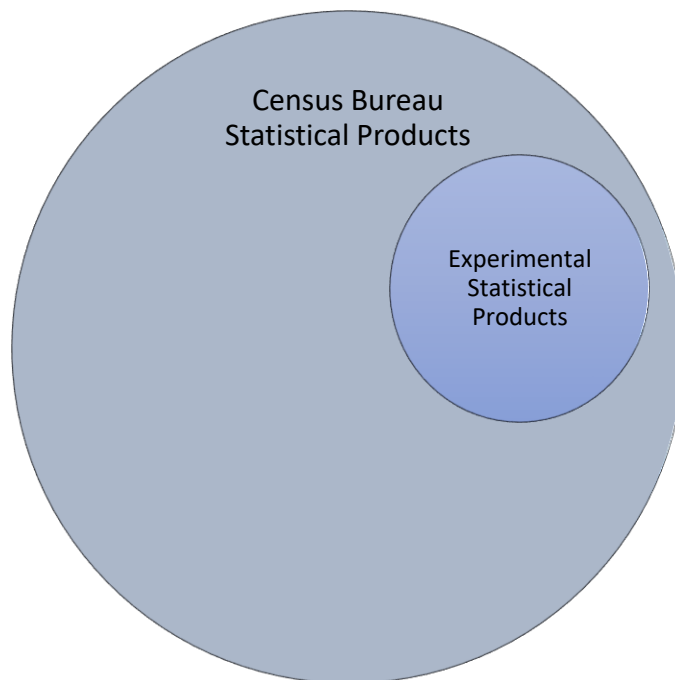


Guiding principles: Experimental Statistical Products

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Taxonomy:

Census Bureau Statistical Products

All statistical products produced and released by the Census Bureau, as designated by OMB Statistical Directives #3 and #4.

Experimental Statistical Products

New or innovative Census Bureau statistical products produced and released that may not meet all of the Census Bureau Quality Standards and would:

- benefit from feedback from data users and other stakeholders;
- benefit data users and other stakeholders in the absence of other available data; and/or
- be used to gauge demand before investing more resources in operationalizing.

Designation:

Experimental statistical products (or experimental statistics) are statistical products created using new data sources and/or methodologies. The resulting product may have unproven quality.

Experimental statistics may originate in program areas, the research directorate, and from within the FSRDC system.

The Associate Director over the program or research area has authority over their experimental statistics.

Experimental statistics provide an important path for the creation of a new, regularly occurring data product. Experimental statistical products should be proposed only if there is a reasonable expectation of producing relevant and useful experimental statistics for release to the public.

Experimental statistics are released through the Census Bureau website as a Census Bureau statistical product.

A proposal to release experimental statistics through the Census Bureau website should include a description of new statistics, data sources, methodology, periodicity, etc., as well as address relevance and feasibility. The proposal should also address shortcomings of the proposed experimental statistics.

The Methodology and Standards Council will review proposals for experimental statistics. The Council may offer concurrence and/or additional advice on development of the experimental statistics but the ultimate authority lies with Associate Director proposing the experimental statistics.

Designating statistics as no longer experimental is the responsibility of program areas and their management up to their Associate Director. For experimental statistics to be advanced to a regularly occurring statistic without the experimental designation, relevant quality standards must be met.

The cessation of an experimental statistical product does not require further action by the Methodology and Standards Council.

Statistical products produced for and released in research papers or for peer reviewed journals are not in scope, although they eventually may lead to experimental statistical products.

Experimental Statistics Quality:

Experimental statistics should try to comply with all Quality Standards but may not meet some requirements due to their novel approach.

Experimental statistics must meet all Quality Standards related to the protection of information and transparency (S1 – Protecting Confidentiality; F2 – Providing documentation to support transparency in information products).

Experimental statistics may be released with (serious) sampling or non-sampling quality issues provided:

- affected statistics are clearly identified ;
- the statistics are clearly labeled as experimental; and
- quality issues with the statistics are described.

Publication and Feedback:

Experimental statistics should be published on as Census Bureau webpage that includes:

- the experimental statistics;
- methodology and supporting research about the experimental statistics;
- links to longer methodology and/or research papers that support the release of the experimental statistics; and

- a feedback mechanism for data users and other stakeholders. Feedback should be solicited for the experimental statistics sources, methodology, and measures of quality.

Governance outside of Quality Standards:

Some measure of governance should apply to experimental statistics, though not necessarily be codified in the Quality Standards.

At minimum, Associate Directors or their designees should track experimental statistics. Specifically, a list of statistics should be maintained as well as their outcome.