

ASA Endorses Sixth Edition of *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency*

World's largest community of statisticians commends National Academies for document supporting accurate, credible and timely government statistics

ALEXANDRIA, Va (August 25, 2017) – The American Statistical Association (ASA) Board of Directors endorsed the sixth edition of *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency* at its meeting during the 2017 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) earlier this month in Baltimore.

The publication is a project of the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), a standing unit of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council, and was first released in 1992 as a resource document, detailing the invaluable role of widely available, trustworthy, relevant, accurate and timely government statistics. With the emergence of big data, the book is just as relevant today for policymakers, educators, the business community and the general public—all of whom benefit from services, programs and funding developed from scientifically based statistical information.

“At a time when some individuals both in and out of government have questioned the legitimacy and validity of official statistics, this resource is a beacon for administration officials to create and manage a credible, independent federal statistical agency,” said ASA President Barry D. Nussbaum. “Although the public may not realize the myriad ways that statistics plays a role in daily life, citizens deserve impartial, objective and unbiased information. This book is a must read for anyone interested in learning about the functions of government entities tasked with compiling, analyzing and disseminating such information so that the public can better understand how and why policy decisions, calculations and scientific research are made.”

Principles and Practices has been widely cited and used by numerous federal agencies and the U.S. Congress. The Office of Management and Budget cites the book in its guidance, while the Government Accountability Office uses it as a benchmark in reports to the legislative branch. Further, federal statistical agencies use the publication to inform new appointees, advisory committee members, congressional staff and other interested parties about the critical function and role of an effective and credible statistical organization.

In the new edition, four established and fundamental principles of federal statistical agency decisions are featured and include the following:

- Relevance to policy issues
- Credibility among data issues
- Trust among data providers

-Independence from political and other undue external influence

Additionally, it highlights 13 practices that are critical for the effective, principled operation of a statistical agency. They are the following:

- A clearly defined and well-accepted mission
- Necessary authority to protect independence
- Use of multiple data sources for statistics that meet user needs
- Openness about sources and limitations of data provided
- Wide dissemination of accessible and easy-to-use data
- Cooperation with data users
- Respect for the privacy and autonomy of data providers
- Protection of the confidentiality of data providers' information
- Commitment to quality and professional standards of practice
- An active research program
- Professional advancement for staff
- A strong internal and external evaluation program
- Coordination and collaboration with other statistical agencies

Copies of *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency (Sixth Edition)* can be ordered online from The National Academies Press at www.nap.edu.

###

About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world's largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.

For more information:

Jill Talley
Public Relations Manager
(703) 684-1221, ext. 1865
jill@amstat.org