



## ***Subcommittee on Updating Statistical Methods for Safeguarding Protected Data***

### **1. OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Subcommittee on Updating Statistical Methods for Safeguarding Protected Data (Subcommittee) is to revise and expand Statistical Policy Working Paper #22 (SPWP22) "[Report on Statistical Disclosure Limitation Methodology](#)" (rev. 2005), to reflect current understanding of the need to protect confidentiality and the risks of re-identification in federal data, recent developments in the knowledge and practice of statistical disclosure limitation by federal agencies, and the varieties of tiered data access mechanisms in use by the statistical system. The Subcommittee will also curate, develop, and deploy automated tools, templates, and other resources to an SPWP22 companion website. These online tools will enable agencies across government to improve their implementations of statistical disclosure limitation and secure/tiered data access.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

Federal agencies, both within and outside the statistical system, collect large amounts of confidential data about individuals, businesses, and other organizations. Agencies have both a legal and ethical obligation to protect the confidentiality of these data, but they also have an obligation to make these data available, to the maximum extent possible, for uses that would benefit society at large. SPWP22 explores the challenges of navigating the countervailing obligations of providing meaningful access to data for research, evaluation, and evidence-based policymaking, while simultaneously protecting the confidentiality of the individuals and organizations from (or about) whom the data were collected.

Since it was first drafted in 1994, and since its revision in 2005, SPWP22 has been the principal resource for federal agencies and others regarding the mechanisms agencies can use to protect confidentiality while promoting data access.

### **3. SCOPE AND APPROACH**

FCSM subcommittees are established to explore some particular aspect of statistical methodology and produce a specific product within a set period of time. Products may include reports, working papers, guidance, or recommendations. This FCSM Subcommittee will be responsible for revising SPWP22, building on the work of the previous versions, while expanding and updating the document to reflect new statistical techniques for protecting confidentiality, emerging technical solutions to data access, and revised agency policies and procedures.

The Subcommittee will also develop resources to assist agencies with implementing the techniques discussed in SPWP22, including, but not limited to, checklists, risk frameworks, templates, etc. The Subcommittee may establish sub-groups to work on individual sections of SPWP22, and to develop resources to supplement the paper. In addition, the Subcommittee may hold workshops, roundtables, or other convening's of federal and/or non-federal experts to discuss topics reflected in SPWP22. The Subcommittee may also coordinate with other groups that are convening events on statistical disclosure limitation, re-identification risk, and/or tiered data access models.

### **4. PROPOSED DELIVERABLES AND DATES**



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Within 30 days of the Subcommittee’s creation, the FCSM SPWP22 Subcommittee chair will submit a project plan with key milestones and proposed deadlines for completing the group’s work to the FCSM.

The Subcommittee will develop an annual report describing the progress toward meeting its objective, including work products addressed in “Scope and Approach.” This annual report will be submitted to the chair/co-chairs of the FCSM, for inclusion in a report to the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy and to the U.S. Chief Statistician.

**5. SPONSOR**

This FCSM Subcommittee serves under the auspices of the FCSM and is subject to direction from it. There must be regular contact with FCSM through an FCSM Member serving as chair/co-chair of the subcommittee, to be determined at the discretion of the FCSM co-chairs.

The Subcommittee will operate in close consultation with, but independent from, the standing FCSM Confidentiality and Data Access Committee (CDAC).

**6. COMMUNICATIONS**

The chair/co-chair of the Subcommittee will liaise with FCSM, providing regular, informal status reports to the sponsor.

The Subcommittee will decide how frequently it wishes to convene. It will use the MAX Federal Community, particularly FCSM’s child page, as a way to communicate and to document materials.

**7. GROUP MEMBERS**

Membership of FCSM subcommittees may be solicited from staff within statistical agencies or programs, or allied areas, by OMB or may consist entirely of FCSM members. Leadership of the FCSM Subcommittee will be composed of a Chair and a Steering Committee.

FCSM, at its discretion, may replace the Subcommittee Chair or any member of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will select individuals from across the Federal government to join specific project teams, based on expertise.

**8. FCSM CHAIR/CO-CHAIRS SIGNATURES**

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
John Eltinge		4/26/2019
Shelly Martinez		4/22/19