Copycat:
Data Review in
the Office of Policy Support

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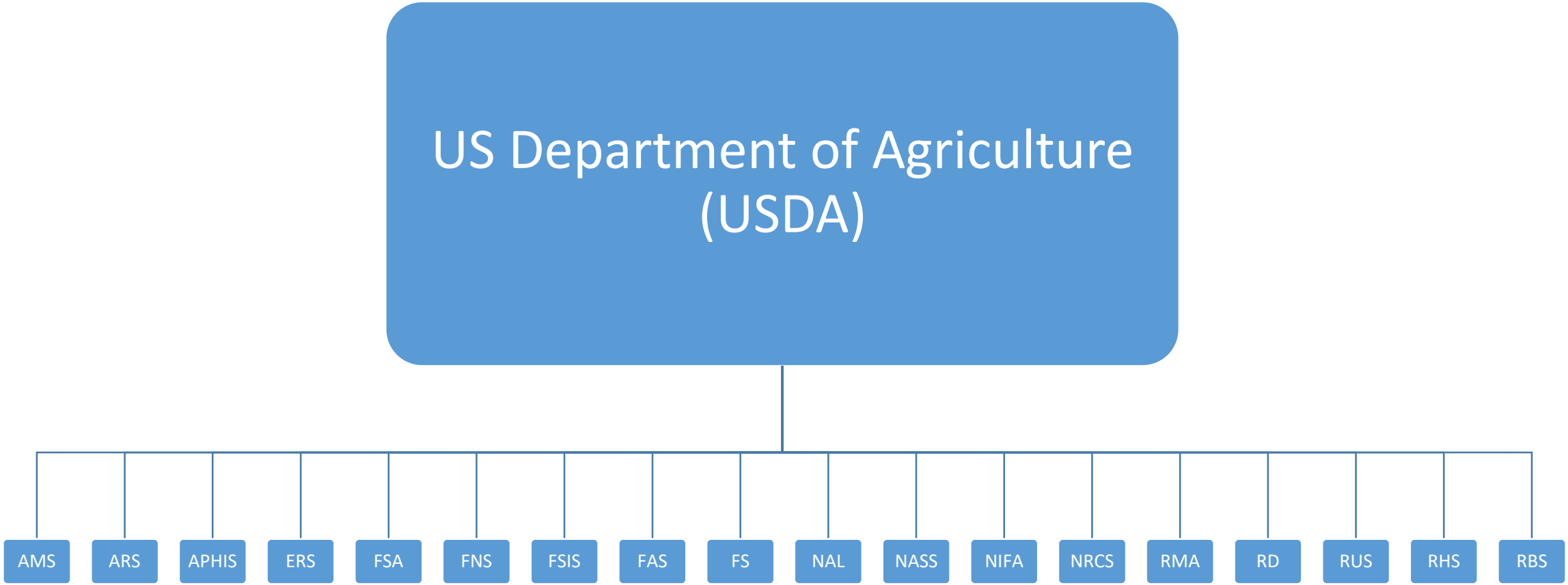
Social Science Policy Analyst

What is OPS?

https://andertoons.com/office/cartoon/5529/we-do-things-little-differently-around-here


