

- 1.1 Purpose.** This chapter establishes the policy for reviewing and substantiating the quality (including the objectivity, utility, and integrity) of information (including statistical information) Indian Affairs (IA) disseminates. See 10 IAM 6 for policy on addressing public requests for correction and reporting requirements of the requests received.
- 1.2 Scope.** This policy applies to all functions under the authority of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (AS-IA), including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) (collectively, “Indian Affairs (IA)”). This policy applies to all information disseminated by IA, including information that IA receives from tribal governments or tribal organizations operating IA programs under grants, contracts or compacts (including but not limited to those authorized by the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, as amended (25 U.S.C. 450 *et seq.*)) and thereafter disseminates.

This policy is intended only to improve the internal management of IA relating to information quality. Nothing herein is intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its offices, or any other person. This policy does not provide any right to judicial review.

**1.3 Policy.**

**A. Standards of Quality.** All information disseminated by IA must comply with basic standards of quality to ensure and maximize its objectivity, utility, and integrity. IA will:

- Ensure information quality at each stage of information development;
- Develop information only from reliable data sources based on accepted practices and policies, using accepted methods for information collection and verification;
- Make IA’s methods for producing information transparent, to the maximum extent practicable, through accurate documentation, use of appropriate internal and external review procedures, consultation with experts and users, and verification of its quality;
- Ensure that methods for producing information are reproducible to the extent possible; and
- Inform the public about corrections and revisions.

**B. Application of Information Quality Standards to Consultants and Contractors.**

IA acquires much of the scientific information it disseminates through scientific activities conducted by personnel in consultation with and under contract to IA (including tribal contracts, compacts or grants). In instances in which IA personnel have developed the disseminated information, that information will be developed under scientific standards that ensure its quality. IA will also apply its information quality standards to parties who are developing scientific and technical information on its behalf.

- C. Internal Review.** To the greatest extent practicable and appropriate, information is internally reviewed for quality (objectivity, utility and integrity) before it is disseminated. The level of internal quality review applied in any particular case depends on the nature, scope and purpose of the information to be disseminated and the proposed/potential audience. Information intended as the basis for more complicated budgeting decisions or legislative reporting purposes may be subject to additional levels of internal review, clarification, or approval.
- D. Dissemination of Information.** The decision to make information publicly available does not override other compelling interests such as privacy, trade secrets, intellectual property rights, the federal Indian trust responsibility, and other confidentiality protections established by law.
- E. Application and Documentation of Information Quality Checks.** In situations where the public will not be provided full access to the data or methodology, IA shall still apply and document information quality checks.
- F. Information Quality Web Site.** IA will keep the public informed by publishing timely information about information quality on a designated information quality Web site. The purpose of the information quality site is to inform the public about IA's information quality practices and procedures. The information quality site will include IA's information quality guidelines and, under 10 IAM 6, procedures regarding both requests for correction and administrative appeals of responses to requests for correction. The information quality site may contain other types of information which will be determined based on mission, activities subject to the guidelines, and the expected level of interest by the public.

#### 1.4 Authority.

- A. DOI Information Quality Guidelines** establish policy to ensure and maximize the objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated to the public by the Department of the Interior ("Department"). These guidelines implement the **Information Quality Act (P.L. 106-554 Section 515)** and associated Office of Management and Budget (**OMB Guidelines (67 FR 8452-8460)**).
- B. The Federal Records Act (44 U.S.C. 3101)** requires the head of each federal agency to make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures and essential transactions of the agency. The records should be designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities.
- C.** The Public Information section of the **Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 552)** requires that the following information be made available to the public: descriptions of the organization, where and how information and decisions can be secured, what

and how functions are performed, what requirements must be met to get benefits or service, and what procedures must be followed.

- D. Provisions of the **Federal Information Resources Management** regulations (**41 CFR 201**), and **Departmental Manual 381 DM 1** require that IA provide proper documentation of its organization, functions, policies, and procedures.
- E. **Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d)** requires Federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public.

### 1.5 Information Specifically Not Subject to These Guidelines for Quality of Disseminated Information.

- A. **Internet Hyperlinks and Referenced Information.** Internet hyperlinks and references to information disseminated by others.
- B. **Opinions.** Opinions where IA's presentation makes it clear that what is being offered is someone's opinion rather than fact or Indian Affairs' views.
- C. **Press Releases.** Press releases, fact sheets, press conferences or similar communications in any medium that announce, support the announcement, or give public notice of information IA has disseminated elsewhere.
- D. **Public Filings.** Information in public filings (such as public comments received by Indian Affairs in rulemaking proceedings or on a National Environmental Policy Act document), except where IA distributes information submitted by a third party in a manner that suggests that IA endorses or adopts the information, or indicates in its distribution that it is using or proposing to use the information to formulate or support a regulation, guidance, or other IA decision or position.
- E. **Research Findings.** Dissemination of information by an agency employee or contractor (including tribes acting under contracts, compacts, or grants) through publication or communication in the same manner as their academic colleagues, as long as the publication or communication does not imply official agency endorsement of the views or findings.
- F. **Testimony and Other Submissions to Congress.** Information presented or submitted to Congress which is simultaneously disseminated or previously disseminated to the public.
- G. **Inadvertent or Unauthorized Disclosure of Information Intended Only for Inter-agency and Intra-agency Use or Communication.** Documents in working form that are generated in day-to-day internal conduct of IA and other government business.
- H. **Correspondence with Individuals.** An exchange of information between two individuals is not considered to be dissemination.

- I. Records Covered by Other Laws.** Responses to requests for IA records under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act or similar laws.
- J. Archived Records and Information Disseminated Prior to the Effective Date of This Policy.** Archived records of information disseminated and subsequently archived are exempt from the Guidelines.
- K. Subpoenas.**
- L. Adjudicative processes.** Information intended to be limited to adjudicative processes, including information developed during the conduct of any criminal or civil action or administrative enforcement action, investigation or audit against specific parties, or information distributed in documents related to any formal or informal administrative action determining the rights and liabilities of specific parties under applicable statutes and regulations.
- M. Solicitations.** Solicitations such as program announcements and requests for proposals.

**1.6 Responsibilities.**

**A. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)** is responsible for coordinating with AS-IA Office Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors to collect information for publication on the Web site and for publishing the information quality guidelines and other information required under this chapter on the Web site.

**B. AS-IA Office Directors, Bureau Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors** are responsible for ensuring that information meets standards of quality and receives the appropriate level of internal review for quality, prior to dissemination. AS-IA Office Directors, Deputy Bureau Directors, and Regional Directors are also responsible for determining when compelling interests exist to justify not disseminating information, for ensuring that their staffs apply and document information quality checks, and ensuring that their staffs provide relevant information to the OCIO for publication on the Web site.

**1.7 Related Guidance.** The OMB Guidelines and DOI Information Quality Guidelines are incorporated herein by reference. IA definitions of information quality are consistent with OMB and Department guidelines.

**1.8 Definitions.** The definitions stated in 10 IAM 1 are incorporated herein by reference.