

U.S. Census Bureau

Procedure To Correct Census Bureau Information That Does Not Comply with Census Bureau Section 515 Information Quality Guidelines

General

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued government-wide guidelines at [67 FR 8452-8460](#) (February 22, 2002) that provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information, including statistical information, they disseminate. Agencies are required to issue their own implementing guidelines, including corrections procedures, and to make the guidelines available on individual agency websites. In accord with Public Law 106-554, "affected persons" (individuals or entities that use, benefit from, or are harmed by the disseminated information at issue) may seek to correct "information disseminated by the agency that does not comply with applicable information quality guidelines." To seek a correction of information maintained or disseminated by the Census Bureau that does not comply with all applicable information quality guidelines, the affected person should follow the procedure described below.

Census Bureau Contacts

The Census Bureau has many different statistical programs. Some of these have pre-existing procedures established to deal with correcting data; others do not. Below we first list the programs with pre-existing correction procedures, and then we describe the procedures that apply in all other circumstances. In all cases, if the complaint concerns an information quality guidelines violation, the affected person must include the name of the report, data set, or product and a detailed description of the information the affected person wishes to correct, including an explanation of how the information does not comply with applicable information quality guidelines. The complaint should include specific recommendations for how and why the information should be corrected, and show how he or she is affected by the information error. The complainant bears the burden of proof with respect to the necessity for correction as well as with respect to the type of correction sought. The affected person must provide his/her name, mailing address, telephone number, fax number (if any), e-mail address (if any), and organizational affiliation (if any).

In cases where the Census Bureau disseminates a study, analysis, or other information prior to the final Census Bureau information product, requests for correction will be considered prior to the final information product in those cases where the Census Bureau has determined that an earlier response would not unduly delay issuance of the information product and the complainant has shown a reasonable likelihood of suffering actual harm from the Census Bureau's dissemination if the Census Bureau does not resolve the complaint prior to the final information product.

1. The **Count Question Resolution Program (CQR)** is an administrative review program that handles external challenges to specific official Census 2000 counts of housing units and group quarters population received from state, local, or tribal officials of governmental entities or their designated representatives in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The program began on June 30, 2001 and will be terminated on September 30, 2003. CQR corrects identified errors in boundaries, assignment of addresses or geographic locations, and/or processing errors. Certified corrected population and/or housing units counts are provided to the appropriate officials, as necessary. Governmental units challenging the completeness or accuracy of the Census 2000 counts must contact the Census Bureau directly in writing or by electronic mail to initiate the Count Question Resolution process. Information about the types of correction requests acceptable for CQR submission, and the supporting evidence required, can be found at <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/CQR.htm>. Requests should be directed to the U.S. Census Bureau, Count Question Resolution Program, Decennial Management Division (Robert A. Rinaldi), Room 2002/SFC-2, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233-7100. The email address is Count.Question.Resolution@census.gov. The phone number is 301-457-4444. The fax number is 301-457-0260.

