Initiatives to Modernize the Federal Statistical System: Access to Federal Data

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Making the Most of Federal Data: Combining Data for Economic Analysis
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Data Access: An ICSP Priority

• Why is data access a priority?
• What is the role of the FSRDC program?
• Who is involved?
• How does it work?
• How do I learn more?
Why is data access a priority?

Opportunities:

• Rich data environment
  • (Hundreds) of thousands of data sets

• Improved technology environment
  • Capability to link and analyze large amounts of data in relatively small amount of time

• Improved methodology environment
  • Advancements in methods & technologies continue to grow

• Potential to answer BIG questions by linking data from different sources
Why else?

Challenges:

• Protecting confidential information – data security
• Guarding against disclosures
• Adhering to individual agency statutes governing access to data (e.g., Title 26, Title 13, etc.)
The role of the FSRDC program

• Facilitate research for statistical purposes
• Increase access to a wide variety of microdata
• Protect confidentiality and avoid disclosures
• Improve the utility and quality of federal data
• Address policy questions
Key Partners in the FSRDC Program

- Federal statistical agencies
- Local institutions
- Researchers
Federal Agency Partners  (as of July 2018)

Active:
- U.S. Census Bureau
- National Center for Health Statistics
- Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality
- Bureau of Labor Statistics

In progress:
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Statistics of Income Division (IRS)

Data contributors:
BJS, BTS, EIA, EPA, ERS, HUD, NCSES, SSA
Location of Institutional Partners
Background & History

• Builds on RDCs established by the Census Bureau in mid-1980’s
  • 1st RDC at Census headquarters
  • Expanded to Boston & Carnegie Mellon in mid-1990’s

• Census Bureau & NSF partner to expand the program in 1998

• NCHS & AHRQ sign on in mid-2000’s

• Rebranded as FSRDC Program in 2015
Program Management

• FSRDC Director housed at Center for Economic Studies
  • Manages daily operations
    • Staffing
    • IT
    • Physical Security

• Legal agreements
Physical Infrastructure

Controlled access:
• Secure Census facility at a host institution
• Census employee on-site at all locations
• Special sworn statutes for all authorized personnel (including researchers)

Restricted, secure IT:
• No internet access
• Direct access to secure data servers
• Strictly controlled printing
Mandatory Disclosure Review

• Analyses are model-based, tabulations discouraged

• Multiple layers of review
  • FSRDC administrator
  • Center for Disclosure Avoidance
Shared Governance

• Co-chairs
  • Chief Statistician, Nancy Potok (non-voting)
  • Elected member from Committee

• Statistical Agency Partners (voting)
  • BEA
  • BLS
  • NCHS
  • SOI
  • Census Bureau

• Institutional Partners (non-voting)
• Ex-officio members (non-voting)
  • Census Bureau CIO
  • FSRDC Director/Executive Secretariat
  • ICSP liaison (BJS)
Shared Governance Goals

• Harmonized procedures
  • One-stop-shop for researchers

• Multi-agency research projects

• New access modes & more data

• Shared oversight & costs
For more information on the FSRDC Program:

• Go to www.census.gov/fsrdc
• Contact Barbara Downs
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For more information on shared governance
• Contact Jeri Mulrow
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Questions?
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