US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
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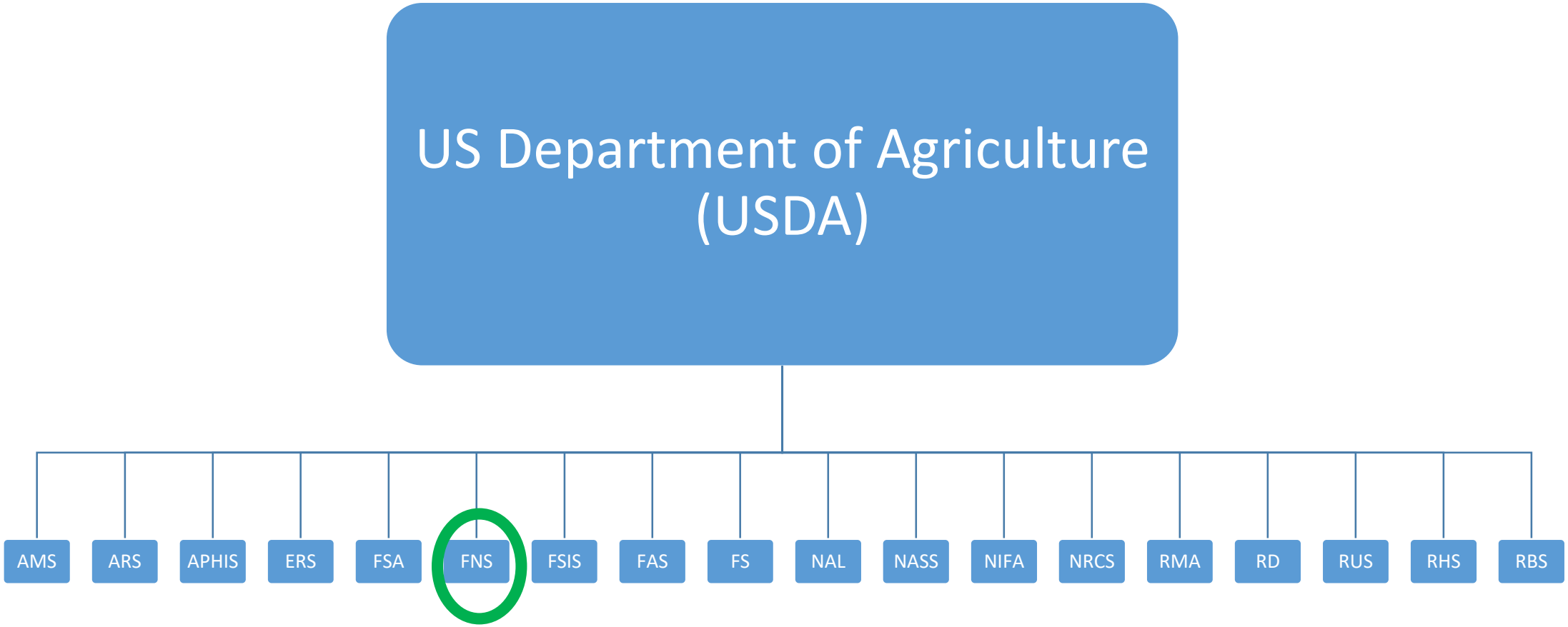
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