

## American Statistical Association Endorses Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency

**ALEXANDRIA, VA, April 30, 2009** – At a recent meeting of the American Statistical Association (ASA) Board of Directors, the directors voted to endorse *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency (P&P), Fourth Edition*. The publication is a project of the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), a standing unit of the National Academy of Sciences, which issued the first edition in 1992.

“*Principles and Practices* is the authoritative guide for federal statistical agencies,” said Sally Morton, ASA president and CNSTAT member. “It builds on years of experience observing, advising and interacting with the federal statistical agencies and represents a great wealth of accumulated wisdom. The endorsement of the ASA board signals our strong support of the federal statistical agencies, and we will utilize *P&P* to provide guidance for ASA’s science policy initiatives.”

*P&P* was developed in response to requests that CNSTAT provide advice on what constitutes an effective federal statistical agency. Second and third editions of the publication were issued in 2001 and 2005, respectively, updating the document to provide current editions to newly appointed cabinet secretaries at the beginning of each presidential administration. The fourth edition was published early this year. *P&P* has been widely cited and used by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. General Accountability Office, and many federal agencies.

In the new edition, CNSTAT presents and comments on four basic principles that statistical agencies must employ to successfully carry out their mission:

- (1) They must produce objective data that are relevant to policy issues,
- (2) they must achieve and maintain credibility among data users,
- (3) they must achieve and maintain trust among data providers, and
- (4) they must achieve and maintain a strong position of independence from the appearance and reality of political control. Principle #4 was added for the 2009 fourth edition to underscore the need for statistical agencies to control their programs so that they can be impartial and trusted by all.

The book also discusses 11 important practices that enable statistical agencies to live up to the four principles. These practices include a commitment to quality and professional practice and an active program of methodological and substantive research.

*Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency, Fourth Edition* is available from The National Academies Press at <http://www.nap.edu>.

### About the American Statistical Association

The American Statistical Association (ASA), the nation’s preeminent statistical society is a scientific and educational society founded in Boston in 1839. It is the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For more than 160 years, ASA has been providing its 18,000 members serving in academia, government, and industry and the public with up-to-date, useful information about statistics. The ASA has a proud tradition of service to statisticians, quantitative scientists, and users of statistics across a wealth of academic areas and applications. For additional information about the American

Statistical Association, please visit the association's web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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