

**Data Management Plan (DMP) for “National Census of Ferry Operators (NCFO)” dataset.**

Office of Survey Programs (OSP),  
Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS),  
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)  
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**Change log:**

2017-10-26: Initial DMP written

**CONTENTS**

- 0. Dataset and Contact Information
  - 1. Data Description
  - 2. Standards Employed
  - 3. Access Policies
  - 4. Re-Use, Redistribution, and Derivative Products Policies
  - 5. Archiving and Preservation Plans
  - 6. Policies Affecting this Data Management Plan

**0. Dataset and Contact Information**

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Title of Dataset: National Census of Ferry Operators (NCFO)

URL: <https://www.bts.dot.gov/surveys/national-census-ferry-operators-ncfo/national-census-ferry-operators-ncfo>

This is an ☒ initial DMP or a ☐ revised DMP.

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### **1. Data Description:**

The National Census of Ferry Operators (NCFO) is a biennial census of all ferry operators in the United States and its territories. The information collected from the census is maintained in a national ferry database containing information regarding ferry routes, vessels, passengers and vehicles carried, funding sources, and other information. The initial NCFO was conducted in 2006 and has subsequently been conducted in 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2016. The data collection for the next NCFO will begin in the Spring of 2018.

The most current NCFO database is used to calculate funding for eligible state or territory projects. In 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (Public Law 114-94, section 1112) set aside \$80 million for each fiscal year from 2016 to 2020 for the maintenance and improvement of the Nation's ferry system. These funds are authorized to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their Ferry Boat Program (FBP) for the construction of ferry boat and ferry terminal facilities.

The NCFO data is numerical and its associated report supports the data with text. The 2016 NCFO included for the first-time data visualizations.

The data is collected by a survey form over a 6-month period, then the data is input into a database and downloaded into 5 spreadsheets that are linked by a common identifier.

Primary stakeholders in the data are the maritime industry, Federal Highways Administration, the Passenger Vessel Association, ferry operators, and State DOTs.

BTS compiles and maintains the ferry database. The data management plan for the NCFO will be reviewed and updated as needed at the time of each publication.

### **2. Standards Employed:**

The NCFO is administered as a mail-out, mail-back analog collection that is manually keyed into Microsoft Access and exported into Microsoft Excel for public release. The data is also released to the public in a Socrata visualization web interface. Both Microsoft Excel and Socrata are proprietary softwares. Microsoft Excel is used for its wide-spread use and ability to be easily imported into statistical softwares for data analysis. There are also a number of open source spreadsheet programs available for viewing the data. The data is stored in Socrata for the public's ease of filtering, analyzing and visualizing the data from a single dataset. The dataset can be downloaded by users from Socrata in a number of file formats, including some open formats, for use in other visualization tools. A data dictionary is available on the website to specifically define each variable in the dataset. The data dictionary will also be available in a plain text file for easy machine access. A Project Open Data .json metadata file will accompany the data files.

### **3. Access Policies:**

Access to this data is limited to two (2) members of the data creation team. The hard copies of the data are stored in a secured room, and the electronic data is stored on a secure drive, due to the presence of business-sensitive data. Survey respondents are able to specify data as business-sensitive in the survey tool. The data specified as business-sensitive by the respondents is not shared with the public. Business-sensitive data is not published, and its exclusion is noted. Final datasets, cleaned of business-sensitive data, are shared with the public via DOT's Socrata web interface, and via Microsoft Excel spreadsheets accessible from the BTS website, or the National Transportation Library repository. Data files that have had business-sensitive responses removed contain no other security concerns for public access.

#### **4. Re-Use, Redistribution, and Derivative Products Policies:**

The NCFO team lead (currently, Janine McFadden) and Office of Survey Programs, Office Director (Joy Sharp) are the only team members with the rights to manage the data. As cited by the FAST Act, the data will be sent to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) for use in calculating Ferry Fund allocations. The final dataset is in the public domain and has no copyright restrictions. The dataset will also be preserved in the NTL repository, where it will remain under public domain. The data are under public domain and free for reuse, redistribution, and derivative products.

#### **5. Archiving and Preservation Plans:**

The dataset will be archived in the National Transportation Library Repository and Open Science Access Portal (ROSA P). The dataset will be updated in ROSA P within 30 days of each update. Prior to archiving, the data are stored on the secured BTS networks and drives, which are backed up nightly. The US DOT systems are secured from outside users and backed up daily.

Files in ROSA P are backed up in NTL drives at US DOT, daily; at the Centers for Disease Control, the repository managing facility, daily; and in Amazon Web Service Cloud servers in Virginia and Oregon daily.

The dataset will be retained in perpetuity.

NTL staff will mint persistent Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for each dataset stored in ROSA P. These DOIs will be associated with dataset documentation as soon as they become available for use.

ROSA P meets all of the criteria outlined on the “Guidelines for Evaluating Repositories for Conformance with the DOT Public Access Plan” page: <https://ntl.bts.gov/publicaccess/evaluatingrepositories.html>

#### **6. Policies Affecting this Data Management Plan**

This data management plan was created to meet the requirements enumerated in the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Plan to Increase Public Access to the Results of Federally-Funded Scientific Research" Version 1.1 <<

<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/Official%20DOT%20Public%20Access%20Plan%20ver%201.1.pdf> >> and guidelines suggested by the DOT Public Access website <<

<https://ntl.bts.gov/publicaccess/> >>, in effect and current as of October, 2017.