2. The **Local Update of Census Addresses Program** (LUCA) is a partnership program established by Congress through the enactment of Public Law 103-430 (The Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994). This Act amends Title 13, United States Code, to improve the accuracy of census address lists, by adding Section 16 to Chapter 1. Section 16 directs the Secretary of Commerce to assist efforts to ensure the accuracy of censuses and surveys by publishing standards defining the content and structure of address information which local units of general purpose government may submit to be used in developing a national address list; develop and publish a timetable for the Census Bureau to receive, review, and respond to submissions of information before the decennial census data; and provide for a response by the Census Bureau with respect to submissions in which the Census Bureau specifies its determinations regarding such information and the reasons for such determinations. In addition, the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB, acting through the Chief Statistician and in consultation with the Census Bureau, shall develop an appeals process for those local units of general purpose government which desire to appeal determinations of the Census Bureau. Appeals under the process must be resolved before the decennial census date, and this process will begin as we approach 2010. Officials who are designated as census liaisons by a local unit of general purpose government are provided with access to census address information for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the address information and must be provided with an explanation of duties and obligations concerning confidentiality as defined under section 9 of title 13. Requests should be directed to the U.S. Census Bureau, Address List Review Branch, Geography Division (Alfred H. Pfeiffer), Room WP1-307, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233-7400. The e-mail address is luca@geo.census.gov. The phone number is 301-457-8630. The fax number is 301-457-4710. More information can be found at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/luca/home.html>.
3. Various Census Bureau products available on the Internet display the **Governmental Unit Boundaries** of states, counties, incorporated places, county subdivisions, American Indian areas, Alaska Native areas, and Hawaiian home lands. These boundaries are collected through the Census Bureau's Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) which contacts the highest elected official (or designee) for annexations and detachments. The boundaries shown on Census Bureau maps and in Census Bureau geographic products are for Census Bureau statistical data collection and tabulation purposes only; their depiction and designation for statistical purposes does not constitute a determination of jurisdictional authority or rights of ownership or entitlement. To seek a correction of this information, the affected person should contact the office of the highest elected official. The highest elected official (or designee) should contact the Census Bureau using the BAS toll-free number to obtain the necessary forms and maps to report the correction, or they may report the correction when responding to the next BAS. The affected individual also should send an email message to the Census Bureau at tiger515@geo.census.gov providing the following documentation: contact information; description of the information to correct; and specific recommendations for how and why the information should be corrected. The Census Bureau will ascertain if the entity provides the correction in the next BAS, and report to the affected person whether or not the correction was received.
4. Various Census Bureau products available on the Internet, including the *American FactFinder*, the Census 2000 Block Maps, and the TIGER/Line files, contain or display information on visible features such as roads, railroads, and hydrography, and associated attributes such as **Street and Address Range Information**. To seek a correction of feature and attribute information, affected individuals should provide the following documentation: contact information; description of the information to correct, including the state and county name and a description of the error; and specific recommendations for how and why the information should be corrected, preferably on a map, to the Census Bureau's regional office responsible for maintenance of the geographic database for the area, Attention: Geographic Coordinator. The contact information, including a description of the geographic coverage for each regional office, is available at <http://www.census.gov/field/www/>. The affected person should also send an email to tiger515@geo.census.gov describing the error.
5. The **Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program** (SAIPE) produces estimates of median household income for states and counties, and poverty for states, counties, and school districts. These estimates are based on statistical models that use decennial census data, household surveys, administrative data, and population estimates. These estimates may be corrected if funding allocations of federal agencies have not been made on the basis of data

previously issued. Otherwise, corrections will be incorporated at the next available opportunity. If you have questions about the data as published, please contact the Small Area Estimates Branch, at 301-763-3182, or by e-mail at SAIPE@census.gov. Requests for corrections may be submitted in writing to Dr. Daniel Weinberg, Chief, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233-8500, via facsimile to 301-457-3248, via email to SAIPE@census.gov, or via the SAIPE Internet site, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe.html>. So that we may fully investigate your concern, please include the following information with your request for consideration: 1) what specific estimate you feel is incorrect, 2) the reason(s) you feel the estimate is incorrect, and 3) any supporting evidence for your concern.

6. The Census Bureau prepares **Annual Estimates of the Total Population** for states, counties and all other units of general purpose government. While it is the policy of the Census Bureau to provide the most accurate population estimates that it can produce, as specified under the provisions of Title 15, The Code of Federal Regulations, Part 90, it is also the policy of the Census Bureau to provide states and units of local government the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of the estimates and to present evidence supporting their challenge. These provisions provide for an informal challenge process to reach consensus. In the event that the challenge cannot be resolved informally, the regulations outline a more formal process that includes providing a personalized challenge package to the affected person. Contact Population Division (Signe Wetrogan), U.S. Census Bureau, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233-8800. The email address is pop@census.gov. The phone number is 301-763-2093 and the fax number is 301-457-2644. More information can be found at <http://eire.census.gov/popest/estimates.php>.
7. The Census Bureau's Foreign Trade Division compiles and publishes the official U.S. **Foreign Trade Statistics**. Occasionally data users may challenge the accuracy of specific import or export statistics. Data users requesting a re-verification of recently released trade statistics should submit a formal written request to Commodity Analysis Branch of the Foreign Trade Division. The request should include the Harmonized Commodity Classification Code; for imports this is the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) number and for exports it is the Schedule B number. The request should also include the reason for requesting re-verification. All requests for data review should specify the specific month(s) or year in question. If the inquiry is restricted to trade with specific countries, the countries must be specified. The reason why a review of the data is being requested (value, quantity, unit price, country, etc.) should also be specified. All requests should be directed to the Chief of the Commodity Analysis Branch. Requests can be sent via facsimile at 301-457-1158, e-mailed to Paul.E.Herrick@census.gov or mailed to: Chief, Commodity Analysis Branch, Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233-6700.
8. **All Other Requests** for correction of information, or further information on this process, must be submitted to the Associate Director for Methodology and Standards (Cynthia Z. F. Clark) at quality@census.gov. The phone number is 301-763-2160. The fax number is 301 457-1902. The mailing address is: Associate Director for Methodology and Standards (Dr. Cynthia Z. F. Clark), Attn:Census Bureau Quality Policy, U.S. Census Bureau, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington DC 20233-9000.

