

Data Linkage Checklist For Project Contacts

I. When Must Project Contacts Fill Out This Checklist?

If a proposed research project is in-scope (see pages 2-4 of policy) for the *Data Linkage Policy*, before submitting the project for review and approval, the Project Contact (PC) responsible for the project must fill out this checklist. Please address Sections II through V of this checklist.

II. Project Proposal Meets Data Linkage Policy Criteria

I, the Project Contact (PC) responsible for the content of the data linkage project description in question, attest that my proposal meets EACH of the following three criteria outlined in the *Data Linkage Policy*: Mission Necessity, Best Alternative, and Public Good Determination (see pages 5-7 of policy).

MARK ONE:

- ☐ **YES**, my proposal meets the *Data Linkage Policy*'s Mission Necessity, Best Alternative, and Public Good Determination Criteria.
- ☐ **NO**, my proposal does not meet these *Data Linkage Policy* criteria.

III. Risk and Sensitivity Assessment

Please fill out both Sections III and IV; the information you report in these two sections will determine the sensitivity of your project and the next steps in the approval process. In Section III, below, you must document any aspect of your project that applies. In Section IV, you must document certain aspects of your project that might result in an additional review step (i.e., PC presents to the Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee, DSEP, for a formal decision). The Policy Coordination Office staff will review your responses and alert the Project Contact if further steps are necessary.

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

- ☐ This proposed linkage involves data sets that were all collected by the Census Bureau (using the authority in Title 13, Section 6 to collect the data), including reimbursable surveys.
- ☐ This proposed linkage involves data sets that were collected by the Census Bureau with information from other agencies (e.g., Title 13 survey data linked to Title 42 administrative records).

- ☐ This proposed linkage involves purchased commercial data sets or publicly available, free data (e.g., data from web scraping, county tax records, etc.).⁶
- ☐ This proposed linkage will result in a file involving a universe that contains 80 percent or more of all U.S. households or persons.⁷
- ☐ This proposed linkage involves matching the total universe of records available in one or more of the data sets, as opposed to limited matching to a sample of records.
- ☐ This proposed linkage involves longitudinal matching of individual or household records or use of a longitudinal dataset.
- ☐ This proposed linkage will produce output that expands the content on individual persons or households.
- ☐ This proposed linkage will produce output that will eventually be released as a Public Use File (PUF) or a Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) file.
- ☐ This proposed linkage will be carried out solely with economic data.

IV. High and Moderate Sensitivity/Public Perception of Risk Default

Certain kinds of data linkage proposals will default a moderate and high sensitivity rating. These types of proposals are of such a sensitive nature that they automatically merit a higher level of review (discussed in the next section). Please check ALL items that apply to this project proposal:

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

- ☐ This project proposal involves a linkage between two mandatory demographic censuses or surveys. [This project defaults to **HIGH SENSITIVITY**]
- ☐ This proposed linkage requires the use of individual names and/or Social Security Numbers (SSNs). [This project defaults to **HIGH SENSITIVITY**]
- ☐ This project involves a linkage between a Census Bureau-sponsored, mandatory demographic census/survey and a voluntary survey. [This project defaults to **MODERATE SENSITIVITY**]

⁶ This includes publicly available information purchased by the Census Bureau (e.g., listings of stock prices compiled by private firms).

⁷ Basis of selecting 80 percent was to capture linkages involving, for example, the entire decennial or economic census.

V. Submit Your Checklist

Upload your completed Data Linkage Checklist to the Census Bureau's centralized electronic tracking system.

PCO will assign a sensitivity rating to your project during the policy portion of the project review process, and you will be contacted about any next steps you must take in seeking approval for your project.

The following actions must occur to document and mitigate sensitivities for projects considered within the scope of this policy:

For High Sensitivity Projects: The PC is required to present this project to the Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee (DSEP) for a decision on whether or not the proposed linkage will be approved. The DSEP will also determine how accessible the linked dataset will be to the Special Sworn Status (SSS) individuals.

For Moderate Sensitivity Projects: PCO staff from the Administrative Records Coordination Branch and the Policy and Data Stewardship Branch will confer to determine whether the project should be presented to DSEP for an approval decision.

For Low Sensitivity Projects: No further action necessary.

PLEASE NOTE: Project Contacts are required to store this completed checklist, including Section VI below, in the Census Bureau's electronic tracking system, along with all other project documentation.

VI. Sensitivity Level Decision and Documentation

PCO will fill out this section and return the Checklist to the PRC or PC, as appropriate.

1. PCO and/or DSEP decision on sensitivity level: _____
2. Restrictions on data for SSS: _____
3. Date of PCO and/or DSEP decision: _____