

Date: 31 December 2015

To: Timothy Johnson, Chair. AAPOR Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee
CC: Mollyann Brodie, President, American Association for Public Opinion Research

From: Jonaki Bose, Chair. Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM)

Subject: Commitment to Transparency in Federal Surveys

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is an interagency committee dedicated to improving the quality of Federal statistics. The Committee has noted with interest the establishment of AAPOR's "Transparency Initiative." The Committee wishes to underscore that the federal statistical community shares the value of scientific openness that is the aim of the Association's Initiative. We thought that bringing some of our community's key transparency-related documents to your attention might be informative as you continue to develop your initiative.

Broadly speaking, Federal surveys are guided by [OMB Statistical Policy Directive No. 1, *Fundamental Responsibilities of Federal Statistical Agencies and Recognized Statistical Units*](#)¹. Building from established Federal guidance, and with reference to complementary international agreements, this Directive provides a framework that promotes trust among Federal statistical agencies, data providers, and data users. The Directive affirms the responsibility of Federal statistical agencies and recognized statistical units to conduct credible, accurate, and objective statistical activities, and to make information available on an "equitable, policy neutral, transparent, timely, and punctual basis."

[OMB Statistical Policy Directive No. 2, *Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys*](#)², provides specific guidance on all aspects of the survey process. Section 7.3 of this document emphasizes disclosure of methodological information, and cites FCSM Working Paper No. 31, on *Measuring and Reporting Sources of Error in Surveys*³.

In addition, OMB Statistical Policy Directive Number 3, *Compilation, Release and Evaluation of Principal Federal Economic Indicators*⁴ and Number 4, *Release and Dissemination of Statistical Products Produced by Federal Statistical Agencies*⁵ are "...designed to preserve and enhance the objectivity and transparency, in fact and in perception, of the processes used to release and disseminate the statistical products of Federal statistical agencies."

Federal surveys are also guided by the government-wide Information Quality Act *Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal*

¹ *Federal Register*. Volume 79. No. 231. December 2, 2014. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-02/pdf/2014-28326.pdf>

² https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/inforeg/statpolicy/standards_stat_surveys.pdf

³ <http://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/files/2014/04/spwp31.pdf>

⁴ *Federal Register*. Volume 50. No. 186. September 25, 1985.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/inforeg/statpolicy/dir_3_fr_09_251985.pdf

⁵ *Federal Register*. Vol. 73, No. 46. 2008.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2008/030708_directive-4.pdf

*Agencies*⁶ . Finally, transparency is an important component of the Committee's own *Statement of Commitment to Scientific Integrity*⁷.

We are pleased to acquaint you with these references and hope that you will find them useful. Please feel free to disseminate this information as you see fit.

⁶ Federal Register. Volume 67. No. 36. February 22, 2002.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/reproducible2.pdf>

⁷ <http://fcs.m.sites.usa.gov/files/2014/03/ScientificIntegrity.pdf>