

Modernization and Reengineering of the Census of Governments

A focus on the Quarterly Tax Survey

presented at COPAFS

June 4, 2010

Disclaimer: This report is released to inform interested parties of research and to encourage discussion of work in progress. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Introduction to Governments Division

- Main Purposes of Governments Division Programs
 - Provide economic statistics about governments
 - Are the public counterpart to business, industry, and services economic data
 - Follow the activity of governments over time
- Response is Voluntary
- Virtually no Confidentiality Restrictions

Base Programs

- Census of Governments and related programs
 - Finance Data – revenues, expenditures, debt, & assets
 - Employment Data – number of employees & payroll
 - Organizational Data – number of governments & characters
- Oldest programs in Governments Division, often called the “base programs”

Base Programs

Frequency	Survey/Program	Data Available For:				Data Items Included
		US	State*	County*	Place	
Every 5 Years	Census of Governments	X	X	X	X	Number of Units, Employment, Finance
Annual	Annual Survey of Public Employment and Payroll	X	X	X	X	Employment, wages, etc.
	Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances	X	X		X	Revenue, expenditures, etc.
	Annual Survey of State Government Finances	X	X			Revenue, expenditures, etc.
	Consolidated Federal Funds Report	X	X	X		Federal expenditures, obligations, & contingent liabilities
	Federal Aid to States Report	X	X			Federal expenditures
	Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Survey	X	X	X	X	Revenue, expenditures, etc.
	State and Local Government Public-Employee Retirement System Survey	X	X	X	X	Contributions, assets, etc.
	State Government Tax Collections Survey	X	X			Tax revenue
Quarterly	Quarterly Public-Employee Retirement Systems Survey	X				Contributions, assets, etc.
	Quarterly Tax Survey	X	X			Tax revenue

Reimbursable Programs

- Because of Government's Division expertise in the public sector, we conduct surveys on behalf of other agencies
- Historically the surveys compliment the work of the base programs

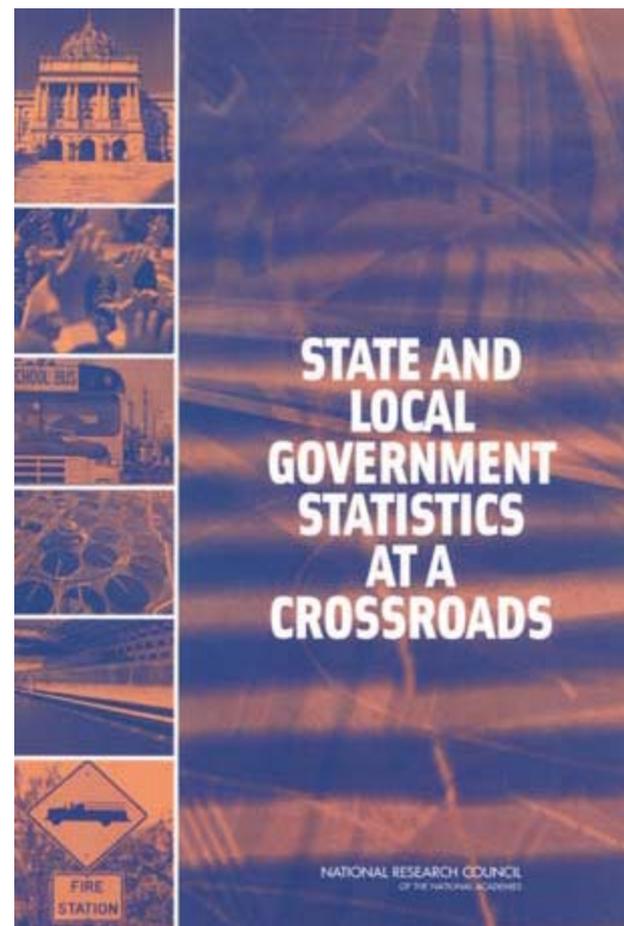
Reimbursable Programs

Frequency	Survey/Program	Data Available For:				Data Items Included	Sponsoring Agency
		US	State *	County *	Place		
Biennial	Academic Libraries Survey	X	X			Expenditures, staffing, circulation, etc.	NCES - (Dept of Education)
	Juvenile Residential Facility Census	X	X			Facility characteristics	OJJDP - (DOJ)
Annual	Annual Survey of Jails	X		X	X	Jails and inmates	BJS - (DOJ)
	Criminal Justice Expenditure and Employment Survey	X				Finance and employment	BJS - (DOJ)
	Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Health Insurance Cost Study	X	X	X	X	Health plans, premiums, benefits, and enrollment	AHRQ
	National Public Education Financial Survey	X	X	X	X	Revenue, expenditures	NCES - (Dept of Education)
	Non-fiscal surveys of the Common Core of Data	X	X			Directory, membership, teachers, staff, dropouts, graduates	NCES - (Dept of Education)
	State Library Agencies Survey	X	X			Expenditures, staffing, governance, etc.	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Quarterly	Federal Assistance Award Data System	X	X	X	X	Federal expenditures or obligations.	OMB

