Guidelines for the Development and Operation of a Federal Statistical Research Data Center (RDC) or RDC Branch

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I. Introduction

The Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (RDCs) are partnerships between federal statistical agencies and leading research institutions. They are secure facilities managed by the Census Bureau. Qualified researchers may attain access to conduct statistical analysis on confidential selected internal microdata from the Census Bureau and other federal and state sources at the RDCs as authorized under approved research projects.

In addition, the Census Bureau and its partners may establish branch locations for RDCs. The security requirements and the IT infrastructure of a "branch" are **identical** to those of a "core" RDC location.

The requirements for the establishment and operation of a Federal Statistical RDC are described below in sections II (Founding a Federal Statistical Research Data Center), III (Establishment of a Federal Statistical RDC Location), IV (Physical Operation of a Federal Statistical RDC Lab) and V (Conducting Research in a Federal Statistical RDC).

II. Founding a Federal Statistical Research Data Center

A. Initial Support

In order to successfully operate a Research Data Center, the host institution should ascertain that it has a sufficient number of researchers interested in quantitative social science and statistical research that require access to selected confidential internal microdata from the agencies providing data in the RDCs for statistical analysis.[1] It is recommended that the proposed host institution survey possible researchers from a number of disciplines and institutions in its general geographic area.[2]

B. Application for National Science Foundation Funding

The host institution should apply using the procedures announced in the Federal Register on January 22, 1998 (Attachment A). As noted therein, an RDC must be self-financing but "An organization proposing to establish an RDC can request from the [National Science Foundation] up to $100,000 per year for a three-year term to cover part of the start-up costs and annual operating costs associated with establishing the RDC." It is recommended that the host institution include a wide variety of possible projects, from multiple disciplines and

[1] The Census Bureau currently offers the opportunity to conduct statistical analysis on internal confidential versions of nearly all surveys collected on its own behalf (both household and business censuses and surveys), selected surveys collected for other agencies on a reimbursable basis, some survey data linked to administrative records, and selected survey data collected for other federal agencies. For more information, see "Restricted-Use Data." Federal statistical agencies making their data available through the FSRDCs include, but are not limited to: the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Census Bureau, the National Center for Health Statistics and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. For more information about available data see the FSRDC website.

[2] Academic departments that have traditionally shown interest in conducting RDC projects include economics, sociology, geography, demography, public policy, public health, business schools, and medical schools.

participating institutions, in its application. It is typical that a new RDC starts slowly in building a portfolio of ongoing projects; some projects will transfer from other locations and collaborations by local researchers with others at different RDCs are likely.

C. Branch RDCs – A definition

In order to leverage the capabilities of the RDC system and minimize costs, the Census Bureau has developed the concept of a *branch RDC.* To initiate branch development, the *core RDC* submits an application to the Census Bureau, using the NSF application (minus Principal Investigator C.V.'s), according to the NSF application schedule. The application materials are reviewed by the Census Bureau and its partners, and approval is granted based on the quality of proposal and the resources available to create the branch.

A branch is not exclusively defined by its distance from an existing RDC location but also by the legal agreement governing the branch's construction and operation. In the case of a branch, the Census Bureau modifies the existing legal agreement with the core RDC location and amends the Statement of Work.

A branch RDC meets all of the same requirements for physical and IT security and uses the same thin client technology as all other RDCs. However, a branch RDC may leverage the onsite RDC Administrator of an existing RDC in a variety of ways:

1) If the branch is within 50 miles of the existing RDC, the RDC Administrator MAY be shared at two locations (travel costs between the two sites *may* be charged to the RDC)
2) If the branch is between 50 and 250 miles from the existing RDC, the branch MUST have its own part time RDC administrator (travel costs *will* be charged)
3) Any proposed location more than 250 miles from the existing RDC MUST be its own RDC and maintain a legal agreement with the Census Bureau.

III. Establishment of a Federal Statistical RDC Location

A. Costs

The RDC host institution must establish a funding model that will guarantee that the institution's share of costs for at least 3 years will be covered. Initial costs include construction of adequate space meeting Census and Internal Revenue Service security specifications. Ongoing costs for the host institution include rent and utilities for the physical RDC space, the salary and overheads for the RDC Executive Director (typically a faculty member given release time in lieu of a payment), the salary and overheads for the RDC Administrator, and a RDC Network Service Fee.

The host institution may decide to charge fees for access, but those fees should be reasonable and may be waived at the sole discretion of the host institution. Several different arrangements have been used by RDCs, including (1) obtaining general support from the host institution thereby allowing its affiliates free access while charging those from other institutions, (2)

providing free access to graduate students but no others, or (3) creating a consortium of institutions with free access handled on a quota basis.

The Census Bureau will supply thin client devices for the RDC Administrator and for researchers, a router to connect to the RDC Virtual Private Network through the institution's Internet connection, and all administrative services concomitant to handling proposals, including obtaining Special Sworn Status (SSS) for researchers and for data handling and disclosure review.

In the case of a Branch, ongoing operational costs, including replacement purchases of physical infrastructure items such as the security equipment, router, thin clients, and monitors, will be borne by the Branch. These costs are expected to be roughly $50,000 every 5 years.

RDC costs are described in detail throughout the remainder of this document and a detailed cost estimate is also provided as Attachment B.

