

The State of Our Federal
Statistical Union:
*Challenges Continue, but Opportunities
Abound*

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The views expressed in this presentation do not represent changes in OMB policy.

Informed decisions require data

- Our democracy and economy demand unbiased, relevant, credible, and timely data.
- Current challenges provide the opportunity to strengthen, even reinvent, how the Federal statistical system provides official statistics.



A “perfect storm” for Federal statistics

- Budget constraints
- Human capital
- Confidentiality and privacy concerns
- Respondent cooperation
- “Casual” statistics offered by entrepreneurs



A “perfect storm” for Federal statistics

- Providers of official statistics may be tempted to resist these pressures, owing to concerns for data quality and confidentiality.
- Not an option if we are to meet our mandate and respond to the needs of our broadened user base.



Opportunities in every challenge

- It's an exciting time for the Federal statistical system!
- These challenges give us the incentive and policy support to try new things.
- By embracing these challenges, we can advance the system overall.



Commitment to evidence-based policy

- Examples:
 - Program Evaluation Initiative
 - Health Care Quality and Cost Effectiveness Initiative
 - Scientific Integrity Initiative



Insatiable appetite for information

- Visions of how to better use technology and data capture the public's imagination.
- The public wants data
 - in a form that is timely, transparent, and flexible
 - to make personal and business decisions
 - to inform public policy.



Think different(ly)

- We have thought of data as a product to be accessed and analyzed by trained professionals who offer their interpretations (often) through a peer review process.
- If data are thought of as a product *from and for the public* to use to make personal, business and public policy decisions, what would that mean to Federal statistical practice?



Salient timeless principles

- Relevance
- Practical utility
- Credibility
- Public trust
- Commitment to quality
- Wide dissemination



Try new things

- Explore “fitness for use,” to allocate resources to areas where high precision is necessary
- Explore use of administrative records to improve timeliness of data
- Facilitate transparency by creating metadata
- Harness innovative ways to make data available to users



New stakeholders

- Take advantage of the energy of this information age to reinvent how we collect, analyze, store, and disseminate data.
- Utilize this broader user group to bring expertise to augment and enhance the Federal statistical system.
- *A broader, more active user base can mean our value is more widely recognized.*





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