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OMB Designates 49 New Metropolitan Statistical Areas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As required by law, the Office of Management and Budget announced today the designation and definitions of 49 new Metropolitan Statistical Areas, bringing the total number of Metropolitan Statistical Areas to 370 (362 in the United States and 8 in Puerto Rico). The 49 new areas are identified in the attached list. Revised definitions of existing Metropolitan Statistical Areas were also announced. In addition, OMB has designated and defined two new sets of statistical areas: 565 Micropolitan Statistical Areas (560 in the United States and 5 in Puerto Rico) and 116 Combined Statistical Areas.

OMB has maintained and updated this classification once every decade since the 1950 census, following a comprehensive review of statistical area standards and definitions. Issued under the statistical policy authority of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the definitions of these statistical areas reflect the technical application of OMB's Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas to Census 2000 population and commuting data. OMB's standards are subject to rigorous public review and comment and Congressional oversight.

Although the federal government and some state and local government entities base some program and funding decisions on these areas, OMB establishes and maintains the definitions of Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, Combined Statistical Areas, and New England City and Town Areas solely for statistical purposes.

For example, Medicare defines hospital labor market areas based on the definitions of MSAs, Primary MSAs (PMSAs), and New England County Metropolitan Areas (NECMAs). Changes to MSA designations could affect Medicare payment rates, but Medicare will not begin to use the revised MSAs until FY 2005. Likewise, MSAs are used to allocate funds in some federal community development programs and in calculations for federal employee locality pay, among other uses.

This classification is intended to provide nationally consistent definitions for collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal statistics for a set of geographic areas. The Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards do not equate to an urban-rural classification; many counties included in Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, and many other counties, contain both urban and rural territory and populations.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population. Micropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population. These areas also include adjacent counties that have a minimum of 25 percent commuting to the central counties. Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are defined in terms of whole counties (or equivalent entities). If the specified criteria are met, a Metropolitan Statistical Area containing a single core with a population of 2.5 million or more may also be subdivided to form smaller groupings of counties referred to as Metropolitan Divisions. One or more principal cities are identified within each Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area. These cities are the population and employment centers and are used in titling the areas.

The Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas include about 93 percent of the U.S.

population – about 83 percent in Metropolitan Statistical Areas and about 10 percent in Micropolitan Statistical Areas. (Previously, the classification included about 80 percent of the U.S. population.) Of the 3,142 counties in the United States, 1,090 counties will be in 362 Metropolitan Statistical Areas and 674 counties will be in Micropolitan Statistical Areas (1,378 counties will remain outside the classification).

The standards also provide for the designation of a complementary set of areas called Combined Statistical Areas, whose components are adjacent Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas, in various combinations. For instance, a Combined Statistical Area may comprise two or more Metropolitan Statistical Areas, a Metropolitan Statistical Area and a Micropolitan Statistical Area, two or more Micropolitan Statistical Areas, or multiple Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas. Combined Statistical Areas were automatically designated for adjacent areas with an employment interchange of 25 or more. In adjacent areas with an employment interchange of at least 15 but less than 25, designation of Combined Statistical Areas was based on local opinion, as expressed through the Congressional delegations. The components of the Combined Statistical Areas retain their separate designations as Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

In view of the importance of cities and towns in New England, the 2000 standards also provide for a set of geographic areas that are defined using cities and towns in the six New England States. The New England City and Town Areas are defined using the same criteria as Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas and are identified as either metropolitan or micropolitan, based, respectively, on the presence of either an urbanized area of 50,000 or more population or an urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population.

In periodically reviewing and revising the definitions of these areas, OMB does not take into account or attempt to anticipate any non-statistical uses that may be made of the definitions, nor will OMB modify the definitions to meet the requirements of any non-statistical program. Thus, OMB cautions that agencies should not use the Metropolitan Statistical Area and Micropolitan Statistical Area definitions to develop and implement Federal, State, and local non-statistical programs and policies without full consideration of the effects of using these definitions for such purposes.

OMB issued the update of statistical areas in a Bulletin. The attachment to the Bulletin provides eight lists of areas with their titles, definitions, and principal cities. This detailed information about the areas is available on the OMB website at www.whitehouse.gov/OMB -- go to "Bulletins" or to "Statistical Programs and Standards." The 2000 Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are also available at www.whitehouse.gov/OMB -- go to "Statistical Programs and Standards."

-- attachment follows --

Titles of the 49 New Metropolitan Statistical Areas

The definitions of these and all other statistical areas can be found on the OMB website at www.whitehouse.gov/OMB -- go to "Bulletins" or to "Statistical Programs and Standards."

Ames, IA	Sandusky, OH
Bend, OR	San German-Cabo Rojo, PR
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford, VA	Valdosta, GA
Bowling Green, KY	Vero Beach, FL
Brunswick, GA	Wenatchee, WA
Carson City, NV	Winchester, VA-WV
Cleveland, TN	Yauco, PR
Coeur d'Alene, ID	
Columbus, IN	
Dalton, GA	
Danville, IL	
El Centro, CA	
Elizabethtown, KY	
Fairbanks, AK	
Fajardo, PR	
Farmington, NM	
Fond du Lac, WI	
Gainesville, GA	
Guayama, PR	
Hanford-Corcoran, CA	
Harrisonburg, VA	
Hinesville-Fort Stewart, GA	
Hot Springs, AR	
Idaho Falls, ID	
Ithaca, NY	
Jefferson City, MO	
Kingston, NY	
Lebanon, PA	
Lewiston, ID-WA	
Logan, UT-ID	
Longview-Kelso, WA	
Madera, CA	
Michigan City-La Porte, IN	
Monroe, MI	
Morgantown, WV	
Morristown, TN	
Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA	
Ocean City, NJ	
Prescott, AZ	
Rome, GA	
St. George, UT	
Salisbury, MD	