

will immediately benefit the public at little to no cost. The Department therefore finds good cause to waive the public notice and comment period under 553(b)(B) and to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness under 553(d).

B. Executive Orders 12866, 14192, 13132

The Office of Management and Budget has determined this rule is not significant pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 12866. This rule is an E.O. 14192 deregulatory action. This rule does not contain policies having federalism implications as the term is defined in E.O. 13132.

C. Regulatory Flexibility Act

Because a notice of proposed rulemaking and an opportunity for public participation are not required to be given for this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are not applicable. Accordingly, no regulatory flexibility analysis is required, and none has been prepared.

D. Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule will not impose additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

List of Subjects for 15 CFR Part 90

Administrative practice and procedure, Census data, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, State and local governments, Statistics.

Dated: January 20, 2026.

George Cook,

Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs performing the non-exclusive functions and duties of the Director of the Census Bureau.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Census Bureau amends 15 CFR part 90 to read as follows:

PART 90—PROCEDURE FOR CHALLENGING POPULATION ESTIMATES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 90 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 13 U.S.C. 4 and 181.

■ 2. Revise § 90.3(g) to read as follows:

§ 90.3 Definitions.

* * * * *

(g) An *eligible governmental unit*, for the purposes of this program, also includes the District of Columbia and non-functioning counties or statistical equivalents represented by a Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE) member agency.

§ 90.4 [Removed and Reserved]

■ 3. Remove and reserve § 90.4.

■ 4. Revise the section heading of § 90.5 to read as follows:

§ 90.5 Who may file a request for a challenge.

* * * * *

■ 5. In § 90.6 revise the section heading and paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 90.6 When a request for a challenge may be filed.

* * * * *

(b) The Census Bureau has the discretion to accept late requests.

■ 6. Revise the section heading of § 90.7 to read as follows:

§ 90.7 Where to file a request for a challenge.

* * * * *

■ 7. Revise § 90.8(a) to read as follows:

§ 90.8 Evidence required.

(a) The governmental unit shall provide whatever evidence it has relevant to the request at the time of filing. The Census Bureau may request further evidence when necessary. The evidence submitted must be consistent with the criteria, standards, and regular processes the Census Bureau employs to generate the population estimate. Currently, the Census Bureau challenge process cannot accept estimates developed from methods different from those used by the Census Bureau.

* * * * *

■ 8. Revise § 90.9 to read as follows:

§ 90.9 Review of a request for a challenge.

The Chief, Population Division, Census Bureau, or the Chief's designee shall review the evidence provided with the request for the population estimate challenge, shall work with the governmental unit to verify the data provided by the governmental unit, and evaluate the data to resolve the issues raised by the governmental unit. Thereafter, the Census Bureau shall respond in writing with a decision to accept or deny the challenge. In the event the Census Bureau finds that the population estimate should be updated, it will also post the revised estimate on the Census Bureau's website (www.census.gov).

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

15 CFR Part 100

[Docket No. 260108-0017]

RIN 0607-AA70

Streamlining the Regulations Governing the Official Seal of the Census Bureau

AGENCY: Census Bureau, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: By this rule, the Census Bureau (Bureau) is amending its regulations that govern the Bureau's official seal. Specifically, this rule removes unnecessary regulatory language and consolidates all of the necessary language into a single regulation. This action is intended to streamline the Bureau's regulations and promote clarity by eliminating redundancy and potential inconsistencies between the regulatory language and the underlying statutory language of 13 U.S.C. 3.

DATES: The rule is effective January 23, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shannon Wink, Program Analyst, Policy Coordination Office, 301-763-6440, pco.policy.office@census.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

This action concerns the Bureau's regulations at 15 CFR part 100, which establish and govern the official seal of the Bureau.