B. Administration

The Census Bureau's Center for Enterprise Dissemination (CED) operates the RDC network on behalf of the Federal Statistical network. The FSRDC Director and his/her staff keep the RDC Executive Directors informed about relevant developments (through biweekly conference calls) and establish policies for the entire program, again in consultation with the Executive Directors. The Census Bureau's Research and Methodology Directorate, which includes CED, coordinates proposal processing and review and provides assistance in obtaining SSS for researchers, data warehousing and access, and disclosure review. Other offices at the Census Bureau or the Department of Commerce are responsible for maintaining computer systems and assessing security control.

The RDC Executive Directors are responsible for (1) reviewing all proposed policies for operating the RDC program; (2) providing advice to the Lead RDC Administrator on the performance of the RDC Administrator stationed at their site; (3) encouraging the submission of new proposals and ensuring their minimum quality; and (4) raising funds as needed to maintain the financial viability of the RDC. The RDCs are operated under legal agreements between the Census Bureau and the appropriate institution; the Executive Directors are also responsible for maintaining and enhancing this relationship.

C. Staffing

The minimum staffing requirement for an RDC (or RDC Branch) is for the presence of a Census Bureau employee, called the RDC Administrator (RDCA), on-site 20 hours per week. The RDCA, depending on experience, assists in the administrative tasks required for the functioning of the RDC, proposal development, and disclosure avoidance review.

The Census Bureau and the RDC Executive Directors have agreed that not all RDCs need a "senior" Administrator who is expected to undertake outreach on behalf of the RDC and work closely with researchers in developing proposals. Some RDCs may be operated by a "junior" Administrator in a role managing administrative tasks, ensuring access and maintaining security. It is recommended that a new RDC hire a senior Administrator for its initial hire in order to facilitate the development of new RDC projects.

Some RDCs may hire a Pathways Intern to serve as a junior Administrator. In this case, the Census Bureau's expectation is that the host institution and Census will work together to make the intern as well off as they would be as a Research Assistant (RA) or Teaching Assistant (TA) in terms of total hours worked, pay and benefits. This usually means that their 20 hours of work at the RDC is on par with standard TA or RA duties, and they will NOT be required to work additional hours for the university to maintain key benefits (e.g. tuition, stipend, health insurance). A detailed document with additional information on Intern salaries and benefits is included as Attachment C.

D. Requirement for a Secure Physical Space

Every RDC lab is a **physically secure facility managed by the Census Bureau.** It is the responsibility of the host institution to provide and prepare this space at the host institution's expense. The cost of site preparation will vary widely depending on the site proposed, ranging from a few hundred dollars to many thousands.

Data files containing Federal Tax Information can be accessed at RDCs for approved projects. Therefore, the requirements of IRS Publication 1075 apply. A link to Publication 1075 is included below.

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1075.pdf

Within an RDC lab, a secure space must be provided to house the required telecommunications equipment (a router) and the equipment for Lenel badge readers and security cameras. A secure office must be provided within the RDC for the onsite RDC Administrator.

Our experience has shown that the key features of good candidate space for an RDC lab are:

- walls that establish a 360 degree perimeter with as few doors as possible
- walls that extend from "slab-to-slab", that is, from floor-to-floor
- locks, bars, and/or security film (frosted glass) on every window and skylight
- solid-core doors
- bars or heavy mesh grating on any air ducts that lead into the RDC that are large enough to allow human passage
- access panels, partitions, and windows are fastened from inside the RDC

The facility proposed for the RDC lab must be inspected and approved by the Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of Security before the RDC begins operation; the facility must also pass periodic reviews by the DOC Office of Security while the RDC is in operation. Any organization that will host an RDC is urged to provide as much information as early as possible about their proposed space for an RDC location, including floor plans and photos. If new construction is planned, we ask the blueprints be provided to us in advance of any construction work. All of this information is coordinated through CED and delivered to the DOC Office of Security; their concerns and suggestions are passed back to the RDC host institution. **This early review is not a guarantee of approval.** After the host institution indicates that the space is ready, the DOC Office of Security conducts an onsite inspection**. Any problems found must be mitigated before final approval by the DOC Office of Security is given.**

E. Physical Access Control

Physical access to the RDC space is controlled by a badge access system from Lenel Systems International. The DOC Office of Security operates the Lenel system. Activity in the lab is recorded and stored by security cameras operated by the DOC Office of Security. The video captured by these cameras can be viewed at the Census Bureau Headquarters by the DOC Office of Security. The Census Bureau will work with the DOC Office of Security to arrange the acquisition and installation of the Lenel system and the security cameras.

The hosting institution provides an Intrusion Detection System (IDS), including motion sensors and intruder alarms. The IDS measures must be in place and in working order before the RDC may begin operation.

F. Secure Computer Environment

All of the data accessed at the RDCs are physically located on computer servers at the Census Bureau's Computer Center (BCC) in Bowie, MD. Access to the data is provided to researchers at the RDCs via a *thin client*; a thin client can only display information from the server and accept mouse and keyboard input from the researcher. The data itself does not leave the BCC. The thin client has no ability to download data from the server and no ability to write to computer media (e.g., a floppy disk or CD). Communications from the RDC thin clients to the servers is via secure communications lines; all communications traffic is encrypted per FIPS140-2. Researchers cannot access the Internet (or any other network) at the RDCs. All users' activities are logged and monitored by Census Bureau computer staff. A typical RDC has about ten thin clients, however, this number can be increased or decreased as needed. It is helpful for the RDC to provide the expected number of thin clients needed as soon as possible.

The Census Bureau will acquire and install the required telecommunications equipment, router, monitors and thin clients; the hosting institution provides the necessary funding through startup fees. Additional IT expenses that the host institution incurs include wiring and cables.

