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## **Policy Cover Sheet for U.S. Census Bureau Privacy Principles**

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***Purpose:*** These Privacy Principles set the ethical standards for the U.S. Census Bureau's data collection, handling, and dissemination. They serve as the underpinnings for all Data Stewardship policies and as the basis for current and future practices.

***Scope:*** The Privacy Principles apply to all phases of a project or activity (planning, design, collection, processing, dissemination, and archiving) involving censuses and surveys authorized by Titles 13 and 15, United States Code, for all types of economic, demographic, and decennial census data.

***Policies and Procedures Impacted:***

- ❑ ***Relationship to Mission:*** The Privacy Principles establish that all data collections must support the Census Bureau's mission and legal requirements.
- ❑ ***Relationship to Existing Policies, Relevant Laws and Regulations, and Procedures:*** The Privacy Principles are consistent with all relevant laws and regulations pertaining to Census Bureau activities. Further, they establish fundamental values that are consistent with accepted fair information practice principles, as well as professional ethical guidelines for survey research organizations (see references). All Census Bureau Data Stewardship policies support one or more of these principles. Current practices have been examined to ensure that they are consistent with these principles, and gaps between principles and current practices that were identified have been addressed by new data stewardship policies or are in the process of being addressed by policies or refinement of practices.

***Responsibility for Implementation:*** The program area divisions that collect, process, and disseminate data from censuses and surveys are responsible for implementing the Privacy Principles in their data collection, processing, and disseminating activities. The Privacy Office is responsible for ensuring Census Bureau-wide awareness of these Privacy Principles. The Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing the Privacy Principles periodically, with the assistance of its staff committees, and ensuring they are complete and that any gaps in current practice are being addressed.

***Committee Responsible for Ensuring the Continued Efficacy of This Policy:*** The Privacy Policy and Research Committee (PPRC) is responsible for maintaining and updating the Privacy Principles, based on guidance from the Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee.

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## U.S. CENSUS BUREAU PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

1. **Principle of Mission Necessity:** *The U.S. Census Bureau will only collect information that is necessary for meeting the Census Bureau's mission and legal requirements.*

*Subprinciple 1* - The Census Bureau will only collect or acquire information about individuals and businesses that is necessary to meet its legal responsibility and fulfill its mission to provide timely, relevant, and quality data about the people and economy of the United States.

*Subprinciple 2* - The Census Bureau will only engage in projects requiring data protected under Title 13, United States Code, if there is a clear benefit to Census Bureau programs.

*Subprinciple 3* - The Census Bureau will only collect or acquire information on a reimbursable basis, or in exchange for products or services, if such collection or acquisition would be seen as being consistent with the Census Bureau's reputation of providing relevant statistical data for public policy and maintaining the public's trust.

*Subprinciple 4* - The Census Bureau will ensure that it uses the data it obtains or collects only for statistical purposes and will advise the public of these limited uses.

2. **Principle of Openness:** *The Census Bureau will be open about its programs, policies and practices to collect and protect identifiable data used to produce statistical information.*

*Subprinciple 1* - The Census Bureau will make it easy to access information about what we collect and why, and provide opportunities for public comment prior to collecting new information.

*Subprinciple 2* - When we collect information, respondents will be informed about the purpose, authority, reporting obligation, legal protections, and uses.

*Subprinciple 3* - When we acquire and link identifiable records from other organizations as part of creating statistical products, we will be open about our activities and inform those supplying the records of proposed uses in order to confirm that they are permitted.

*Subprinciple 4* - Once we have assured the confidentiality of the data, the Census Bureau does not attempt to control the uses or users of its products. Further, we

release the identity of all requesters of custom data products and make those same products publicly available.

**3. Principle of Respectful Treatment of Respondents: *The Census Bureau will be considerate of respondents' time and desire for privacy and will respect their rights as research participants.***

***Subprinciple 1*** - When we design our data collections, the Census Bureau will employ efficiencies to minimize respondents' time and effort.

***Subprinciple 2*** - The Census Bureau will engage only in legal, ethical and professionally accepted data collection practices.

***Subprinciple 3*** - The Census Bureau will request sensitive information from children and other sensitive populations only when it has determined that doing so will provide a clear benefit to the public good and will not violate federal protections of human research participants.

**4. Principle of Confidentiality: *The Census Bureau will ensure that confidentiality protections are included in its procedures to collect, process, and release data.***

***Subprinciple 1*** - The Census Bureau will permit authorized users access to, and use of, only that confidential data needed to conduct their work in support of Census Bureau programs.

***Subprinciple 2*** - The Census Bureau will use appropriate and comprehensive physical and communications security measures when collecting, storing, and analyzing all legally protected information held by the Census Bureau.

***Subprinciple 3*** - The Census Bureau will use comprehensive disclosure avoidance techniques consistent with professionally acceptable standards before releasing data products derived from legally protected information.

***Subprinciple 4*** - Agencies supplying legally protected information to the Census Bureau will always be given the opportunity to review and approve either the proposed data releases or the disclosure methodology used to protect the data in order to ensure that the agencies' disclosure-protection requirements are met.