Modernization and Reengineering

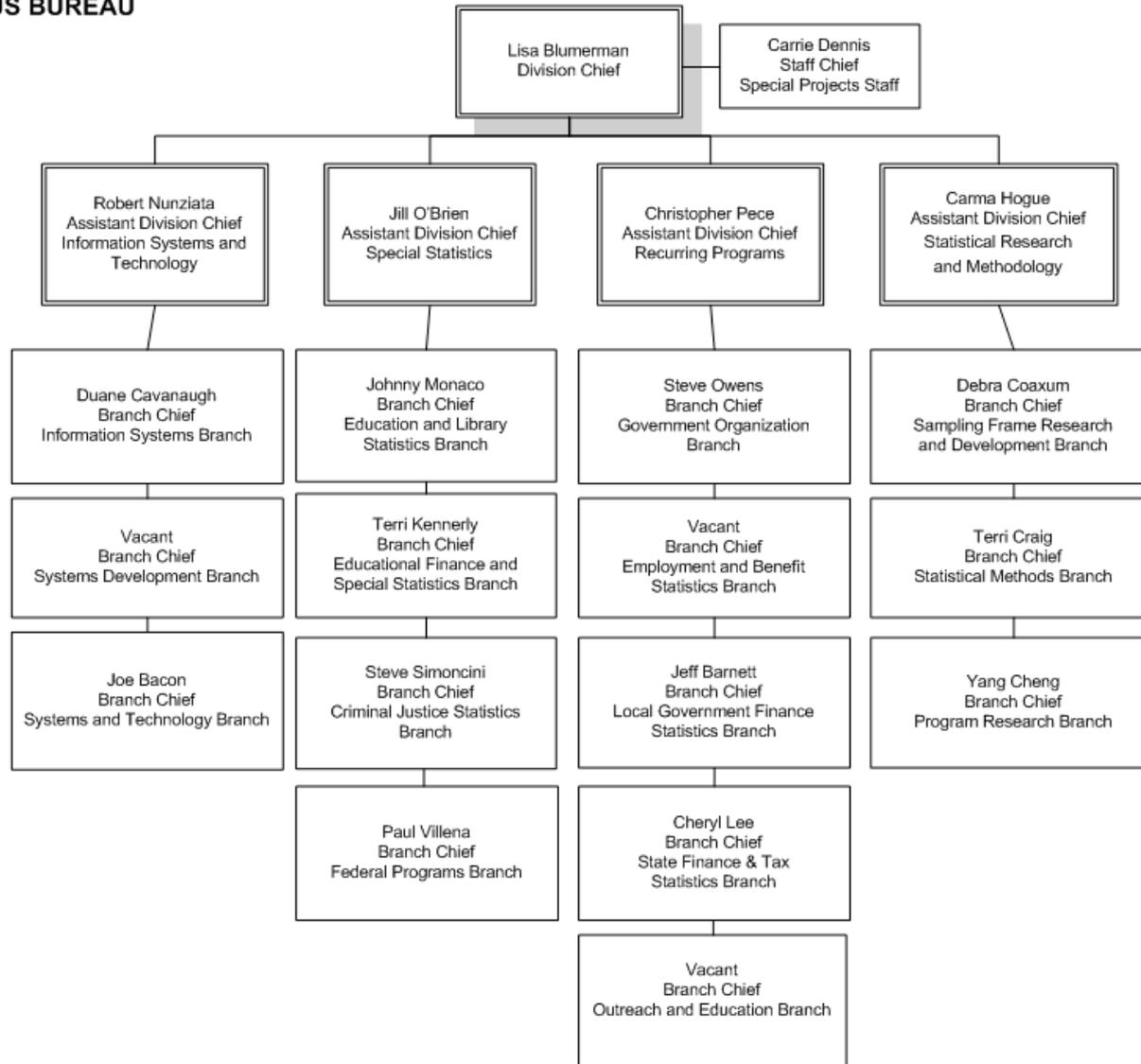
State and Local Government Statistics at a Crossroads