IV. Physical Operation of a Federal Statistical RDC Lab

A. Controlled Data Access for Approved Purposes

All access to internal microdata for statistical analysis by researchers at RDCs is conducted under the auspices of approved research projects. Qualified researchers may submit proposals for research projects to the appropriate Federal Statistical RDC agency. In reviewing project proposals, these agencies explicitly consider whether the proposed research output could present a significant risk of disclosing confidential information. When a research proposal is approved, researchers are granted access to conduct statistical analysis only on the data specifically requested in the proposal for that research project.

B. Researcher Screening, Training and Badge Issuance

Once a project has been approved by the Census Bureau or another agency providing their data to the FSRDC, all researchers must undergo a background check that includes the submission of the researcher's fingerprints to the FBI. All researchers must be approved for the "moderate" risk level. All researchers must undergo mandatory Title 13 Data Stewardship Training and Title 26 Data Security Training and any other trainings as required by the agency providing data; both trainings must be renewed annually. All researchers must take the same oath of confidentially that Census Bureau employees take; there are severe Federal penalties for the violation of this oath. All researchers are issued a Department of Commerce/Census Bureau badge. The initial background check, training, and oath must be completed and the badge issued before the researcher is granted access to data.

C. Rules of Behavior for Users

Rules of behavior have been established for RDC researchers. These are defined in a Researcher Handbook that is provided to all researchers. Researchers are not allowed to bring laptop computers and other personal computer devices into an RDC. Researchers are not allowed Internet access (neither email nor web browsing) in an RDC. Researchers are also subject to the rules and regulations of the host institution.

D. Disclosure Review

Before a researcher may remove any material from an RDC, the materials must be submitted to the appropriate Federal Statistical RDC agencyfor *disclosure avoidance review*. This review is designed to ensure the confidentially of individual responses. As stated previously, Federal Statistical RDC agencies explicitly consider potential disclosure risks in their initial review of all projects. At no time are hard (paper) copies of output allowed to leave the RDC; upon approval in the disclosure avoidance review, materials are released electronically.

E. No Personal Identifiers Provided to Researchers

Researchers at the RDCs are not given access to any demographic or demographic administrative record data files with personal identifiers. Such identifiers include name, address, or Social Security Numbers. All demographic or demographic administrative record datasets either contain no identifiers or contain Protected Identification Keys (PIKs) that are produced by the Census Bureau. PIKs are "synthetic" codes that do not identify individuals or households but do allow records to be linked.

V. Conducting Research in the RDC

A. Other Agencies Providing Data

Information about the overall RDC program can be found at https://www.census.gov/fsrdc. Researchers requesting restricted Census Bureau data must follow the guidelines described below. Researchers requesting data from other agencies in the Federal Statistical RDC network should direct any questions about the process and associated fees to those agencies.

B. Census Project Review Standards

Research proposals submitted to CED for the use of confidential Census Bureau data are reviewed and judged against five major review standards that demonstrate:

- A benefit to Census Bureau programs conducted under Title 13;
- Scientific merit in that the research will contribute to existing knowledge;
- A clear need for non-public data;
- Feasibility of success; and
- Acceptance of all confidentiality protection and disclosure avoidance review requirements.

Each of the five standards is discussed in more detail below.

Standard 1 - Benefit to Census Bureau programs

Proposals must demonstrate that the research will provide benefits to data programs the Census Bureau conducts under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. Research proposals using only Title 13 data have to satisfy at least one of the 13 Census Bureau benefits documented in *Articulating the Title 13 Benefits of Census Bureau Projects (DS-002)*, dated May 22, 2018, and listed below. Census Bureau staff determine whether proposals using only Title 13 data provide adequate programmatic benefits.

Projects using Title 26 Federal Tax Information (FTI) face a stricter standard. They must demonstrate that the project's *predominant* purpose is to benefit Census Bureau programs authorized under Chapter 5 of Title 13 and they must satisfy at least one of the nine benefits numbered 5 through 13 below. These nine benefits are those agreed to by the Census Bureau

and the IRS in the *Agreement for the Review and Approval of US Census Projects that Use Federal Tax Information*, dated March 6, 2018. Census Bureau staff and IRS staff jointly determine whether the predominant purpose of a project proposing to use FTI is to benefit Census Bureau programs conducted under Title 13.

Articulating the Title 13 Benefits of Census Bureau Projects

1. Evaluating concepts and practices underlying Census Bureau statistical data collection and dissemination practices, including consideration of continued relevance and appropriateness of past Census Bureau procedures to changing economic and social circumstances;
2. Analyzing demographic and social or economic processes that affect Census Bureau programs, and that evaluate improvements to the quality of products issued by the Census Bureau;
3. Evaluating or analyzing public programs, public policy, and/or demographic, economic, or social conditions to identify potential complementary datasets, improve data quality, enhance data collection techniques or develop innovative estimate procedures;
4. Conducting or facilitating census and survey data collection, processing or dissemination, including through activities such as administrative support, information technology support, program oversight, or auditing under appropriate legal authority;
5. Understanding and/or improving the quality of data produced through a Title 13, Chapter 5 survey, census, or estimate;
6. Leading to new or improved methodology to collect, measure, or tabulate a Title 13, Chapter 5 survey, census, or estimate;
7. Enhancing the data collected in a Title 13, Chapter 5 survey or census. For example:
    a. Improving imputations for non-response;
    b. Developing links across time or entities for data gathered in censuses and surveys authorized by Title 13, Chapter 5;
8. Identifying the limitations of, or improving, the underlying Business Register, Master Address File, and industrial or geographic classification schemes used to collect the data;
9. Identifying shortcomings of current data, collection programs and/or documenting new data collection needs;
10. Constructing, verifying, or improving the sampling frame for a census or survey authorized under Title 13, Chapter 5;
11. Preparing estimates of population and characteristics of population as authorized under Title 13, Chapter 5;
12. Developing a methodology for estimating non-response to a census or survey authorized under Title 13, Chapter 5;
13. Developing statistical weights for a survey authorized under Title 13, Chapter 5.