A. Regulatory History

The official seal for the Bureau was first established in a final rule published on March 16, 1960 (25 FR 2163). That 1960 rule cited 13 U.S.C. 3 as the statutory authority and codified regulations governing the official seal at 15 CFR part 20. Subsequently, in a final rule published on June 7, 1985 (50 FR 23947), the Bureau redesignated 15 CFR part 20 as 15 CFR part 100. However, that 1985 rule was a purely administrative action, and it made no substantive changes to the regulations governing the official seal.

B. Description of the Current Regulations

The cited authority for 15 CFR part 100 is "R.S. 161, as amended, sec. 3, 68 Stat. 1012, as amended (5 U.S.C. 301, 13 U.S.C. 3)." Part 100 currently consists of three sections: §§ 100.1, 100.2, and 100.3.

Section 100.1 readdresses the authority for 15 CFR part 100 and states that “[p]ursuant to section 3 of Title 13, United States Code, the Bureau of the Census official seal and design thereof, which accompanies and is made a part of this document, is hereby approved.” 15 CFR 100.1.

Section 100.2 sets forth a detailed description of the official seal. *See* 15 CFR 100.2. Specifically, it states as follows:

Seal: On a shield an open book beneath which is a lamp of knowledge emitting rays above in base two crossed quills. Around the whole a wreath of single leaves, surrounded by an outer band bearing between two stars the words “U.S. Department of Commerce” in the upper portion and “Bureau of the Census” in the lower portion, the lettering concentric with an inner beaded rim and an outer dentilated rim.

Id.

Section 100.3 addresses custody and affixation of the seal. *See* 15 CFR 100.3. Specifically, it states that “[t]he seal shall remain in the custody of the Director, Bureau of the Census or such officer or employee of the Bureau as he designates and shall be affixed to all certificates and attestations that may be required from the Bureau.” *Id.*

II. Discussion

The Bureau has determined that it is appropriate to amend 15 CFR part 100 by removing §§ 100.1 and 100.3, and by making some minor additions to § 100.2, for the following reasons.

Removing § 100.1. As previewed, § 100.1 readdresses the underlying authority for 15 CFR part 100 and states that, pursuant to 13 U.S.C. 3, the official seal included in part 100 is “hereby approved.” *See* 15 CFR 100.1. Notably, 13 U.S.C. 3 is already identified in the authority citation for 15 CFR part 100. Thus, insofar as § 100.1 reestablishes 13 U.S.C. 3 as the underlying statutory authority for 15 CFR part 100, it is unnecessary and redundant. And insofar as § 100.1 “approve[s]” the official seal, such language can be consolidated into § 100.2, as described below. Doing so, and eliminating § 100.1 as a standalone provision, will reduce clutter and streamline 15 CFR part 100, thereby promoting clarity and efficiency.

Revising § 100.2. Section 100.2 contains a detailed description of the official seal. *See* 15 CFR 100.2. As particularly relevant, the description is currently introduced by a single word—“Seal:”. To account for the removal of § 100.1 and also ensure clarity, the Bureau is amending the introduction of § 100.2 to instead identify the seal as the “approved, official seal of the Census

Bureau.” This consolidation and clarification will promote simplicity and efficiency.

Separately, the Bureau is also making some minor punctuation additions to the detailed description set forth in § 100.2 to promote readability.

Removing § 100.3. Section 100.3 effectively establishes two rules: (1) that the official seal shall remain in the custody of the Director of the Bureau (or his designee); and (2) that the official seal shall be affixed to “all certificates and attestations that may be required from the Bureau.” 15 CFR 100.3. However, the language of § 100.3 no longer tracks the controlling statute with respect to either of these rules. As for custody, the current version of 13 U.S.C. 3 provides that “[t]he seal shall remain in the custody of the *Secretary [of Commerce]* or such officer or employee of the Bureau as *he* designates.” (Emphasis added.) And, as for affixation, the current version of 13 U.S.C. 3, provides that the seal “shall be affixed to *all documents authenticated by the [Census] Bureau.*” (Emphasis added.) Upon review, the Bureau has determined that 13 U.S.C. 3 sufficiently speaks for itself on these issues of custody and affixation. Removing § 100.3 will eliminate the potential inconsistencies between 15 CFR part 100 and 13 U.S.C. 3, and will properly encourage readers to directly review and consult the underlying statutory text.