- 2007 report issued by the Committee on National Statistics (CNStat)
- Suggested 21 recommendations for improving existing programs
- Working toward addressing the majority of recommendations by the 2012 Census of Governments



**GOVERNMENTS DIVISION
US CENSUS BUREAU**

Updated:2/18/10



Modernization and Reengineering

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Modernization & Reengineering

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Census of Governments Modernization & Reengineering

In response to the 2007 [Committee on National Statistics](#) (CNSTAT) report (*State and Local Government Statistics at a Crossroads*), we have begun a major program reengineering effort with the goal of implementing the majority of changes by the 2012 Census of Governments. This program reengineering addresses all facets of the Census of Governments from content, to business analysis, to infrastructure, to dissemination and outreach. In recognition of the need to preserve the integrity of the historical data with the need for more relevant data, we have implemented a strategy to re-engineer our collections and processes while strengthening our relationships with our data users.

Data User Exchanges

In order to ensure the relevance and usability of our programs, the Governments Division has implemented a series of data user exchanges. These exchanges will begin with a series of five small workshops in the fall and winter and will culminate with a large data user workshop planned for the spring of 2010.

These exchanges will explore the varying needs of the data user community as we address potential changes to the content of the Census of Governments, and its related annual & quarterly programs.

Please select the workshop you will be attending:

Select a Data User Exchange

Research Program

Our research program addresses the research that is needed to improve the quality, timeliness, and relevance of the statistics on state and local governments. It chronicles known current and future research projects for the Census of Governments and related surveys as well as the known research needs of our sponsors. The program also establishes a research report series and addresses issues of developing mathematical statisticians and analysts.

[Governments Publications](#)

Process Modernization & Reengineering

Working in consultation with the MITRE Corporation, we completed an evaluation of our survey business process, corresponding infrastructure, and technology used to operate the Census of Governments.

Comments or Suggestions?
Please contact us by [email](#).

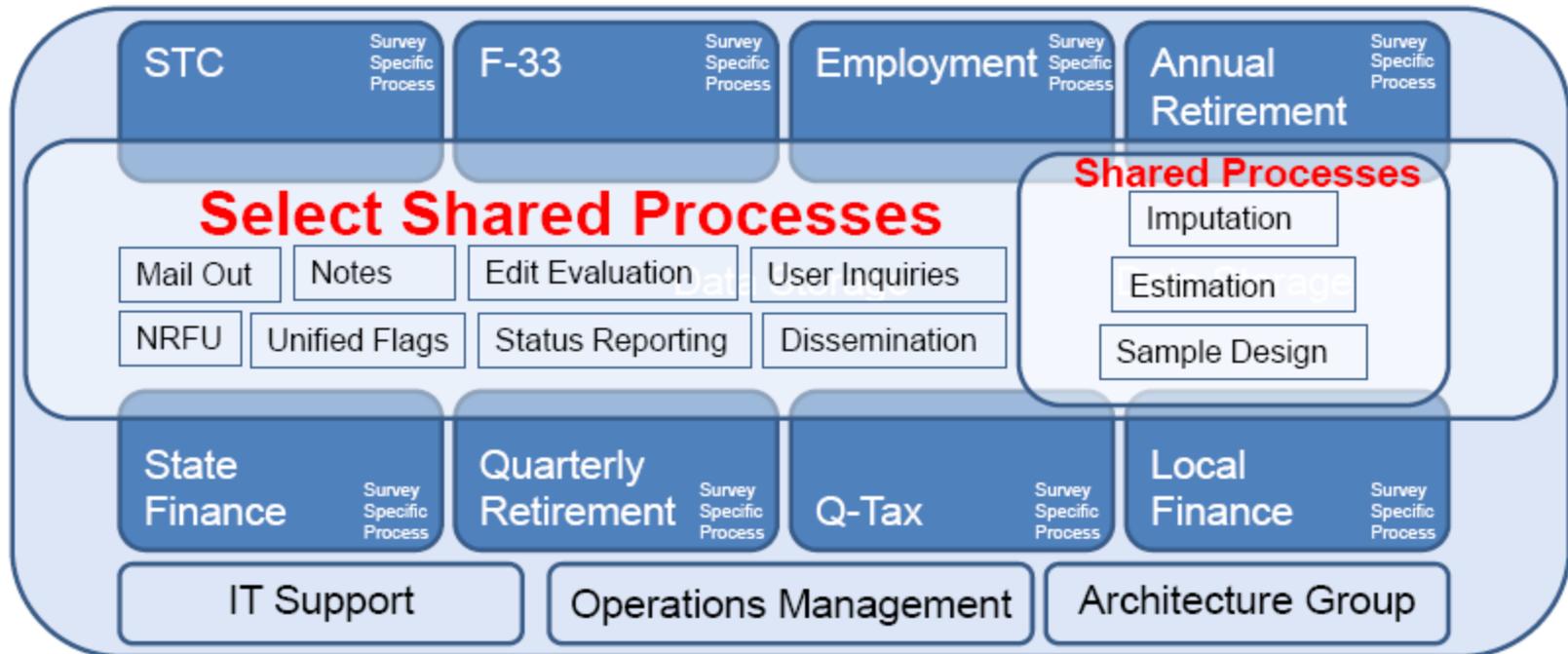
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Last Revised: September 25, 2009