Standard 2 - Scientific merit

Projects without scientific merit will not contribute to existing knowledge. Evidence that a federal-funding agency, such as the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health, using a peer review process, has approved a proposal for support meets this requirement. Proposals by graduate students to use Census Bureau data for a dissertation must include a statement by the student's advisor that the research methodology is appropriate for the proposed project and include the advisor as a co-principal investigator.

Standard 3 - Clear need for non-public data

The proposal must demonstrate the need for and importance of access to non-public data. The proposal also should explain why publicly available data sources are not sufficient to meet the proposal's objectives.

Standard 4 - Feasibility

The proposal must show that the research is likely to be conducted successfully using the proposed methodology and requested data.

Standard 5 - Risk of disclosure

The researchers must accept all confidentiality protection and disclosure avoidance review requirements, including strict limits concerning how much and how often intermediate output can be taken out of the RDC. Output from all research projects must undergo and pass disclosure avoidance review. Therefore, the proposal must describe the probable outputs so that the Census Bureau can assess the likelihood that such outputs will pass disclosure avoidance review. Note that:

- Employees of the Census Bureau and sworn temporary staff, including those sworn users of Title 13, United States Code, confidential data at an RDC, are required by law to protect the confidentiality of the data collected under its authorizing legislation, 13 U.S.C. Sections 9, 23(c). Wrongful disclosure of confidential Title 13 data is punishable by fine not exceeding $250,000 and/or imprisonment of no more than five years (cf. 13 U.S.C. Section 214; 18 U.S.C. Section 3571).
- Tabular and graphical output presents a higher risk of disclosing confidential information than do coefficients from statistical models. Except in unusual circumstances, RDCs are reserved for projects that involve statistical or econometric modeling using economic and demographic microdata. RDCs are neither equipped nor designed to supplement the Census Bureau's existing data program operations by producing large-scale special tabulations from confidential Census Bureau microdata.
- Some data files are collected under the sponsorship of other agencies. In providing restricted access to these data, the Census Bureaus must also adhere to all applicable laws and regulations under the sponsoring agency's authority. Researchers may be required to sign non-disclosure documents of survey sponsors or other agencies that provide data for their research projects.

See Section V. *F. (Research Products and Disclosure Avoidance)* for additional detailed information on disclosure avoidance policies and procedures.

C. Proposal Review and Approval Process for Census Projects

External Projects. Census Bureau staff (including experts on subject matter, datasets, and disclosure avoidance) review proposals. In addition, external experts may occasionally be requested to assist in proposal review. Proposals to use data collected by the Census Bureau on behalf of another agency must be approved by that agency as well. In addition, all proposals undergo a review by the Census Bureau's Policy Coordination Office for compliance with the Census Bureau's policies. Proposals that clearly do not fall within existing Census Bureau policy guidelines will be referred to the Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee for additional review. Relevant proposals must also abide by the requirements articulated in the *Administrative Data Acquisition, Access, and Use Policy (DS-001),* dated October 25,2016.

The Census Bureau will inform the researchers about the outcome of the review process, and include a review synopsis, an explanation for the decision, and anonymized copies of the expert reviews.

Internal Projects. Internal Census Bureau collaborative projects, that is, those that involve access to confidential Census Bureau data by both Census Bureau employees and Special Sworn Status employees, must meet the five review standards outlined above, whether they are carried out at an RDC or elsewhere at the Census Bureau. However, internal projects use a streamlined proposal review process. Internal projects must be submitted in the same manner as external proposals. The division chief of the Census Bureau division sponsoring the project must attest to Census Bureau program, project, and privacy benefits, feasibility, and acceptance of disclosure avoidance requirements. In addition, the sponsoring division must provide the following:

- Payment of RDC lab fees, if applicable;
- Any confidential data not yet available to the RDC network, along with associated documentation;
- Sufficient resources to store or process such data (if there are any unusual requirements of the proposed analysis); and
- Staff to assist the RDC researchers in their collaboration on this project, such as answering questions about the datasets, or assisting in disclosure avoidance review.

Review Outcome. Reviewed proposals, external and internal, receive one of two ratings:
• **Approved**. The proposal successfully addresses all of the review standards described above.

• **Not Approved**. The proposal fails to meet at least one review standard, and may be resubmitted as a new proposal after suitable revision.

D. Data Linkage

Proposals that link records to Census Bureau datasets must comply with the requirements of applicable Census Bureau policies and procedures, primarily *Data Linkage Policy (DS-014)* dated December 30, 2015, and *Administrative Data Acquisition, Access, and Use Policy (DS-001)* dated October 25, 2016. Projects proposing linkages may require approval of the Data Stewardship Executive

Policy Committee (if that class of linkages has not yet been approved). If the linkages involve non-Title 13 data or Title 13 data collected for another agency, they require approval of the agency that provides or funds the collection of such data. Note that projects that require handling administrative records, linking, or similar services will be charged for the costs of such work.