In sum, the Census Bureau is amending 15 CFR part 100 to consist solely of a description of the “approved, official seal of the Census Bureau.” The Bureau has determined that such a description constitutes the core component of 15 CFR part 100, and that the rest of 15 CFR part 100 is unnecessary and appropriate for removal. The Bureau is amending 15 CFR part 100 accordingly to promote regulatory simplicity and to reduce clutter and the potential for inconsistencies or confusion.

III. Regulatory Certifications

A. Administrative Procedure Act

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Department of Commerce (Department) finds good cause to waive the prior notice and opportunity for public participation requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act for this final rule. The Department considers this rule to be uncontroversial, and has determined that prior notice and opportunity for public participation is unnecessary, because this rule only consolidates the core language of 15 CFR part 100 into one section, adds some missing punctuation marks, and

eliminates unnecessary language that poses some risk of inconsistency and confusion; the appropriateness of these minor changes would not be affected by public comment. For the same reasons, the Department has determined that delaying the effectiveness of these amendments would be contrary to the public interest. The language being removed by this rule unnecessarily poses some risk of inconsistency, confusion, and inefficiency; its removal will immediately benefit the public at little to no cost. The Department therefore finds good cause to waive the public notice and comment period under 553(b)(B) and, for the same reasons, to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness under 553(d).

B. Executive Orders 12866, 14192, 13132

The Office of Management and Budget has determined this rule is not significant pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 12866. This rule is an E.O. 14192 deregulatory action. This rule does not contain policies having federalism implications as the term is defined in E.O. 13132.

C. Regulatory Flexibility Act

Because a notice of proposed rulemaking and an opportunity for public participation are not required to be given for this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are not applicable. Accordingly, no regulatory flexibility analysis is required, and none has been prepared.

D. Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule will not impose additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

List of Subjects for 15 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Archives and records, Census data, Organization and functions (Government agencies), Seals and insignia.

Dated: January 20, 2026.

George Cook,

Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs performing the non-exclusive functions and duties of the Director of the Census Bureau.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Census Bureau amends 15 CFR part 100 as follows:

PART 100—SEAL

■ 1. The authority citation for part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: R.S. 161, as amended, sec. 3, 68 Stat. 1012, as amended (5 U.S.C. 301, 13 U.S.C. 3).

§ 100.1 [Removed and Reserved]

- 2. Remove and reserve § 100.1.
- 3. Revise § 100.2 to read as follows:

§ 100.2 Description.

The approved, official seal of the Census Bureau is as follows: On a shield, an open book beneath which is a lamp of knowledge emitting rays above in base two crossed quills. Around the whole a wreath of single leaves, surrounded by an outer band bearing between two stars the words “U.S. Department of Commerce” in the upper portion and “Bureau of the Census” in the lower portion, the lettering concentric with an inner beaded rim and an outer dentilated rim.

§ 100.3 [Removed and Reserved]

- 4. Remove and reserve § 100.3.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

15 CFR Part 101

[Docket No. 260108–0016]

RIN 0607–AA69

Eliminating Unnecessary and Overly-Restrictive Regulations Related to the Release of Decennial Census Population Information

AGENCY: Census Bureau, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Census Bureau (Bureau) is removing its regulations related to the release of decennial census population information. Such regulations are obsolete and have not applied to the determination of methodology for calculating the tabulations of total population reported to states and localities under 13 U.S.C. 141(c) since the decennial census in 2000. This action is necessary to remove obsolete regulatory language, keep the Bureau’s regulations current, and ensure that the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) is able to fulfill his statutory obligations without being hindered by an unnecessary administrative process.

