

About the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF)

(Important information regarding the use of CPDF and its data)

A. Purpose

1. CPDF is an information system to support statistical analyses of Federal personnel management programs. It is not intended to be a Governmentwide personnel accounting system.

B. Composition

1. CPDF is composed of two primary data files:
 - (a) **Status File**
Documents the characteristics of employees at a specific point in time.
 - (b) **Dynamics File**
Documents personnel actions (**e.g.**, appointments, promotions, separations, etc.) over a period of time.
2. Primary data files above are processed to create other files. For example:
 - (a) **High Utility Extract (HUE) Files**
Subsets of the most often used data from the status and dynamics files.
 - (b) **Longitudinal History File (LHF)**
Dynamics data sorted by social security number and effective date to create employment histories.
3. CPDF also contains a number of auxiliary files. For example:
 - (a) **Name File**
Provides a link from social security number to name.
 - (b) **Personnel Office Identifier (POI) File**
Provides a link from POI code to information about that specific personnel office (**i.e.**, mailing address, contact names, phone numbers, etc.).

C. Coverage

1. CPDF coverage is limited to Federal civilian employees.
2. **Executive Branch** includes all agencies **except** the following:
 - Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve
 - Central Intelligence Agency
 - Defense Intelligence Agency

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C. **Coverage** (Continued)

2. **Executive Branch** includes all agencies **except** the following: (Continued)

- National Imagery and Mapping Agency
- National Security Agencies
- Office of the Vice President
- Postal Rate Commission
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- United States Postal Service
- White House

(a) Other **exclusions** include:

- Public Health Services's Commissioned Officer Corps
- Nonappropriated fund employees and foreign nationals overseas

(b) Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) coverage is **limited**:

- FBI does not provide dynamics data.
- FBI provides status data but does not report duty location for employees outside the District of Columbia.

3. **Legislative Branch** coverage is limited to:

- Government Printing Office
- U.S. Tax Court, **and**
- Selected commissions.

4. **Judicial Branch** is entirely excluded.

5. CPDF coverage has changed over time. Coverage in older files may differ slightly from coverage in more current files.

6. CPDF coverage can differ from that of other **O**ffice of **P**ersonnel **M**anagement (**OPM**) data sources.

D. **Collection, Editing, and Production of CPDF Status and Dynamics Data**

1. With the exception of "generated" data elements, all status and dynamics data are submitted by the agencies from their own separate personnel systems. Generated data elements are created from one or more submitted data elements (**e.g.**, Metropolitan Statistical Area is generated from Duty Location, a submitted data element).

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D. Collection, Editing, and Production of CPDF Status and Dynamics Data (Continued)

2. Agency submissions are subjected to validity and relationship edits to ensure codes are valid and consistent with other related data elements (**e.g.**, if pay plan is GS then grade must be 01-15). These edits can detect invalid data but not miscoded data (**e.g.**, record shows grade of 11 but employee is actually grade 12).
 - Submissions that fail minimum acceptability requirements are rejected and must be resubmitted.
 - Values of individual data elements that fail the edits are replaced with asterisks to prevent invalid data from entering CPDF.
 - Agencies are kept informed of their edit failures and may submit corrections.
 - The **O**ffice of **P**ersonnel **M**anagement (**OPM**) may change data element values that are missing or invalid by matching to older files or making the values consistent with statistical assumptions. Alteration of agency submitted values are limited to situations where agency correction is not possible or feasible and failure to act would seriously undermine the usability of the data.
3. Submissions and their corrections are processed to produce **quarterly** (**i.e.**, March, June, September and December) **status** and **dynamics** files.
 - (a) **Status files**

Reflects employment at the end of a quarter but, for many agencies, may actually reflect employment at the end of the pay period just prior to the end of the quarter.
 - (b) **Dynamics files**

Reflects all personnel actions occurring within a quarter but may be missing actions that appear in subsequent quarters because of late submission by the agencies.
4. Once a quarterly CPDF status or dynamics file is released for use it is no longer subject to correction.

E. Accuracy

1. CPDF accuracy is affected by:
 - (a) Omissions (**e.g.**, personnel action missing from dynamics file).
 - (b) Duplications (**e.g.**, employee with multiple records in status file).
 - CPDF has some safeguards against true duplication. What appears to be duplication may be valid as in the case of employees with multiple appointments.
 - (c) Invalid data, which get re-coded to asterisks by the CPDF edits.
 - (d) Miscoded data (**e.g.**, record shows grade of 11 but employee is actually grade 12).

(Important information regarding the use of CPDF and its data)

E. Accuracy (Continued)

2. Accuracy varies from quarterly file to quarterly file, agency to agency, and data element to data element.
3. The Office of Personnel Management performs periodic surveys to examine CPDF accuracy by data element.

F. Data Element Information

1. Changes in organizations and personnel classifications over time require corresponding changes in the CPDF codes. These changes, which involve additions, deletions and/or re-definitions, can make tracking a consistent set of information over time difficult.
2. Some CPDF data are collected at the time of appointment and not routinely updated (e.g., education level may reflect a bachelor's degree at the time of the employee's appointment but not the master's degree the employee subsequently earned.)
3. **Pay**
 - (a) All pay fields, except those for fee basis and piecework
Reflect **annualized** rates of pay. They do not reflect earnings which may include other forms of pay (e.g., overtime, shift differentials) or may be less than the annualized rate because of the employee's work schedule (i.e., less than full time non-seasonal) or individual circumstances (e.g., leave without pay).
 - (b) Adjusted basic pay
May be "capped" to reflect payable rather than scheduled rate of pay.
 - (c) Basic pay and total pay
Not "capped" and may exceed amount actually paid.
4. While most CPDF data elements have specific formatting requirements, some do not. This is particularly true for data elements in the auxiliary files which frequently reflect uncoded or agency defined values (e.g., although most names conform to a last name, first name format, there is no mandatory format).