Personal identifiers must remain under the control of those Census Bureau employees who are permitted access to them, under strictly controlled circumstances. For approved projects requiring linked person or household records, one of three procedures will be followed:

> (1) The linked files, created by Census Bureau employees with access to personal identifiers, will be stripped of identifiers and made available at the RDC;
> (2) Census Bureau employees with access to personal identifiers will replace them with "Protected Identification Keys" (PIKs). The files with PIKs will be made available to researchers so that the researchers can carry out the link; or
> (3) Researchers will receive some files with PIKs replacing personal identifiers. For other files, Census Bureau employees with access to personal identifiers may create crosswalks between PIKs and the unique (but not personal) identifiers on the files at the RDC so that the researcher can carry out the linkage.

E. Data Availability

CED does not have, and does not expect to have, all past and present Census Bureau confidential (Title 13) data available for RDC researchers. Researchers requesting data not currently available must consult with the relevant RDC Administrator about the procedures to make such data available, which is not guaranteed, and which may involve paying the costs of data and metadata development.

For projects using non-Title 13 confidential data that the researcher provides, only unmodified input files may be returned to the researcher; no modified input files or resulting matched files will be available outside the RDC environment. Researchers bringing data to an RDC for their project must provide documentation to CED from the data producer that the researchers are permitted to use the data; the documentation should also describe any restrictions on the use of the data by the researcher or others.

Public-use versions of any dataset may be included in a research proposal. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain such files and make them available to CED (unless they are already available). Proprietary private datasets can also be included in research proposals provided the researchers provide evidence that the custodian of the data has approved their use by the researchers at an RDC and understands that linked versions cannot leave Census Bureau facilities. Researchers are not permitted simultaneous access to the confidential or linked versions and the public use version of the same dataset.

F. Research Products and Disclosure Avoidance

All research papers using Census Bureau data available only at an RDC must be submitted for inclusion in the Center for Economic Studies Discussion Paper series.

The primary form of output from RDC research projects using Census Bureau data consists of coefficients from various types of regression or other statistical modeling procedures, plus certain statistics derived from these coefficients. With few exceptions, such regression coefficients are considered safe for release because it is impossible to use the coefficients to reveal detailed information about individual respondents.

A second form of output consists of basic one- or two-dimensional tables of summary statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations). These tables are designed to give some basic information about the data that go into the analytical models; they are not the primary focus of the analysis. Most of these tabulations are safe because they are carried out at reasonably highly aggregated levels. Census Bureau employees perform primary and complementary disclosure avoidance analysis on these tabulations. If disclosure avoidance problems arise, the researcher is asked to collapse or suppress cells.

While disclosure avoidance review of regression statistics and the associated covariance matrixes and summary descriptive tables is relatively easy, it would be impractical for CED staff to review large, complex tabulations prior to removal from an RDC. Therefore, it is the Census Bureau's policy to limit the number and dimension of tabulations to be created at an RDC to those necessary to understand the statistical models' input data. If a researcher needs detailed custom tabulations, that person must contact the sponsoring Census Bureau division directly, and expect to be charged an extra fee for complex disclosure avoidance review requirements. All custom tabulations must comply with the requirements of the Census Bureau's *Policy on Providing Custom Tabulations under Section 8(b) of Title 13 U.S.C. (DS-021)*, dated August 20, 2015.

All research output is subject to disclosure avoidance analysis. However, because research papers and other such output generated from outside-funded research projects are not considered official Census Bureau data products, the Census Bureau does not impose its publication standards on researchers' output. Researchers are required to include a disclaimer to this effect on any papers or other publicly distributed output. The required disclaimer is worded as follows:

> Any opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the view of the U.S. Census Bureau. This research was carried out at a U.S. Federal Statistical Research Data Center facility [the location may be specified] under FSRDC Project Number FSRDCNNNN [enter your project number]. All results have been reviewed to ensure that no confidential information is disclosed.

Materials to be discussed at the meetings have been properly classified and are specifically authorized under criteria established by Executive Order 12958, 60 FR 19,825 (1995), to be kept secret in the interests of national defense and foreign policy.

Therefore, in accordance with section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Public Law No. 92–463, 86 Stat 770 (1972) (codified at 5 U.S.C. App. 2 510(a)(1)(1996)), I have determined that, because of the need to protect the secrecy of such national security matters, the meetings should be closed to the public.

This notice is being published less than 15 days before the first meeting day, in order to enable more Committee members to attend.

John D. Holum,

Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs and Director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

[FR Doc. 98–1657 Filed 1–20–98; 3:38 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

[Docket No. 971231318–7318–01]

Establishing New Research Data Centers (RDCs)

AGENCY: Bureau of the Census, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of program and request for proposals.

SUMMARY: This notice informs the public about the process and selection criteria available for establishing a limited number of new Research Data Centers (RDCs) at nonprofit organizations around the United States. Such organizations could include universities, nongovernmental research centers, and certain government facilities. The Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies has developed and put into practice the concept of RDCs. At RDCs, qualified researchers may have access to microdata from Census Bureau economic (business establishment and firm) and demographic (household and individual) surveys with appropriate safeguards to protect data confidentiality.

DATES: Proposals can be submitted for the National Science Foundation (NSF) winter 1998 proposal review cycle, with a proposal submission deadline of March 1, 1998. Thereafter, proposals will be accepted for the August 15 and January 15 review cycles until further notice.