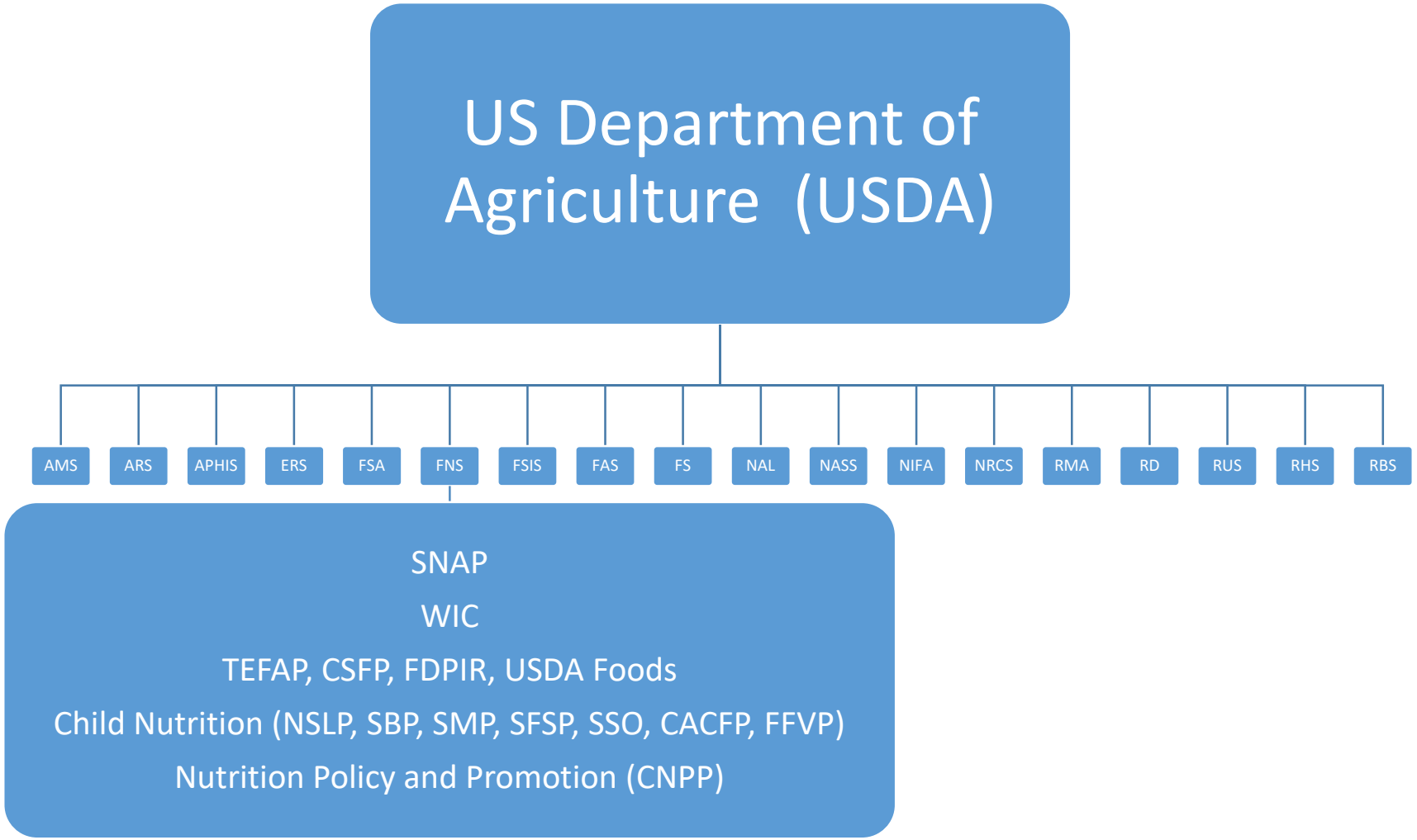
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SNAP
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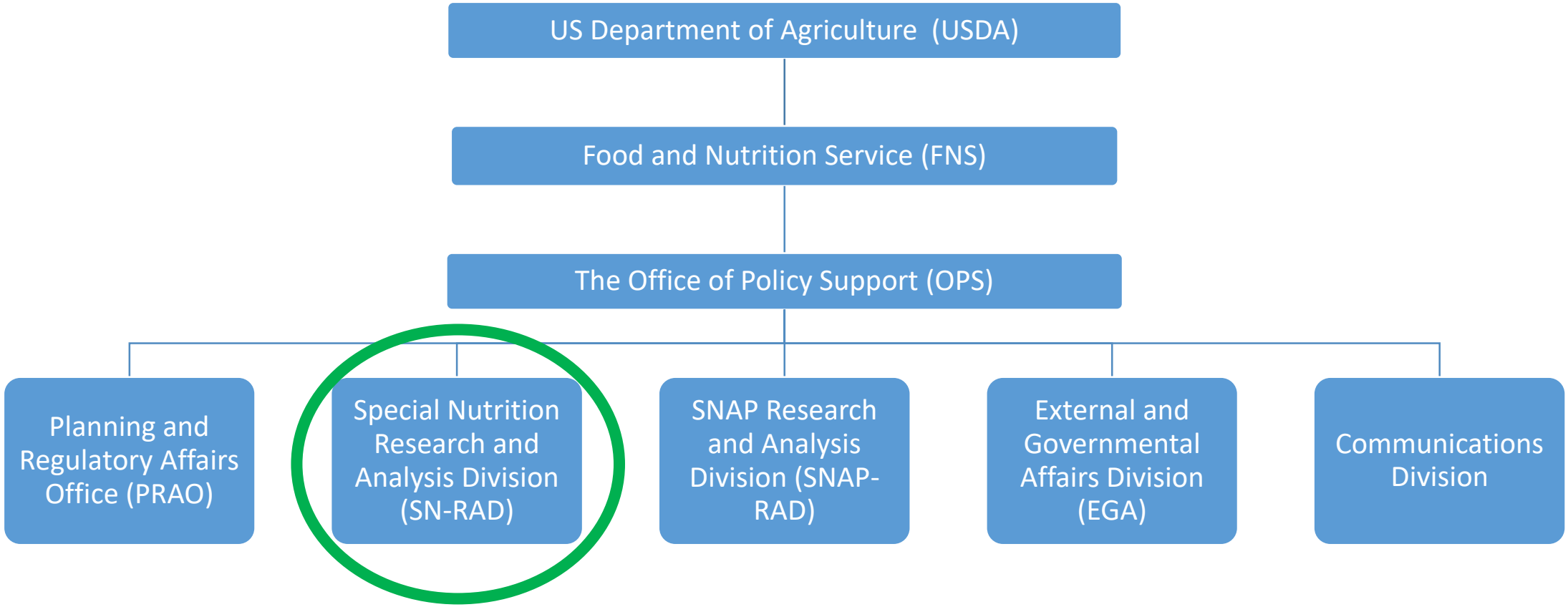
