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COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL STATISTICS

*Principles and Practices for a
Federal Statistical Agency*

7th Edition

Brian Harris-Kojetin, Director CNSTAT

September 10, 2021

Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT)

- Founded in 1972 as recommendation from Presidential Commission on Federal Statistics
- Members are appointed by National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
 - Include statisticians, economists, methodologists, sociologists, computer scientists, etc.
- The mission of CNSTAT is to provide advice to the federal government and the nation grounded in the current best scientific knowledge and practice that will lead to improved statistical methods and information upon which to base public policy.

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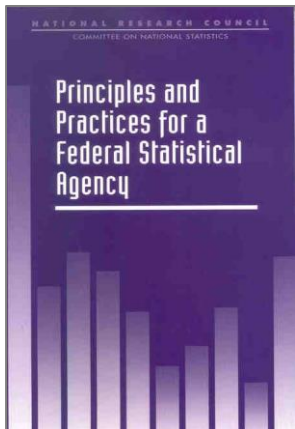
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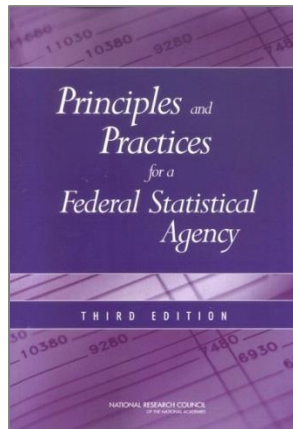
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“P&P” — The first Six Editions

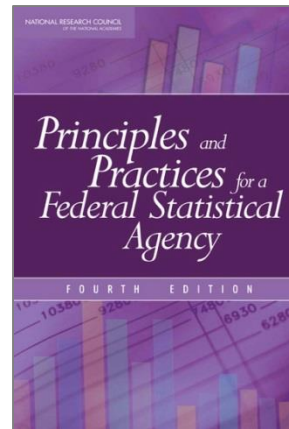
1992 — 27 pp.



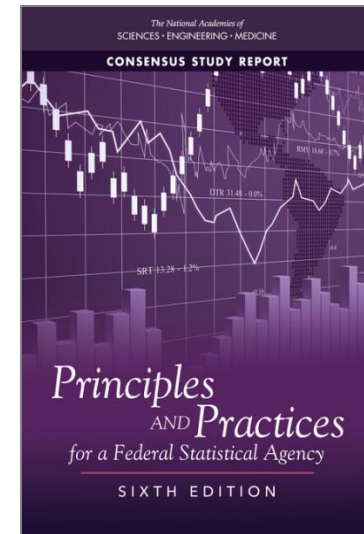
2005 — 66 pp.



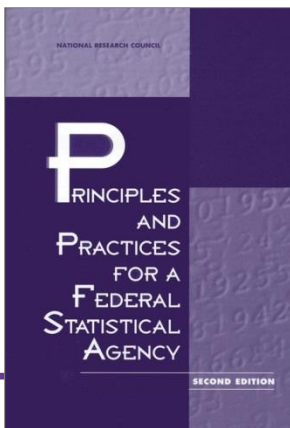
2009 — 123 pp.



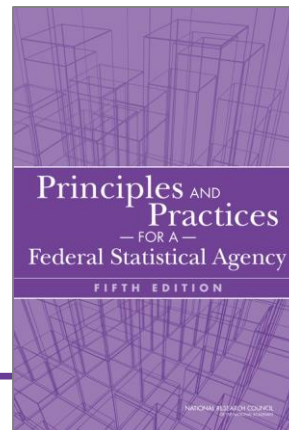
2017 — 156 pp.



2001 — 44 pp.