ADDRESSES: Written proposals to establish new RDCs should be submitted formally to the Division of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research (SBER) at the NSF. Detailed information on proposal guidelines and review procedures is available on the NSF web site <http://www.nsf.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Arnold Reznek at (301) 457–1856 (areznek@census.gov), John Haltiwanger at (301) 457–1848 (jhaltiwa@census.gov), Cheryl Eavey (ceavey@nsf.gov), or Daniel Newlon (dnewlon@nsf.gov). Also see the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site (http://www.census.gov/ces/ces.html).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of the Census is prepared to enter into partnerships with universities, nongovernmental research centers, and certain government facilities to establish a limited number of new RDCs around the United States. Written proposals to establish new RDCs will be reviewed and evaluated jointly by the Census Bureau and the NSF.

The RDC program now operates pilot RDCs in Boston (in partnership with the National Bureau of Economic Research) and in Pittsburgh (in partnership with Carnegie Mellon University). The Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics also plan to establish a narrowly-focused RDC concerned with research using health data.

The RDC program has two major goals: (1) To use the results of the research carried out at the RDCs, and the contact between the Census Bureau and RDC researchers, to improve Census Bureau data programs, including data collection methodology and the underlying research microdatabases (benefit to the Census Bureau is required by the law authorizing the Census Bureau to enter into RDC arrangements, Title 15, United States Code, Section 1525); and (2) to promote academic research using microdata collected by the Census Bureau as part of its ongoing survey and census operations.

The Census Bureau data available at the RDCs would include both economic (business establishment and firm) data and demographic (household and individual) data collected in the Census Bureau's surveys and censuses. In particular cases, it may be possible to supplement these data with similar data from other governmental agencies.

A successful proposal from a research organization or a consortium of such organizations would have to demonstrate (1) the ability to work along with the Census Bureau to provide fair and objective access to researchers while protecting the confidentiality of the underlying microdata, (2) the existence of a regional research community of sufficient size and quality to yield high-quality research output, and (3) a sound plan for long-term funding that provides access to data users on a low-cost basis. The NSF's evaluation of the potential research output of proposed RDCs will be a key element in selection decisions.

The Census Bureau will enter into joint project Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with those organizations chosen by the evaluation process. The authority for the Census Bureau to enter into these MOUs is found in Title 15, United States Code, Section 1525.

Any MOU entered into under the authority of Title 15, United States Code, Section 1525 will include information relating to the mutual interest of the Census Bureau and its MOU partner(s) in establishing an RDC; the equitable apportionment of costs by the Census Bureau and its partner(s); the nonprofit status of the partner(s); and the mutuality of the benefit to be derived from the joint project.

RDC operations will emphasize the following elements: (1) A secure research computer laboratory (as certified by the Census Bureau) in which to store and use the data, (2) a research project selection and approval process carried out jointly with the Census Bureau, (3) at least one Census Bureau employee on-site to provide support and to help instill the Census Bureau's ''culture of confidentiality'' into the researchers at the RDC, (4) an executive director (or senior ''faculty advisor'') to act as a liaison between the local research community and the Census Bureau, and (5) an RDC review and oversight board to ensure efficient operation of the RDC, as well as fair and objective choice of projects at the RDC.

An overriding consideration in providing researchers with access to these data will be the need to protect the confidentiality of the underlying data pursuant to Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. In particular, prospective researchers will be required to submit detailed project descriptions that must be approved by both the RDC board and the Census Bureau. It is important to remember that RDCs are reserved for projects that involve statistical or econometric modeling using economic and demographic microdata. RDCs are neither equipped nor designed to supplement the Census

Bureau's existing data program operations by producing large-scale special tabulations from confidential Census Bureau microdata.

Once projects are approved, project researchers will be required to obtain Special Sworn Status from the Census Bureau. Obtaining this status requires researchers to undergo a security check, including fingerprinting. Researchers holding Special Sworn Status will be subject to the same criminal penalties as regular Census Bureau employees for disclosure of confidential information. (The penalties are a fine of up to $5,000, imprisonment for up to five years, or both.) Only persons with Special Sworn Status are allowed access to the RDC facility. Moreover, all research findings must be submitted to Census Bureau personnel for disclosure review prior to release to the public.

The estimate of the annual operating costs is $250,000 per year, with higher initial costs in the first year to equip the RDC. This estimate is based upon experience at the pilot RDCs and includes (1) costs at the RDC of equipment, software, space, and the salary of the Census Bureau employee stationed at the RDC, and (2) costs of supporting the RDC at Census Bureau headquarters.

RDCs must be self-financing, with funding coming from institutions, foundations, or state support. The NSF is prepared to provide seed money to assist in covering start-up costs associated with establishing RDCs. An organization proposing to establish an RDC can request from the NSF up to $100,000 per year for a three-year term to cover part of the start-up costs and annual operating costs associated with establishing the RDC. Determinations on these requests will be made by NSF.

RDCs may charge fees to researchers not supported by the NSF to help defray facilities costs. It is the goal of the NSF and the Census Bureau in establishing these centers that these fees will be kept low in order to promote widespread access to the data by the academic community, contingent on sufficient funding to cover annual operating costs. The NSF will continue to provide support through its regular grant competition for faculty time and graduate student assistance on individual research projects that use RDC facilities. NSF-funded individual research projects can be charged access fees once NSF institutional support has been phased out.