Process Modernization and Reengineering



- Addresses all facets of the Census of Governments from content, to business analysis, to information technology infrastructure, to dissemination and outreach.
- Effort for the full system integration of the business processes and information technology to address program inefficiencies.

Research Program

- Research projects (sample design, dashboards, “design-based” estimation, small area estimation, nonresponse bias studies)

- Governments Division Report Series

– Available at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/govern.html>



- Training and development of staff through conference attendance, seminars, courses

Data User Workshops

- 6 Data User Workshops
 - 5 small exchanges in the fall and winter
 - 1 data user conference March, 2010
- Workshops explored the varying needs for data on government statistics, specifically:
 - research questions and data needs and uses;
 - identified government statistics data that are most useful;
 - identified additional data needs;
 - identified potential data quality issues; and
 - assisted in prioritizing future data needs.

Summary of CNSTAT Recommendations

CNStat Report Themes

- Data Quality, Relevance, and Utility
- Dissemination
- Timeliness

CNStat Theme: Data Quality, Relevance, and Utility

- Recommendations in Chapter 3: Get feedback from users
- Progress Update:
 - Increasing participation in user meetings
 - Series of focus groups with variety of data users in both the Federal statistical community and the private research community
 - Presentation to the Census Bureau's Professional Advisory Committee, April 22

CNStat Theme:

Data Quality, Relevance, and Utility

- Recommendations in Chapter 4: Conduct research on existing methods to identify efficiencies and improvements
- Progress Update:
 - Re-organized the division to develop an area devoted to research and methodology
 - **Redesigning all aspects of the Quarterly Tax survey (new sample for property tax is in its 5th quarter of production)**
 - Local Finance Central Collection Evaluation
 - Expanded the Annual Survey of Public-Employee Retirement Systems to collect additional information on defined contributions systems

CNStat Theme: Dissemination

- Recommendations in Chapter 5: Facilitate wider dissemination of products by issuing press releases; add value to existing data by providing simple derived measures; provide users with tools and documentation
- Progress Update:
 - Regular press releases began in October 2008 with the release of 2007 Census of Employment data
 - Introduction of quarterly surveys to “Tip Sheets” and planning on developing quarterly press releases
 - Introduced new analytical material to accompany releases
 - Availability through Build-A-Table and website redesign

Build-A-Table



There are three basic categories of data:

- **Level of Government:** State government data (all 50 states), local government data (county, special district, and school district data) or state and local government data combined.
- **State:** Data for a specific state or DC.
- **Government Function:** Data on a specific government function e.g., education, health, etc.

Please select which category you would like to base your table on. You must make one selection from one of the three basic categories.

Level of Government
 State

Next

Select category

U.S. Census Bureau
Public Employment and Payroll Build-a-Table

BACK to Build-a-Table Main

Please select the variables you would like the table to display

Year

2002 1997 Add All >> Add > < Remove << Remove All 2007

Variables

Full-Time Employees Add All >> Add > < Remove << Remove All Total Employees
Full-Time Pay
Part-Time Employees
Part-Time Pay
Total Pay
Full-Time Equivalent

Level of Government

State and All Local Add All >> Add > < Remove << Remove All State
All Local

Government Function

Add All >> Add > < Remove << Remove All
Total Education Total
Higher Education Instructional Employees
Elementary and Secondary Instructional Employees
All Other Elementary and Secondary Education

Submit

Select variables

U.S. Census Bureau
Public Employment and Payroll Build-a-Table

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 [Excel] or the letters [xls] indicate a document is in the Microsoft® Excel® Spreadsheet Format (XLS). To view the file, you will need the [Microsoft® Excel® Viewer](#) available for free from Microsoft®.