For correction requests directed to the Associate Director for Methodology and Standards, the affected person must include his/her name, mailing address, telephone number, fax number (if any), e-mail address (if any), and organizational affiliation (if any). The complaint must include the name of the report, data set, or product and a detailed description of the information the affected person wishes to correct, including an explanation of how the information does not comply with applicable information quality guidelines. The complaint should include specific recommendations for how and why the information should be corrected, and show how he or she is affected by the information error. Requests for correction that are specific and provide evidence to support the need for correction will be more persuasive than requests for correction that are general and unfocused. Supporting documentary evidence, such as comparable data or research results on the same topic, will help the Census Bureau evaluate the merits of the request. The complainant bears the burden of proof with respect to the necessity for correction as well as with respect to the type of correction sought.

Based on the explanation and evidence submitted, the Census Bureau will review the information

being challenged, the processes that were used to create and disseminate it, and how it conforms to the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines and all applicable DOC and OMB Information Quality Guidelines. After its review, the Census Bureau will determine whether a correction is warranted, and, if so, what action to take. Any corrective action, and the timeframe for taking this action, will be determined by the nature and timeliness of the information involved and such factors as the significance of the error on the use of the information, and the magnitude of the error. Corrective actions will vary from immediate correction or replacement of information on the Census Bureau website (<http://www.census.gov/>), to revision of subsequent issues of recurring products, to issuance of errata for printed reports and other data products. The Census Bureau will provide the public with timely notification of any information the Census Bureau intends to correct.

Timing

The Census Bureau will respond in writing to the affected person within 60 days of receiving the complaint. The Census Bureau does not have to respond substantively to requests that concern information not covered by the guidelines or from a person whom the information does not affect. If the Census Bureau has completed its review, the response will explain the process that the Census Bureau followed in its review of the complaint, and the findings of the review. If correction is warranted, the response will include a progress report, and a subsequent letter will be sent when the correction action is complete. If correction is not warranted, the Census Bureau will explain that a correction will not be made, and why.

If the Census Bureau has not completed its review, the response will notify the affected person that a review is underway, and provide an expected completion date. When the review is complete the Census Bureau will again contact the affected person in writing, and explain the process that the Census Bureau followed in its review of the complaint, and the findings of the review. If correction is warranted, the response will include a progress report, and a subsequent letter will be sent when the correction action is complete. If correction is not warranted, the Census Bureau will explain that a correction will not be made, and why.

Appeals

If the affected person wishes to appeal the Census Bureau response, he or she should provide in writing a justification supporting the appeal that responds as specifically as possible to the reasons the Census Bureau gives in rejecting the initial request for correction. The appeals process, when not separately defined in the programs listed above, will be managed by a panel determined by the Associate Director for Methodology and Standards. Appeals must be initiated within 30 calendar days of the date of the initial decision, and must be submitted to the Associate Director for Methodology and Standards (Dr. Cynthia Z. F. Clark), Attn: Census Bureau Quality Policy, U.S. Census Bureau, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Washington DC 20233-9000. The Census Bureau will respond to all requests for appeals within 60 days of receipt. If the request requires more than 60 days to resolve, the Census Bureau will inform the complainant that more time is required and indicate the reason why and an estimated decision date.

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