Copycat:
Data Review in
the Office of Policy Support

Jinee Burdg
Social Science Policy Analyst
What is OPS?

“"We do things a little differently around here.""
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?

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/334533078540741917/?nic=1a
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?