Proposals to establish RDCs must follow the standard NSF proposal format. They can be submitted for the NSF winter 1998 proposal review cycle, with a proposal submission deadline of March 1, 1998. Thereafter, proposals will be accepted for the August 15 and January 15 review cycles until further notice. The pace of expansion of RDCs will be limited by the capacity of the Census Bureau to provide adequate support and oversight. It is anticipated that up to four additional RDCs can be supported in the next two to three years.

Proposals should be formally submitted to the Division of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research (SBER) at the NSF. Detailed information on proposal guidelines and review procedures is available on the NSF web site <http://www.nsf.gov>. Proposals will be reviewed jointly by relevant peer review panels, including Economics; Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics; and Sociology. Final decisions will be made jointly by the Census Bureau and the NSF.

A detailed prospectus is available on the Census Bureau World Wide Web site (http://www.census.gov/ces/ces.html). The prospectus gives more information on the expected contents of the proposal and the expected roles of both the Census Bureau and its partners in RDC operations, including costs. For more information, contact Arnold Reznek at (301) 457–1856 (areznek@census.gov), John Haltiwanger at (301) 457–1848 (jhaltiwa@census.gov), Cheryl Eavey (ceavey@nsf.gov), or Daniel Newlon (dnewlon@nsf.gov). Those who do not have web access may contact Kim Austin at (301) 457–1848 (kaustin@census.gov) to obtain a paper copy of the prospectus.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The collection of information contained in the Notice is cleared under OMB Control Number 3145–0058.

It has been determined that this notice is not significant under Executive Order 12866.

Dated: January 12, 1998.

Bradford R. Huther,

Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, Bureau of the Census.

[FR Doc. 98–1504 Filed 1–21–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–07–P

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

Notice of Approval of Guidance Document on Lead in Consumer Products

AGENCY: Consumer Product Safety Commission.

ACTION: Notice of approval of guidance document on lead in consumer products.

SUMMARY: The Commission announces that it has approved a statement that provides guidance for manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers of consumer products that may contain lead.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Washburn, Office of Compliance, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207; telephone (301) 504–0400, ext. 1452.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The text of the guidance document is as follows:

Guidance for Lead (Pb) in Consumer Products

Summary

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issues this guidance to manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers to protect children from hazardous exposure to lead in consumer products.[1] The Commission identifies the major factors that it considers when evaluating products that contain lead, and informs the public of its experience with products that have exposed children to potentially hazardous amounts of lead.

To reduce the risk of hazardous exposure to lead, the Commission requests manufacturers to eliminate the use of lead that may be accessible to children from products used in or around households, schools, or in recreation. The Commission also recommends that, before purchasing products for resale, importers, distributors, and retailers obtain assurances from manufacturers that those products do not contain lead that may be accessible to children.

Hazard

Young children are most commonly exposed to lead in consumer products from the direct mouthing of objects, or from handling such objects and subsequent hand-to-mouth activity. The

[1] This guidance is not a rule. It is intended to highlight certain obligations under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. Companies should read that Act and the accompanying regulations at 16 CFR part 1500 for more detailed information.

Attachment B

The RDC partner may NOT ask for funding to make a subaward to the Census Bureau to pay for these costs. NSF can't use their funds to give money to another federal agency; legally, that's abrogating Congress' power to set appropriation levels.

Census RDC Five year Cost Estimate	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Total**	**Annual Average Cost**
Disclosure Services**	$ 6,000	$ 12,000	$ 18,000	$ 24,000	$ 24,000	$ 84,000	$ 16,800
Infrastructure Costs	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ -	$ -	$ 150,000	$ 30,000
RDC Administrator Gross Salary (internship version, 2nd year Ph.D. student)*	$ 42,053	$ 43,455	$ 51,440	$ 62,236	$ 64,311	$ 263,495	
Direct Amount	$ 34,904	$ 36,068	$ 42,695	$ 51,656	$ 53,378		
Overhead Rate on Direct Amount	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098		
Part-time	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		
Bottom range estimate	$ 36,613	$ 37,833	$ 44,785	$ 54,184	$ 55,991	$ 229,406	$ 45,881
Cost for Tuition Remission by university							
Cost for Health Insurance by university							
Grade Level	GS-7/1	GS-7/2	GS-9/1	GS-11/1	GS-11/2		
Appointment	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways		
RDC Administrator Gross Salary (standard version)*	$ 74,596	$ 77,082	$ 79,569	$ 82,056	$ 82,056	$ 395,359	
Direct Amount	$ 61,915	$ 63,978	$ 66,042	$ 68,106	$ 68,106		
Overhead Rate on Direct Amount	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098		
Fulltime	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		
Top Range estimate	$ 129,891	$ 134,220	$ 138,550	$ 142,881	$ 142,881	$ 688,422	$ 137,684
Grade Level	GS-12/1	GS-12/2	GS-12/3	GS-12/4	GS-12/4		
Appointment	Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 2	Permanent		
Estimated lower bound costs to Census	$ 92,613	$ 99,833	$ 112,785	$ 78,184	$ 79,991	$ 463,406	$ 92,681
Estimated upper bound costs to Census	$ 185,891	$ 196,220	$ 206,550	$ 166,881	$ 166,881	$ 922,422	$ 184,484

Pathways Internship Program - Education Level	**Salary**
2.95 GPA with BA/BS or 1 year of education at the graduate level	GS-7
2 years at the graduate level	GS-9
3 years of education towards Ph.D.	GS-11

*Reference: http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2019/RUS.pdf (RUS=Rest of US, use locality tables if applicable)