TEFAP, CSFP, FDPIR, USDA Foods
Child Nutrition (NSLP, SBP, SMP, SFSP, SSO, CACFP, FFVP)
Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP)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The Office of Policy Support (OPS)
Planning and Regulatory Affairs Office (PRAO)
Special Nutrition Research and Analysis Division (SN-RAD)
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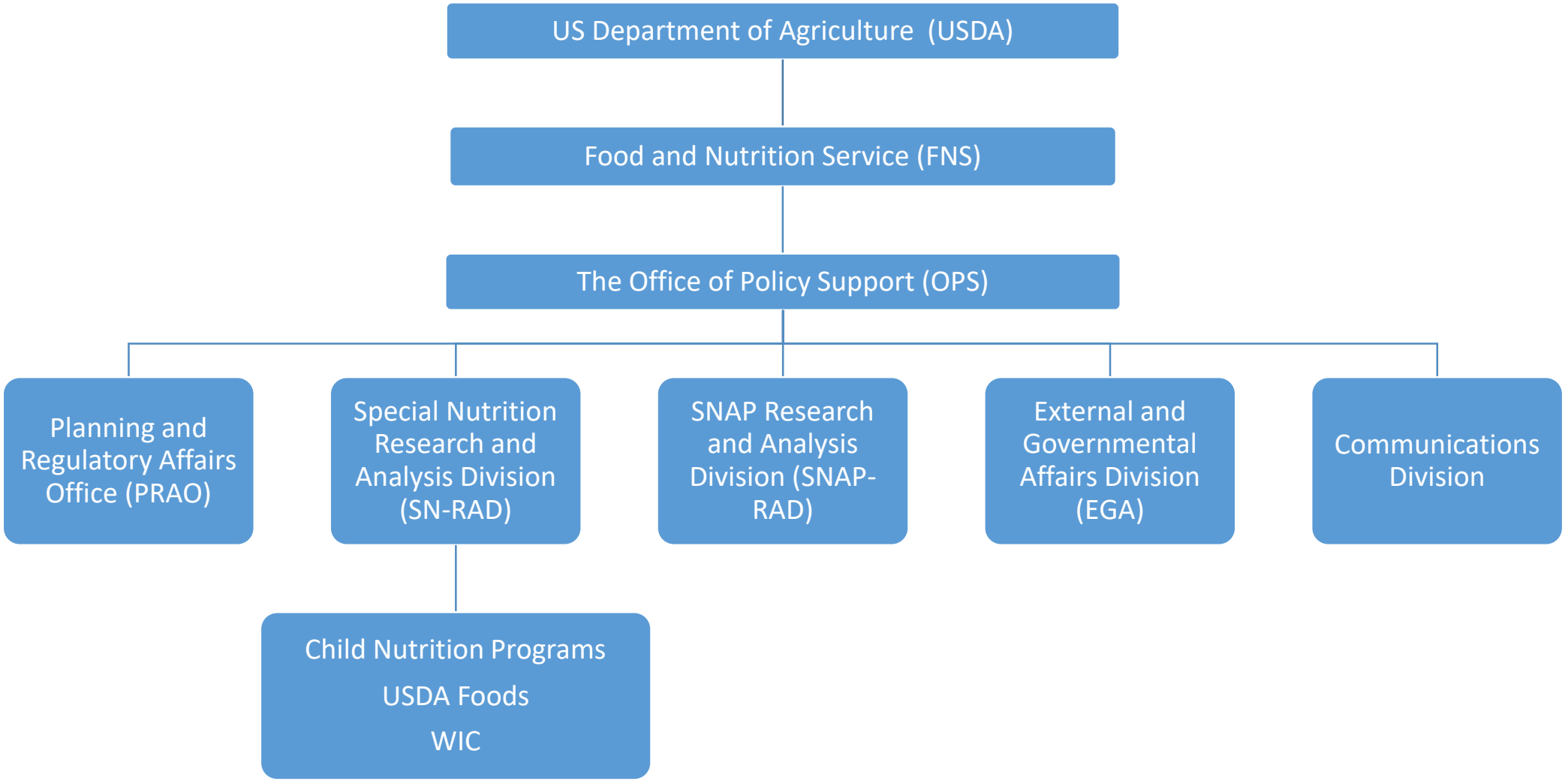
Communications Division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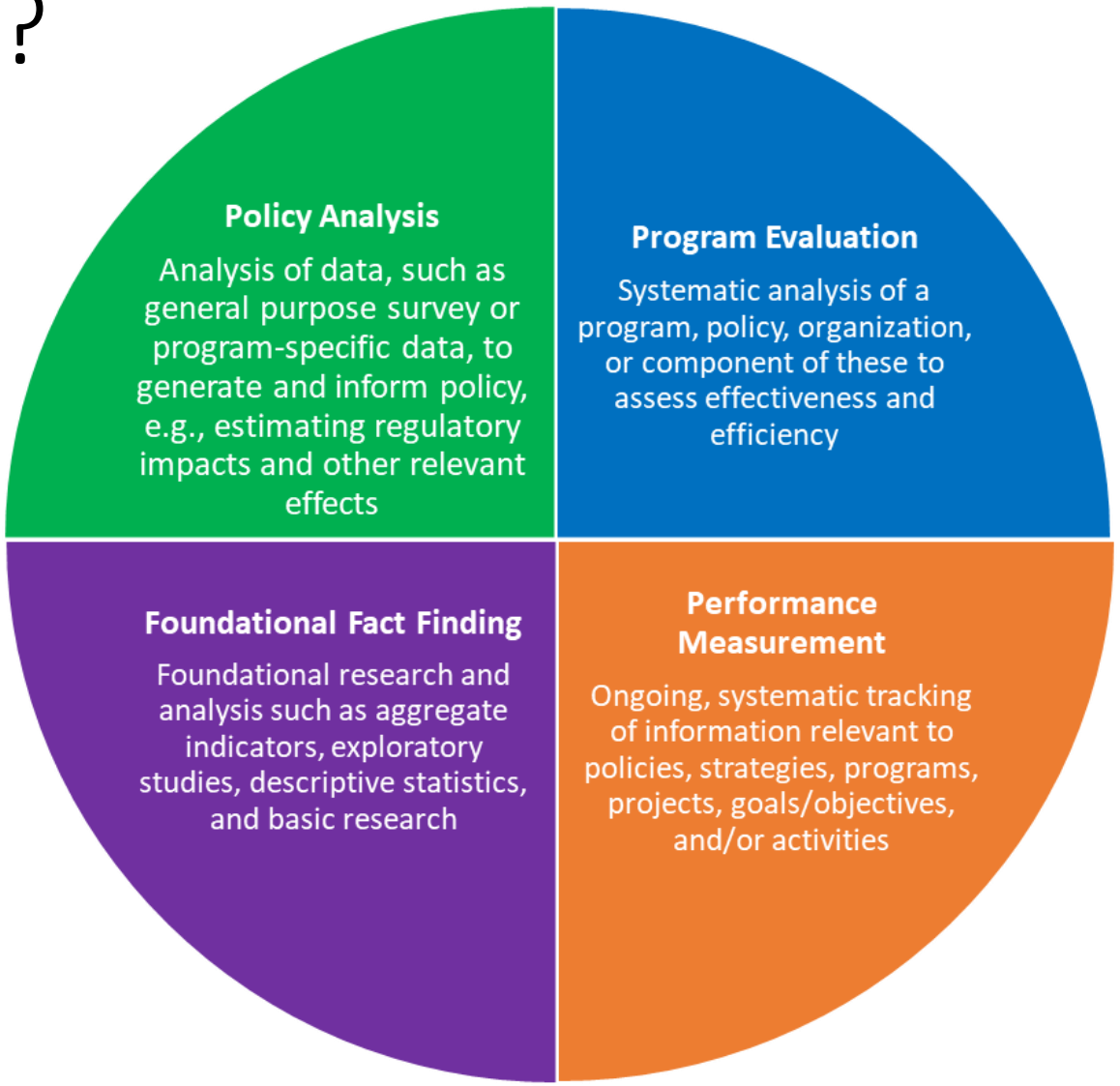
Child Nutrition Programs
USDA Foods
WIC