DATES: The rule is effective January 23, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Sweeney, Senior Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, at (202) 482–1395.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Executive Summary

The Bureau is removing 15 CFR part 101, “Release of Decennial Census Population Information,” in its entirety. The Bureau is removing this language to ensure conformity with the primary underlying statutory authority—13 U.S.C. 141(c)—and to ensure that the Secretary is able to fulfill his mandate thereunder without being hindered by any overly-prescriptive and outdated regulatory restrictions and requirements. This removal is intended to promote flexibility and efficiency—within lawful limits and subject to democratic accountability—and to reduce regulatory complexity and bloat.

II. Background

A. Statutory and Regulatory Context

As previewed, the Bureau is removing 15 CFR part 101, which governs the release of decennial census population information. The cited statutory authorities for 15 CFR part 101 consist of 5 U.S.C. 301; 13 U.S.C. 4, 141, 195; and 15 U.S.C. 1512; with the most pertinent statutory authority being 13 U.S.C. 141(c).

Under 13 U.S.C. 141(c), the Secretary is required to establish, and to furnish to “[t]he officers or public bodies having initial responsibility for the legislative apportionment or districting of each State,” criteria governing State plans “identifying the geographic areas for which specific tabulations or population are desired.” The Secretary is also required to complete tabulations of populations for the areas identified in any plan that he approved “as expeditiously as possible after the decennial census date” and to report such tabulations to the Governors of the States involved and to the relevant officers or public bodies. *See* 13 U.S.C. 141(c).

On October 6, 2000, the Department issued a final rule that set forth the process by which the Bureau would release data to the States and that delegated to the Director of the Census (Director) the Secretary’s authority to make determinations regarding the methodology to be used in calculating the tabulations of population to be reported (65 FR 59712). Less than a year later, on February 23, 2001, the Department issued a final rule revoking the described delegation to the Director and establishing the decision-making process currently outlined in part 101 (66 FR 11232). Both of these rules were issued against the backdrop of the proposed use of statistically-adjusted populations counts for non-

apportionment purposes following the 2000 Census, which use did not occur.

B. Description of the Regulation

Part 101 consists of a single regulatory section (§ 101.1), which itself consists of multiple paragraphs.

Paragraph (a)(1) provides that “[t]he Secretary of Commerce shall make the final determination regarding the methodology to be used in calculating the tabulations of population reported to States and localities pursuant to 13 U.S.C. 141(c).” 15 CFR 101.1(a)(1). It further provides that “[t]he determination of the Secretary will be published in the **Federal Register**.” *Id.*

Paragraph (a)(2) restricts the Secretary from making the determination specified in paragraph (a)(1) “until after he or she receives the recommendation of the Director of the Census, together with the report of the Executive Steering Committee for A.C.E. Policy, in accordance with paragraph (b)(1).” 15 CFR 101.1(a)(2).

Paragraph (b)(1), in turn, provides that the Executive Steering Committee for A.C.E. Policy (the Committee) “shall prepare a written report to the Director of the Census analyzing the methodologies that may be used in making the tabulations of population reported to States and localities pursuant to 13 U.S.C. 141(c), and the factors relevant to the possible choices of methodology.” 15 CFR 101.1(b)(1). It further provides that the Director will forward the Committee’s report, along with his or her recommendation—if he or she has any—to the Secretary. *Id.*

Paragraph (b)(2) imposes a requirement that the Director’s recommendation and the Committee’s report be both posted on the Bureau’s website and published in the **Federal Register** “at the same time” they are delivered to the Secretary. 15 CFR 101.1(b)(2).

Lastly, paragraph (b)(3) requires that the Committee be composed of the following employees of the Bureau: (i) the Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer; (ii) the Principal Associate Director and Chief Financial Officer; (iii) the Principal Associate Director for Programs; (iv) the Associate Director for Decennial Census (Chair); (v) the Assistant Director for Decennial Census; (vi) the Associate Director for Demographic Programs; (vii) the Associate Director for Methodology and Standards; (viii) the Chief of the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Division; (ix) the Chief of the Decennial Management Division; (x) the Chief of the Decennial Statistical Studies Division; (xi) the Chief of the Population