**Disclosure costs may be increased if an intern is hired as the RDC administrator

RDC Branch Five year Cost Estimate	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	Annual Average Cost
Disclosure Services, assumes equal share across TWO locations	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 60,000	$ 12,000
Supervisory Costs	$ 8,000	$ 8,000	$ 8,000	$ 8,000	$ 8,000	$ 40,000	$ 8,000
Travel Costs, may depend on distance of the branch to the primary site	$ 4,000	$ 4,000	$ 4,000	$ 4,000	$ 4,000	$ 20,000	$ 4,000
Equipment Replacement Fee		$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 12,000	$ 48,000	$ 9,600
Branch Fee	$ 100,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 100,000	$ 20,000
RDC Administrator Gross Salary (intern, 2nd year Ph.D. student)*	$ 42,053	$ 43,455	$ 51,440	$ 62,236	$ 64,311	$ 263,495	
Direct Amount	$ 34,904	$ 36,068	$ 42,695	$ 51,656	$ 53,378		
Overhead Rate on Direct Amount	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098		
Part-time	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		
Bottom range estimate	$ 36,613	$ 37,833	$ 44,785	$ 54,184	$ 55,991	$ 229,406	$ 45,881
Cost for Tuition Remission by university							
Cost for Health Insurance by university							
Grade Level	GS-7/1	GS-7/2	GS-9/1	GS-11/1	GS-11/2		
Appointment	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways		
RDC Administrator Gross Salary (standard version)*	$ 74,596	$ 77,082	$ 79,569	$ 82,056	$ 82,056	$ 395,359	
Direct Amount	$ 61,915	$ 63,978	$ 66,042	$ 68,106	$ 68,106		
Overhead Rate on Direct Amount	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098	2.098		
Fulltime	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		
Top Range estimate	$ 129,891	$ 134,220	$ 138,550	$ 142,881	$ 142,881	$ 688,422	$ 137,684
Grade Level	GS-12/1	GS-12/2	GS-12/3	GS-12/4	GS-12/4		
Appointment	Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 2	Permanent		
Estimated lower bound costs to Census	$ 160,613	$ 73,833	$ 80,785	$ 90,184	$ 91,991	$ 497,406	$ 99,481
Estimated upper bound costs to Census	$ 253,891	$ 170,220	$ 174,550	$ 178,881	$ 178,881	$ 956,422	$ 191,284

Pathways Internship Program - Education Level	Salary
2.95 GPA with BA/BS or 1 year of education at the graduate level	GS-7
2 years at the graduate level	GS-9
3 years of education towards Ph.D.	GS-11

*Reference: http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2019/RUS.pdf (RUS=Rest of US, **use locality tables if applicable**)

Attachment C

Date: December 4, 2013

Expectations for Ph.D. Students as Census Bureau Pathways Interns

CED's expectation is that the university and Census will work together to make the intern as well off as they would be as an RA/TA in terms of total hours worked, pay and benefits. This usually means that their 20 hours of work at the Census RDC is on par with standard TA or RA duties, and they will NOT be required to work additional hours for the university to maintain key benefits (e.g. tuition, stipend, health insurance). The Census Bureau has had a long-term relationship with Cornell University and the University of Maryland along these lines, but the details differ about how to meet our expectations. The details for each are below.

FYI - Pathways Internship Salaries (General Schedule (GS) varies across locations):

- GS-7 = Completion of 1 full year of education at the graduate level
- GS-9 = Completion of 2 years at the graduate level, or a master's degree
- GS-11(Research) = Master's degree
- GS-11(Non-research) = PhD

If the executive director cannot meet these expectations then the Census Bureau will not hire the intern. The requirement for keeping an intern is that they progress to higher grades based on their educational attainment as described above.

Cornell University (John Abowd)

The general principle is to have the Intern position match the arrangements of what Cornell calls a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA).

Tuition: Waiver provided by Cornell (Cornell does not have reduced tuition for Ph.D. students who have passed their candidacy exams. Tuition is currently $20,800/year, including summer.)

Health insurance: Paid by Abowd's research funds (In a Cornell GRA position, health insurance would be provided. Health insurance is currently approximately $1,950/year for a single student. Family coverage is optional and paid by the student.)

Work hours: In Ithaca, a maximum of 20 hours/week on Census duties, remaining hours (depending on GS level) on undirected research using confidential Census Bureau data. The total compensation is set to approximately match Cornell's standard 12-month graduate student stipend (approximately $27,500 in 2012-2013). In NYC or DC, the student may work full-time provided the Census supervisor agrees. Cornell does not allow students in Ithaca to work full-time. An exception is made for the RDC Admin when CED asks for that position to be full-time.

Supervision: John is always a member of the student's Ph.D. committee, usually the chair or co-chair. In this role, he functions as the student's GRA supervisor from Cornell's viewpoint.

There is a formal Census Bureau supervisor. For RDC Admins, the lead RDC admin assigns the supervisor.
Cornell requirement (imposed by John): At least one of the essays in the thesis must use the confidential Census Bureau data.

University of Maryland (John Haltiwanger)
Salary, Tuition, and Benefits: Students who are interns are half-time RAs at UMD providing them with half-time stipend, half tuition and full benefits.
Work hours: This along with a 15-20 hour a week position about matches a full time RA position. If it does not, grant funds from other sources are used to make them whole.

At UMD, they see the mutual benefits of the intern positions. These are students UMD would fund anyway and they have seen the skill development and quality of the dissertations that have emerged.