

United States Census Bureau

Invest Now to Keep Pace With Public Sector Data

Innovation Empowers Better Public Services

What Is the Census of Governments?

The Census of Governments is the most comprehensive, comparable, and price measure of government activity. It identifies the scope and nature of the nation's public sector and provides authoritative benchmarks figures of public finance, pensions, and employment. It classifies the complex and diverse state and local government organizations, powers, and activities, and measures federal, state, and local fiscal relationships.

With the release of each data product, the Census of Governments provides policy analysts, researchers, and the general public with a more complete and clear picture of the public sector. These data products present information to assist in addressing the issues that concern state and local governments and serve as the foundation for developing national economic and public policy.

The ongoing improvements will help the Census Bureau better meet the needs of our data users.

A More Efficient Census of Governments

Electronic data collection for more than 90,000 governments is scheduled to increase to 95 percent by 2017.

2012 60%

2017 95%

Data Collection by Type of Government

Cities and Townships 35,879

Independent school districts 12,880

Counties 3,031

Special districts 38,266

*Special districts included water districts, fire districts, mosquito abatement districts, and more.

Elements of an Efficient Census of Governments

1 More towards 100 percent electronic collection to reduce cost and increase efficiency.

2 Reduce respondent burden for state and local governments through localized data collection.

3 Automate operations to increase productivity

4 Improve data products to reflect the ever-changing public sector activity within the U.S. economy.

More Timely+Less Burden

Most Relevant View of the Public Sector

Census of Governments Timeline

Research and Testing Phase

2015

Research content

Develop collection strategy

2016

Develop electronic instruments

Begin respondent outreach

Begin survey mailout

2017 (Reduce the burden on government resources while maintaining data quality)

Continue data collection

Begin data processing

2018 (Provide policy-makers the right tools to make data-driven decisions.)

First Data Release: Government Units Survey.

Release State Government Tax Collections.

Release State Government Finances.

2019

Release Government Employment and Payroll

Release Government Finance- Public Pensions

Final Data Release: State and Local Government Finances.

Four Elements of an Innovation and Cost Effective Census of Governments

1 Moving Towards 100 Percent Electronic Collection to Reduce Cost and Increase Efficiency

What are we talking about?

Reducing reliance on paper processing.

Streamlining the way governments respond.

What are we researching and developing?

Partnering with state governments to expand data collection.

Expanding options for electronic data collection.

What are the intended outcomes?

Increase electronic reporting.

Improve response time.

Improve frame coverage and data quality.

Increase efficiency and reduce processing costs.

2 Reducing Respondent Burden for State and Localized Governments Through Customized Data Collection

What are we talking about?

Relying more on administrative records?

What are we researching and developing?

Collection data for many or all governments from a single state contact.

Collection data readily available by internal government accounting systems.

Collecting data for multiple surveys from a single state contact.

Using administrative data to reduced burden on governments.

What are the intended outcomes?

Reduce respondent burden.

Maintain or reduced costs.

Improve coverage and data quality.

More Timely + Less Burden

Most Relevant View of the Public Sector

3 Automating Operations to Increase Productivity

What are we talking about?

Using Census Bureau-wide solutions to increase productivity and reduce cost.

What are we researching and developing?

Integrating processing systems by using the Government Processing Interactivity Console (GPIC)

Developing a single delivery system for results by using the Center for Enterprise Dissemination Services and Consumer Innovation (CEDSCI) system.

Improving statistical methods for better coverage and data quality.

What are the intended outcomes?

Eliminate duplicate systems and processes

Increase productivity

Better allocate staff resources.

Enable users to combine Census of Government statistics with other information.

4 Improving Data Products to Reflect the Ever-Changing Public Sector Activity With the U.S. Economy

What are we talking about?

Updating content to reflect the changing public sector activity within the economy.

Disseminating more timely and relevant data.

What are we researching and developing?

Measuring new and dynamic government programs.

Finding ways to release data more quickly.

Better integrating more content across survey areas and programs.

Updating the official classification manual so that data content is captured more accurately.

What are the intended outcomes?

Provide the most accurate picture of our changing public sector of the economy?

Help users find better information to make data-driven decisions.

Improve relationships with all data users.

United States Census Bureau

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