US Total Government Employment and Payroll Data
 By Level of Government and By Government Function: 2007
 SOURCE: The table was user generated from the Census Bureau's Build-a-Table tool with data from the [Census of Government Employment](#). For information about the data's sampling error, nonresponse error, and definitions, select the appropriate link.
 Note: Data is in whole numbers.

Function	2007 Total Employees
Total	5,201,871
Education Total	2,538,370
Higher Education Instructional Employees	768,228
All Other Higher Education	1,607,066
Elementary and Secondary Instructional Employees	45,622
All Other Elementary and Secondary Education	18,013
Other Education	99,441
Libraries	778
Public Welfare	239,834
Hospitals	444,148
Health	189,970
Social Insurance Administration	81,378
Highways	241,483
Air Transportation	3,443
Water Transport and Terminals	4,993
Police Protection Total	108,672
Police Officers Only	67,724
Other Police Employees	40,948
Fire Protection Total	N/A
Firefighters Only	N/A
Other Fire Employees	N/A
Corrections	475,022
Natural Resources	159,218
Parks and Recreation	40,725
Housing and Community Development	0
Sewerage	1,765
Solid Waste Management	1,975
Financial Administration	177,339
Judicial and Legal	177,423
Other Government Administration	61,811
Water Supply	721
Electric Power	4,073
Gas Supply	0
Transportation	0
State	0
All	0

 *N/A: Data is not applicable

Retrieve data

CNStat Theme: Dissemination

- Recommendations in Chapter 6: Stay engaged with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB); obtain status as member of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council (GASAC)
- Response:
 - GASAC membership obtained
 - Attune to changes in state and local government accounting practices and guidelines

CNStat Theme: Timeliness

- Recommendations in Chapter 5: Research the benefits/ costs of adopting earlier release procedures, i.e., releasing preliminary estimates or releasing estimates as they are compiled
- Progress Update:
 - Successful in moving up the release of several products
 - Some constraints due to data processing; are reviewing existing processes and methods to determine where efficiencies can be made

Progress on the Redesign of the Quarterly Tax Survey

CNSTAT Recommendation: 4 -11

Background: Quarterly Tax Survey

Provide estimates of state and local government tax revenues

- Collection began in 1962
- F71 - sample collecting local government ***property tax*** data
- F72 - census of state governments collecting ***state tax*** data
- F73 - panel collecting local government ***non-property tax***

F71 - Local Property Tax

- Stratified sample of county-areas
 - Estimated number of tax collectors
 - Population
 - Annual collection of property tax
- 609 county-areas selected into the sample containing 5,407 tax collectors; not imposers
- National estimate of local property tax collections

F71 - Improvements

- Processing five quarters of old and new sample, concurrently
- Redesigned imputation methodology
- Redesigned edits
- Redesigned estimation
- Coefficient of variations
- Bridge study

F73 - Non-Property Tax

- Currently panel of 111 local governments with significant non-property tax collection yields
- Local general sales tax and individual income tax collectors
- Other local taxes

F73 - Improvements

- Forms design through use of cognitive interviews
- Revised content to ensure relevance
 - New form will be expanded to cover 11 categories of taxes and licenses imposed by local governments
- Revised methodology
 - Sample tax imposers
 - Frame being developed based on 2007 Census of Governments

F72 - Improvements

- Redesigned edits
- Redesigned imputation methodology
- Comparison to annual tax survey
- Benchmarking

Next Steps on Quarterly Tax

- Estimates of property tax with CVs in Spring 2010
- Improved edit flags on state tax item imputes
- Regional estimates
- Classification Research for Hybrid Taxes
- Involvement from user community

Next Steps on Modernization and Reengineering

- Continued involvement with the user community
- Implementation of Quality Improvement Program – “QUIP Trips”
- Content review and determination for the 2012 Census of Governments
- Revitalized product line
- Modernized and then Reengineered Systems

Questions?

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For updated information on our efforts, please visit:

<http://harvester.census.gov/duw/>