

Geographic Support System Initiative (GSS-I) Telephone Script

The Census Bureau will contact tribal, state, and local governments to obtain a digital file containing their address and spatial data. Listed are the script and other key points that Census Bureau staff will use when contacting a government official.

Initial contact between the Census Bureau and the government

Hi, this is [insert name] from the Census Bureau.

I'm calling about the Geographic Support System Initiative that the Census Bureau is working on. Do you have a few minutes right now to talk?

If the person answers yes, then continue. If they answer no, ask for a convenient time when you can call back and thank them for their time.

Suggestions:

- Try to avoid letting the person call you back. If they suggest this, wait a week and then try again. Approach this callback gently: *"I really appreciate your time"*. Ask if there is someone else whom you should speak.
- Be prepared to leave a voice-mail message. Remember to leave your name and number at the beginning of the message and keep the message short: *"This is [NAME] with the Census Bureau at [phone number]. I'm calling to talk with you about obtaining your geographic data. I will try to reach you later [state when]. I look forward to talking with you."*

Explain the GSS-I to the government

The GSS-I is an integrated program of improved address coverage, on-going address and spatial feature updates, and enhanced quality assessment and measurement.

One of the goals is to develop programs to implement on-going updates of the MTDB throughout the decade to support current surveys (including the American Community Survey). We are seeking to acquire suitable data on an on-going basis, in order to assure that the data in the MTDB is as accurate and current as possible.

Another benefit of continual updates is that where we are able to ensure that the MTDB is up-to-date, we may be able to conduct a targeted, rather than complete, Address Canvassing operation during 2019 in preparation for the 2020 Decennial Census.

What does the Census Bureau want?

The Census Bureau wants to establish data sharing partnerships with governments. We would like you to provide the Census Bureau with copies of your address/feature/parcel data, so we can use the data to analyze the accuracy of the spatial features (roads, boundaries, etc.), addresses, and geocodes (address locations) within the MAF/TIGER Database and identify areas requiring corrections or updates.

We want to obtain addresses, structure points, features, parcels, boundaries, and imagery.

If the local would prefer to provide their complete dataset without extracting any of the specific layers that we asked for, we will gladly accept the offer.

NOTE: If the local states that these items are available on line, ask for the web address.

We will also be analyzing the accuracy and completeness of the data (by comparing both address and spatial data to the MTDB, commercial datasets, and possibly conducting field work), and will provide you with information on the results of our analysis. Where we determine that the data is usable for MTDB updates, we will be seeking to initiate a regular exchange with you to capture change and/or growth.

Stress the ease of involvement for a government. They can choose when to provide their data, the media, and the format.

Would you be willing to provide the Census Bureau with this data?

Other good things to ask (Note that much of this information may be available online, please gather any information you can prior to making contact then ask only the questions where you are unable to find answers in advance):

Are there any restrictions on the use of this data, for example licensing agreements? Note that during the research and development phase, we will not be using this data to update the MTDB, but it would be good to know this info for future reference (as we will be seeking to use data, where suitable, to update the MTDB in the future).

Data Format

We can accept digital geographic files in any format, but a Geodatabase or shape files are preferred. If layers are linked to other databases, or (for example) the data is in a tabular format, we can accept data base information in a variety of formats (ASCII text files, Comma Delimited, Excel, Access, etc.).

Do you have any questions about the file format?

Other good things to ask (Note that much of this information may be available online, please gather any information you can prior to making contact then ask only the questions where you are unable to find answers in advance):

Are there any restrictions on the use of this data, for example licensing agreements? Note that during the research and development phase, we WILL NOT be using this data to update the MTDB, but it would be good to know this info for future reference (as we will be seeking to use data, where suitable, to update the MTDB in the future).

Do you have a data dictionary available for any or all of the above information?

If they have one, we want to acquire it as well. In short, if there is documentation of any type that will help us understand/evaluate the data, it should be part of the acquisition.

Providing the data

For now, the preferable medium of transfer is FTP transfer, direct download from provider websites, or CD-ROM/DVD. Additional transfer mechanisms will be available in the future, such as a secure web exchange system (currently in the requirements development phase).

Wrapping up the call

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. We would really appreciate your help on this project.

If you have any questions for need any additional information, please call or e-mail me. [Provide contact information].