

# Introduction to the Wisconsin Census Research Data Center

## *Health Projects*

Rachelle Hill, PhD  
Administrator, MnRDC  
Center for Economic Studies  
U.S. Census Bureau

*November 26, 2014*

# Overview

- Introduction to the Census Research Data Centers
- Data
- Getting Access
  - NCHS
  - AHRQ
  - Census
- Research Environment
- Disclosure
- Timeline

# What is the RDC?

- Census-run facility
- Approved researchers with approved projects can access data that is not publicly available
  - Census
  - NCHS
  - AHRQ
- To be located in Sewell Social Sciences

# Why use the RDC?

- Only microdata samples available (MEPS-IC)
- Lower levels of geography
- NCHS data linkages
  - Mortality
  - Medicare Claims
  - Social Security Benefits
- Greater detail in variables
  - Race
  - Disease codes
  - Industry and occupation codes

# Available Data

- Census Data:
  - MEPS-IC
  - Demographic and household data
    - [Decennial](#) and [ACS](#)
    - [American Housing Survey \(AHS\)](#)
    - [Current Population Survey \(CPS\)](#) – March and December Supplements Only
    - [Survey of Income and Program Participation \(SIPP\)](#)
    - [National Longitudinal Survey \(NLS\)](#)
    - [NCVS](#)

# Available Data

- AHRQ
  - MEPS-HC
- NCHS
  - [National Health Interview Survey \(NHIS\)](#)
  - [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey \(NHANES\)](#)
  - [National Survey of Family Growth \(NSFG\)](#)
  - [National Vital Statistics System \(NVSS\)](#)
  - [National Health Care Surveys](#) – NAMCS, NHAMCS, NHDS, NNHS, NNAS, NSRCF, NSLTCP

# Linking Possibilities

- Internal data with PIKs
  - Both surveys and administrative data
- External data CAN be linked
  - Unique individual identifiers (e.g. SSN, name, address)
  - Variables contained in both datasets (e.g. geography)

# Research from the MnRDC



- Jean Abraham and Anne Beeson Royalty
  - Recently approved
  - MEPS-IC
  - How the provision of employer health insurance and employment outcomes are changing following the implementation of ACA.



# Getting Access

# NCHS Application Process

- Determine need for data
- Determine mode for accessing data (WI RDC)
- Prepare proposal for the agency
  1. Defined research question
  2. Identified needed restricted variables
  3. Access disclosure risk
  4. Mode of access
- Submit proposal to agency and wait for comments

# AHRQ Application Process

- Contact the AHRQ Data Center manager
- Prepare proposal for the agency
- Submit proposal to agency and wait for comments
  
- Criteria
  - Feasibility
  - Risk of Disclosure
  - Supporting resources for the researcher
  - Fits the mission of AHRQ

# Notes about NCHS and AHRQ projects

- Fees for applying, merging, and technical assistance
- Relatively quick timeline
- Work directly with the agency and assigned analyst

# Census Application Process

e.g. MEPS-IC, ACS, Decennial, etc.

- Identify need for data
  - [www.census.gov/ces/](http://www.census.gov/ces/)
- Contact the RDC administrator
  - Preliminary proposal
  - 2-page summary
- Proposal and PPS
- Census (and additional agency) review

# Census Proposals

- Abstract
- Description of the project
  - Introduction
  - Background/literature
  - Methods
  - Plans for disclosure and disclosure risk
  - Timeline and RDC usage needs
- PPS (aka Benefits statement)

# Notes about Census Proposals

- Laws govern use of data (Title 13 and Title 26)
  - No IRB - No informed consent - Mandatory participation
- Plan ahead
  - At least 6 months to a year to get access
- Work with the RDC Administrator
- Written for a data expert rather than a content expert
- 15 pages single spaced or 30 pages double spaced

# Special Sworn Status

- Off-line paperwork and documentation
- On-line trainings and certifications
- Background check
  - Submitted online and followed with interview
    - Residential history
    - Foreign travel
    - Education and employment history
    - References
- Fingerprinting



# Research Environment

# Working Environment

- All work must be completed in the RDC lab
- Computing environment
  - Preliminary output viewed in the RDC
  - No internet access
  - Unix environment
  - Software: SAS, Stata, R, Matlab (others may be available)
- NCHS researchers must work when administrator is on duty

# Disclosure Processes

- No output can leave RDC without review
- Plan ahead
- Performed by RDCA or the agency disclosure officer
  - Review process worked out in proposal stage
    - Turn around generally 1-2 weeks but plan for 3-4 weeks (Census)
  - Descriptive data can be problematic

# Next steps

# Expected Timeline

- Lab expected to open summer 2015
- Begin developing projects now
  - NCHS and AHRQ
    - Become familiar with data
    - Contact agency and develop proposal
  - Census
    - Check out [www.census.gov/ces/](http://www.census.gov/ces/)
    - Contact me
    - Begin working on proposal
- Following approval, submit application for SSS

# How to contact me?

- Email: [rachelle.hill@census.gov](mailto:rachelle.hill@census.gov)
- Phone: 612-626-4365
- Schedule: Monday - Thursday & every other Friday
  - Maternity leave
    - 6 weeks off (early March through mid April)
    - 6 weeks reduced schedule (10 hours per week, mid April through late May)
- Meetings:
  - Plan to visit at least once more before March

# Additional Slides

# Predominant Purpose Statement (1)

1. Evaluating concepts and practices underlying Census Bureau statistical data collection and dissemination practices, including consideration of continued relevance and appropriateness of past Census Bureau procedures to changing economic and social circumstances
2. Analyzing demographic and social or economic processes that affect Census Bureau programs, especially those that evaluate or hold promise of improving the quality of products issued by the Census Bureau
3. Developing means of increasing the utility of Census Bureau data for analyzing public programs, public policy, and/or demographic, economic, or social conditions
4. Conducting or facilitating census and survey data collection, processing or dissemination, including through activities such as administrative support, information technology support, program oversight, or auditing under appropriate legal authority

\*Demographic projects only



# Predominant Purpose Statement (2)

5. Understanding and/or improving the quality of data
6. Leading to new or improved methodology to collect, measure, or tabulate a Title 13, Chapter 5 survey, census, or estimate
7. Enhancing the data collected
  - Improving imputations for non-response
  - Developing links across time or entities for data
8. Identifying the limitations of, or improving, the underlying Business Register, Master Address File, and industrial and geographical classification schemes used to collect the data
9. Identifying shortcomings of current data, collection programs and/or documenting new data collection needs
10. Constructing, verifying, or improving the sampling frame
11. Preparing estimates of population and characteristics of population
12. Developing a methodology for estimating non-response
13. Developing statistical weights