Expanding the Statistical System’s Capacity to Support Evidence-Building
Recommendations to the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking from the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP)

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The Role of ICSP

• Advises and assists OMB in the coordination of Federal statistical activities
• Fosters interagency coordination and collaboration
• Membership: 13 statistical agency heads + 1 rotating member, led by the Chief Statistician of the United States
• Authorized by 44 U.S.C. § 3504
The U.S. Federal Statistical System

• The U.S. decentralized system includes about 120 agencies

• A substantial portion of official statistics are produced by 13 principal statistical agencies
View Around the President’s Cabinet Table

Agriculture | Commerce | Defense | Education | Energy

Interior | Transportation
Justice | Treasury
Labor | Office of Management and Budget
State | Homeland Security | Housing, Urban Dev | Veteran’s Affairs | Health, Human Services

Independent Agencies
BEA Uses a Variety of Data
Recommendations

- Establish a research environment that brings together data sets from across the statistical agencies

- Streamline the research approval process to expedite evidence-building work

- Modify legislation to expand the allowed use of administrative data for statistical purposes

- Implement strategies that increase access to and improve the quality of State and Local government data
Establish a new research environment

• Build a research and computing environment that more fully supports the use of statistical information for a range of activities, including evidence-based policy research

  • Available to governmental and non-governmental researchers

  • Provides convenient data access for users who are not located geographically close to statistical agency operations

  • Equipped with systems designed to enhance privacy and protect data confidentiality
Streamline the research approval process

• Current approval process is cumbersome

• Recommend modifications to existing process, not elimination
  • Establish review boards composed of technical representatives from the agencies that own the data to be used in the proposed project
  • Harmonized, transparent processes for requesting and accepting research project proposals

• ICSP can oversee and coordinate these modifications
Modify legislation to expand allowed use of data

- Regulations that are in place to protect data confidentiality and privacy sometimes prevent statistical use of data
  - Example 1: Use of federal tax data by non-Treasury employees is limited to “tax administration” purposes
  - Example 2: Census Bureau has broad access to federal tax data, BEA has limited access, and BLS has no access
- Recommend broadening/amending language in the Internal Revenue Code to address above examples
Increase access to and quality of State and Local data

• Many valuable types of administrative data are collected by State and Local governments but made available only in a limited manner to Federal agencies

• Process for Federal agencies to acquire the data can be very time-consuming and costly (e.g. BLS QCEW agreements)

• ICSP can oversee a review of existing State and Local data collections to assess current needs and avoid duplication of requests made by Federal agencies

• Use results to formulate consolidated requests by Federal agencies, identify pilot projects to improve data quality