Why does our office feel it is important to focus on reproducibility?

- Customer service
- Transparency
- Extending our research
- Evidence Act



Research & Evaluation Plan

- Annual plan developed with FNS researchers

- Considerations
  - Congressional mandates
  - Strategic Goals and Agency Priority Plan objectives
  - Budget
  - Recurring studies
  - Unanswered policy questions

- Check out our plans on the FNS website: https://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/study-evaluation-plans

OPS Research - Contracts

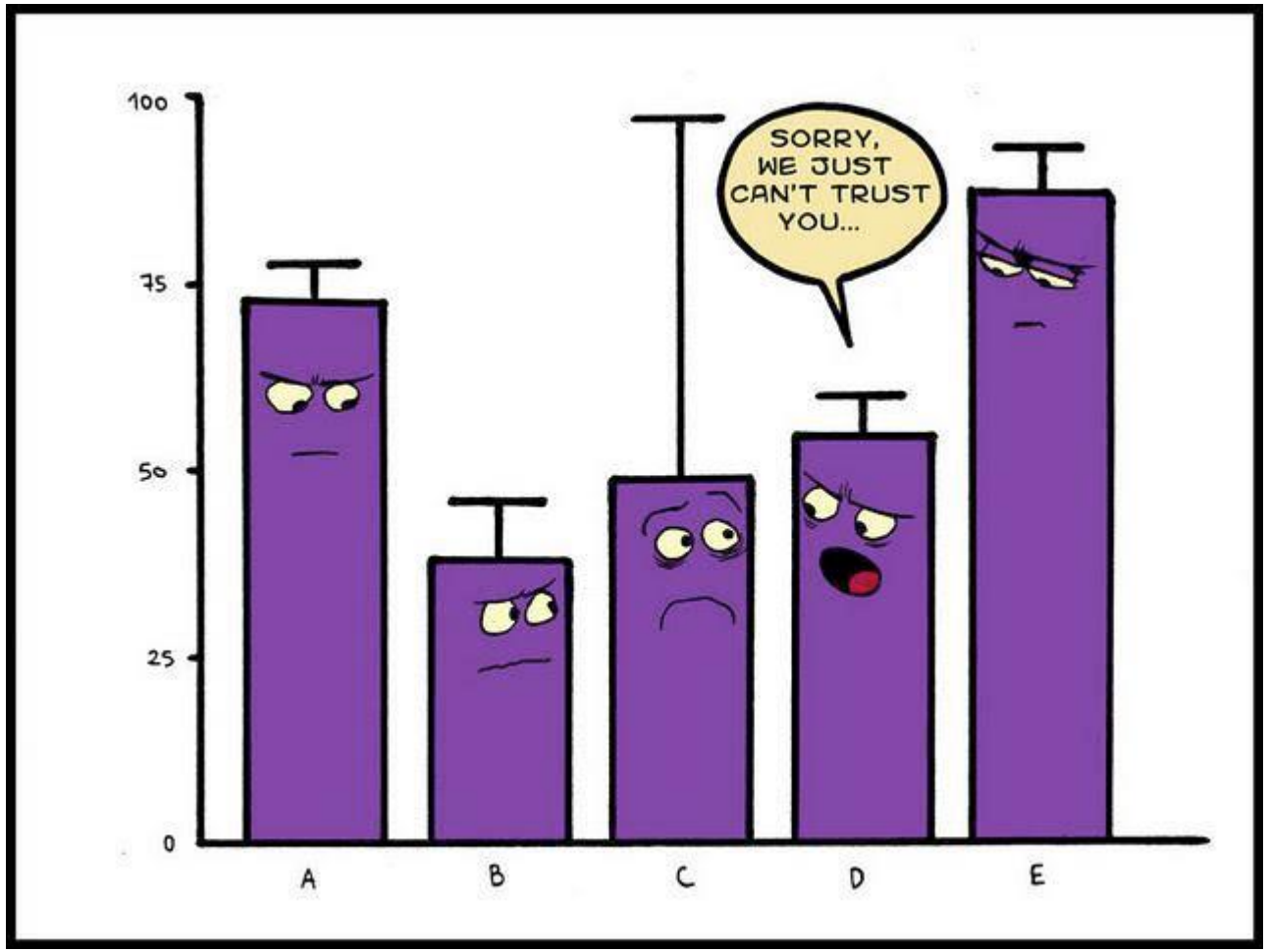
- COR/Project lead, not principle investigator
- Language about government ownership of data & analyses

https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-image-check-contract-image4746851

OPS Research - Types of Studies/Projects

- Evaluations
- Longitudinal studies
- Case studies
- Analysis and modeling
- Reviews

What is our data review process?



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Contract Requirements & Deliverables

- Code/programs
- Data tables
- Codebooks, crosswalks, other documentation
- SAS, Stata, NVivo, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel

Types of Data & Code

- Restricted
- Public use
- Considerations
  - PII
  - State and local sensitivity

Data Review

- Confirm receipt of all documentation and input files needed
- Run all programs from beginning to end
- Confirm all output files and tables produced match documentation and tables provided in deliverable package
- Determining/finalizing restricted vs. public data set parameters

Data Review - Challenges

- Missing files
- Changes in variable names
- Changes in file names
- Macros
- Lengthy code before any output
- Messy output tables
- Switching back and forth between software platforms

Data Use

- Study publications
- Program fact sheets
- Technical assistance
- Cross tabs with other data sets
- Answer additional future research questions

Data Use - Challenges

- PII + public use data sets
- Changes in admin data

RESEARCH?
YOU MEAN LIKE GOOGLE?