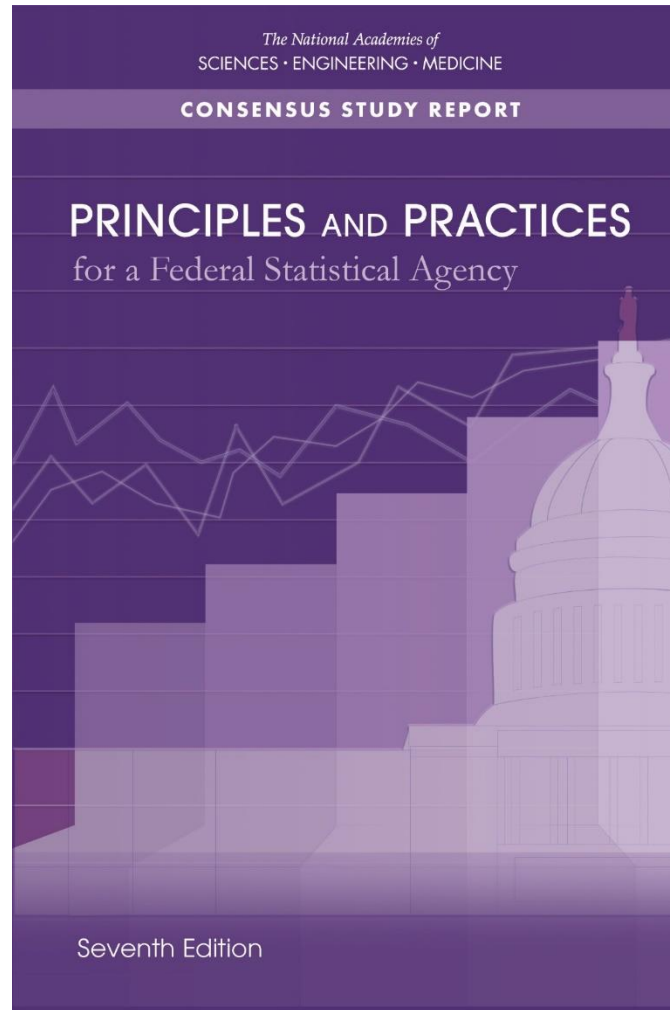
2013 — 166 pp.



Origins of the First Edition

- Congressional staff and cabinet departments inquired about what constitutes an effective statistical agency
- CNSTAT recognized that statistical agencies are sometimes confronted with inappropriate requests for confidential information or to put a policy spin on press releases of data
- Statistical agencies in our decentralized system must operate under policies and guidance of many departments of government and congressional committees, and not all officials are knowledgeable about proper practices for federal statistics
- Objectivity has been threatened at various agencies at various times

Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency, 7th Edition



INTRODUCTION

- THE VALUE OF NATIONAL STATISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES
 - How Statistical Information Powers Government and Policy-Making
 - The Costs and Benefits of Federal Statistics
 - Federal Statistics as a Public Good
- FEDERAL STATISTICAL AGENCIES AND UNITS
- THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL STATISTICS AND THIS REPORT

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: RELEVANCE TO POLICY ISSUES AND SOCIETY

Federal statistical agencies must provide objective, accurate, and timely information that is relevant to important public policy issues.

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 2: CREDIBILITY AMONG DATA USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Federal statistical agencies must have credibility with those who use their data and information.

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 3: TRUST AMONG THE PUBLIC AND DATA PROVIDERS

Federal statistical agencies must have the trust of those whose information they obtain.

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 4: INDEPENDENCE FROM POLITICAL AND OTHER UNDUE EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

Federal statistical agencies must be independent from political and other undue external influence in developing, producing, and disseminating statistics.

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 5: CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Federal statistical agencies must continually seek to improve and innovate their processes, methods, and statistical products to better measure an ever changing world.

Practices

1. A Clearly Defined and Well-Accepted Mission
2. Necessary Authority and Procedures to Protect Independence
3. Commitment to Quality and Professional Standards of Practice
4. Professional Advancement of Staff

Practices

5. An Active Research Program

6. Strong Internal and External Evaluation Processes for an Agency's Statistical Programs

7. Coordination and Collaboration with Other Statistical Agencies

Practices

8. Respect for Data Providers and Protection of Their Data

9. Dissemination of Statistical Products that Meet Users' Needs

10. Openness about Sources and Limitations of the Data Provided

Appendix A. Legislation and Regulations That Govern Federal Statistics

LEGAL AUTHORITY OF OMB OVER FEDERAL STATISTICS

OMB STATISTICAL POLICY DIRECTIVES

OMB GUIDANCE FOR SURVEYS, FEDERAL STATISTICS, AND EVIDENCE BUILDING

LAWS AND OMB GUIDANCE ON CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY PROTECTION

LAWS AND GUIDANCE RELATED TO INFORMATION QUALITY AND THE FEDERAL DATA STRATEGY

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON STATISTICAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

Appendix B. Organization of the Federal Statistical System

OVERVIEW

U.S. OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

PRINCIPAL STATISTICAL AGENCIES

OTHER AGENCIES WITH STATISTICAL OFFICIALS

OMB-RECOGNIZED STATISTICAL UNITS UNDER CIPSEA

Appendix C. Some International Frameworks Relevant for U.S. Federal Statistics

UNITED NATIONS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

THE COMMON QUALITY FRAMEWORK OF
THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR OECD
STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

