from data users and from other professional and technical subject-matter and methodological experts.

Scope

Data collection is broadly defined as those activities and processes that obtain statistical data about the elements of a population, either directly through the mechanism of obtaining the needed information by contacting respondents representing the population elements or indirectly by using administrative records or other data sources. These principles guide the implementation of all Census Bureau data collection operations, regardless of data collection mode, medium, respondent universe, or subject matter.

Principles

1. Respondents are a data collection organization's most valuable resource. To assure full and continuing cooperation, the Census Bureau will minimize individual respondent burden and obtain participation by fully informing the respondent regarding the purpose of the data collection and the authority under which it is conducted.
2. All data collection instruments, methods, systems, training, tools, and other materials will be validated before use.
3. Quality and performance measurement and process control systems will be implemented and integrated in the data collection process to assist management and inform the quality of the resulting statistics, facilitating objectivity. These processes, systems, and tools will provide timely measurement and reporting of all critical components of the data collection process, on the dimensions of progress, response, quality, and cost, and enable managers to identify and resolve problems and assure that data collection is completed successfully. Additionally these measurements will provide survey designers and data users with indicators of survey performance and resultant data quality.
4. Reporting unit and item nonresponse will be minimized using appropriate methods.
5. The secure handling of collected data will be assured by appropriate means throughout the entire data collection process to preserve confidentiality and privacy and ensure integrity.

6. All components of the data collection process will be comprehensively documented to assure the consistency and repeatability of the process.
7. Ways will be sought to use technology wisely to reduce respondent burden, improve data quality, process efficiency, and/or timeliness.
8. Exemption from the requirements of these Principles may be sought in special circumstances using the procedure described below under “**Responsibilities.**”

Responsibilities

Program areas will be responsible for the following:

- Developing requirements to satisfy these Principles in the design, schedule, and budget of new or re-designed statistical activities, programs, or products; and
- Submitting applications for exemption from the requirements of these Principles to the Census Bureau Methodology and Standards Council.

The Methodology and Standards Council will be responsible for the following:

- Providing standards and guidelines on the application of these Principles to program areas;
- Producing reports as necessary on the state of compliance with these Principles;
- Initiating evaluations of the application of these Principles within particular program areas and ensuring that such evaluations are co-ordinated with other program evaluation activities;
- Initiating a review of these Principles and accompanying standards and guidelines when deemed necessary; and
- Reviewing applications for exemption from the requirements of the Principles.

Inquiries

Inquiries relating to the interpretation of these Principles should be addressed to the Census Bureau Methodology and Standards Council.

Recommended by the Census Bureau Methodology and Standards Council:

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Signed August 06, 2002

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