Preface

The *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, published since 1878, is the standard summary of statistics on the social, political, and economic organization of the United States. It is designed to serve as a convenient volume for statistical reference and as a guide to other statistical publications and sources. The latter function is served by the introductory text to each section, the source note appearing below each table, and Appendix I, which comprises the Guide to Sources of Statistics, the Guide to State Statistical Abstracts, and the Guide to Foreign Statistical Abstracts.

This volume includes a selection of data from many statistical publications, both government and private. Publications cited as sources usually contain additional statistical detail and more comprehensive discussions of definitions and concepts than can be presented here. Data not available in publications issued by the contributing agency but obtained from unpublished records are identified in the source notes as unpublished data. More information on the subjects covered in the tables so noted may generally be obtained from the source.

Except as indicated, figures are for the United States as presently constituted. Although emphasis in the *Statistical Abstract* is primarily given to national data, many tables present data for regions and individual states and a smaller number for metropolitan areas and cities. Appendix II, Metropolitan Area Concepts and Components, presents explanatory text, a complete current listing and population data for metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), the primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs), and the consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs) defined as of June 30, 1999. Table 30, in Section 1, presents population numbers for MSAs with population of 250,000 or more. Statistics for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and for outlying areas of the United States are included in many state tables and are supplemented by information in Section 29.

Additional information for states, cities, counties, metropolitan areas, and other small units, as well as more historical data are available in various supplements to the *Abstract* (see inside back cover).

Statistics in this edition are generally for the most recent year or period available by summer 2002. Each year over 1,400 tables and charts are reviewed and evaluated; new tables and charts of current interest are added, continuing series are updated, and less timely data are condensed or eliminated. Text notes and appendices are revised as appropriate.

USA Statistics in Brief, a pocket-size pamphlet highlighting many statistical series in the *Abstract* is available and will be provided along with this edition. Additional copies can be obtained free from U.S. Census Bureau, Customer Service, Call Center, Washington, DC 20233 (telephone 301-763-INFO(4636). We attempt to update the pamphlet several times during the year. The latest data can be found on our Web site: <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/brief.html>.

Changes in this edition—This year we have added a new section which includes Census 2000 Sample Data. The 30 new tables in this section include data covering the educational attainment, disability status, ancestry of and language spoken at home by the resident population, as well as household income, poverty and selected housing characteristics. The layout of Appendix III has been revised. In this edition, Appendix III has been organized by the source agency and title of the survey rather than by section and table number in which the survey data appeared, as was the format in earlier editions.

In addition to the above, we have introduced 49 new tables throughout our core sections. These cover a variety of topics including unmarried households, state children's health insurance programs, limitation of activity level caused by chronic

conditions, characteristics of home-schooled students, computer use by children, firearm use offenders, home-based work and flexible schedules by workers, computer use in the workplace, employee benefits in private industry as well as computer and internet use. For a complete list of new tables see Appendix VI, p. 942.

Statistical Abstract on other media—The *Abstract* is available on the Internet and on CD-ROM, an enhanced version (except for a few copyrighted tables deleted by the request of source organizations). Our Internet site, <http://www.census.gov/statab/www>, contains this 2002 edition and earlier editions of the book, as well as— Statistics in Brief.

The CD-ROM version of the *Abstract* is also available. Information for the CD-ROM is located in the inside back cover.

Statistics for counties and cities—Extensive data for counties can be found in the *County and City Data Book: 2000*. It features 191 data items covering everything from age and agriculture to water use and wholesale trade for all states and counties with U.S. totals for comparison. Also included are 103 data items for cities with population of 25,000 or more. The primary sources are Census 2000 and the 1997 Economic Census. Two tables present 11 data items from Census 2000 for all places and MCDs with a population of 2,500 or more.

This publication, as well as selected rankings will be available on our Internet site at <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/ccdb.html>. Some data items that appear in the book from private sources are not available on the Internet or CD-ROM versions because we did not receive copyright permission to release the data items in these formats. For a database with over 5,000 county items, check out USA Counties at <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/county.html>.

Statistics for states and metropolitan areas—Extensive data for the states and metropolitan areas of the United States can be found in the *State and Metropolitan Area Data Book: 1997-98*.

This publication minus some data items, as well as selected rankings of the states and metropolitan areas, is available on our Internet site at <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/smadb.html>. The CD-ROM version is also available. See the inside back cover for more information.

Limitations of the data—The contents of this volume were taken from many sources. All data from either censuses and surveys or from administrative records are subject to error arising from a number of factors: Sampling variability (for statistics based on samples), reporting errors in the data for individual units, incomplete coverage, nonresponse, imputations, and processing error. (See also Appendix III, pp. 903.) The Census Bureau cannot accept the responsibility for the accuracy or limitations of the data presented here, other than those for which it collects. The responsibility for selection of the material and for proper presentation, however, rests with the Census Bureau.

For additional information on data presented—Please consult the source publications available in local libraries or write to the agency indicated in the source notes. Write to the Census Bureau only if it is cited as the source.

Suggestions and comments—Users of the Statistical Abstract and its supplements (see inside back cover) are urged to make their data needs known for consideration in planning future editions. Suggestions and comments for improving coverage and presentation of data should be sent to the Director, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233.