UK CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

GENERIC STATISTICAL BUSINESS PROCESS
MODEL

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

for a Federal Statistical Agency, Edition 7

Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency is intended to support the invaluable role of widely available, trustworthy, relevant, accurate, and timely government statistics. The Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine developed these principles and practices and has refined and updated them periodically as part of its mission to provide an independent review of federal statistical activities. CNSTAT intends for its principles and practices to assist statistical agencies and units, as well as other agencies engaged in statistical activities, to carry out their responsibilities to provide accurate, timely, relevant, and objective information for public and policy use. It also intends this report to inform legislative and executive branch decision makers, data users, and others about the characteristics of statistical agencies that enable them to serve the public good.

FIVE PRINCIPLES

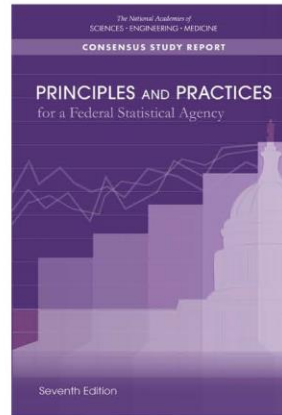
PRINCIPLE 1: Relevance to Policy Issues and Society: Federal statistical agencies must provide objective, accurate, and timely information that is relevant to important public policy issues.

PRINCIPLE 2: Credibility among Data Users and Stakeholders: Federal statistical agencies must have credibility with those who use their data and information.

PRINCIPLE 3: Trust among the Public and Data Providers: Federal statistical agencies must have the trust of those whose information they obtain.

PRINCIPLE 4: Independence from Political and Other Undue External Influence: Federal statistical agencies must be independent from political and other undue external influence in developing, producing, and disseminating statistics.

PRINCIPLE 5: Continual Improvement and Innovation: Federal statistical agencies must continually seek to improve and innovate their processes, methods, and statistical products to better measure an ever-changing world.



TEN PRACTICES

In order to fulfill these five principles, 10 practices are essential for statistical agencies to adopt:

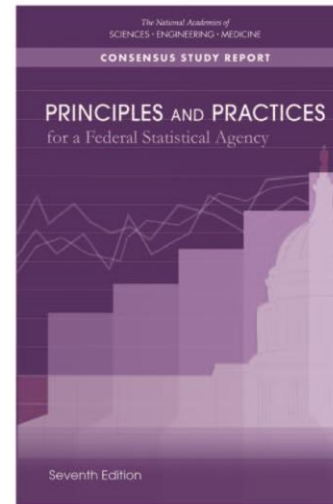
1. A Clearly Defined and Well-Accepted Mission
2. Necessary Authority and Procedures to Protect Independence
3. Commitment to Quality and Professional Standards of Practice
4. Professional Advancement of Staff
5. An Active Research Program
6. Strong Internal and External Evaluation Processes for an Agency's Statistical Programs
7. Coordination and Collaboration with Other Statistical Agencies
8. Respect for Data Providers and Protection of Their Data
9. Dissemination of Statistical Products That Meet Users' Needs
10. Openness About Sources and Limitations of the Data Provided



Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency, Edition 7

From its first edition in 1992 to this seventh edition, *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency* is intended to support the invaluable role of widely available, trustworthy, relevant, accurate, and timely government statistics. Such statistics are essential not only for policy makers and program administrators at all governmental levels, but also for individuals, households, businesses, and other organizations to make informed decisions and for scientists to add to knowledge. Even more broadly, the effective operation of a democratic system of government depends on the unhindered flow of impartial, scientifically based statistical information to its citizens on a wide range of issues, including employment, growth in the economy, the cost of living, crime victimization, family structure, physical and mental health, educational attainment, energy use, and the environment.

In the United States, more than a dozen federal statistical agencies, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau, are the entities whose principal function is to collect, compile, analyze, and disseminate information for such statistical uses as monitoring key economic and societal indicators, allocating legislative seats and government funds, evaluating programs, and conducting scientific research. Although statistical agencies provide objective and impartial information that informs policy makers, they should not advocate policies or take partisan positions that would undercut public trust and the credibility of the statistics they produce.



Interactive Resource

The screenshot shows a web browser window with two tabs: 'Meeting Information - Zoom' and 'Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency'. The address bar shows the URL: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/25885/interactive/>. The browser's taskbar at the bottom includes icons for Home, My Profile - Zoom, and Committee on National Statistics.

The webpage header features the logo for 'The National Academies of SCIENCES ENGINEERING MEDICINE' on the left and a navigation menu on the right with links for 'Value', 'Government & Policy-making', 'Agencies', 'Principles', 'Practices', and 'Get the Report'.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

for a Federal Statistical Agency

SEVENTH EDITION

This report is intended to support the invaluable role of widely available, trustworthy, relevant, accurate, and timely government statistics. **The publication and the information below draws on CNSTAT's many studies of specific statistical and research agencies, programs, and topics.** Previous editions have proven helpful to Congress, OMB, federal statistical agencies, and others about what constitutes an effective and credible statistics entity. Beginning with the second edition in 2001, CNSTAT has updated the document every four years to provide a current edition to newly appointed cabinet secretaries and other personnel at the beginning of each presidential administration or second term.

[↓ SCROLL DOWN TO LEARN MORE](#)

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar with the text 'Type here to search', several application icons (including Edge, File Explorer, Outlook, and PowerPoint), the system tray with weather information (76°F), and the date and time (10:48 AM, 9/8/2021).

Many Thanks to our Core Sponsors!!!

COMMERCE: BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

EDUCATION: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

ENERGY: ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

HHS: AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY, NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS, NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND EVALUATION

HUD: OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

DOJ: BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS

DOL: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

DOT: BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

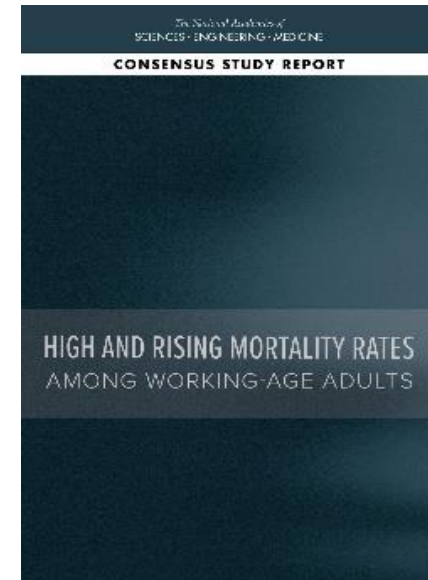
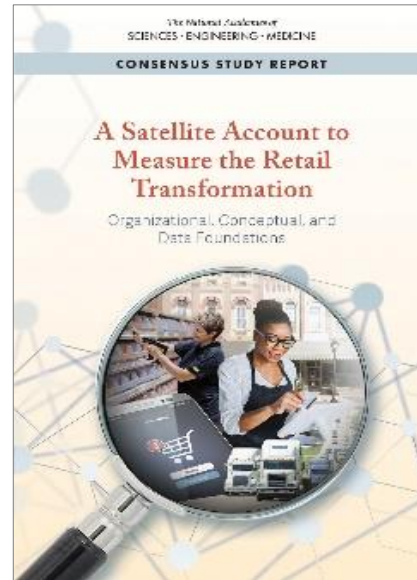
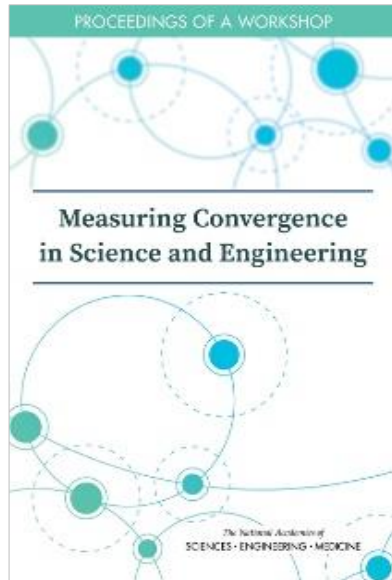
NSF: METHODOLOGY, MEASUREMENT, AND STATISTICS PROGRAM;
NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING STATISTICS |

SSA: OFFICE OF RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND STATISTICS

TREASURY: STATISTICS OF INCOME DIVISION, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

USDA: ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE, NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Recent and Forthcoming Reports



Coming Soon!

Transparency in Statistical Information for the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics and All Federal Statistical Agencies

Understanding the Aging Workforce and Employment at Older Ages

Thank You!

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CNSTAT Director bkojetin@nas.edu

Link to report and other resources:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/7th-edition-of-principles-and-practices-for-a-federal-statistical-agency>

CNSTAT Website

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