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(SCMI)

# **Standard Data Elements for Integrating Service Center Systems**

Prepared by

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**Abstract:** This document describes data elements that are potential key linkage points between information systems. While there are thousands of data elements that are potentially sharable across information systems and business areas, there are a mere handful which are particularly useful to link whole sets of data or even whole systems. These data element, or variations on them, can be found in numerous legacy systems, and appear frequently in recent Business Process Reengineering projects.

**Keywords:** standard data elements, integrated systems, unique keys, common definitions, financial systems, congressional district codes, soils data elements, plants data elements

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## Foreword

The Service Center Data Team (Data Team) developed the material contained herein. This team is composed of representatives from NRCS, FSA and Rural Development.

Sponsorship and direction for the Data Team comes from the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the partner Service Center agency's Chief Information Officers (CIOs).

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## Standard Data Elements for Integrating Service Center Systems

Standard Data Elements are potential key linkage points between information systems. While there are thousands of data elements which are potentially sharable across information systems and business areas, there are a mere handful which are particularly useful to link whole sets of data or even whole systems. These data element, or variations on them, can be found in numerous legacy systems, and appear frequently in recent Business Process Reengineering projects. For the most part, they can be succinctly defined, and they often have a single source for their data values.

### 1 What are Standard Data Elements

“Standard” data elements are those pieces of data where a clear and distinct definition can be established. Wherever a standard data element is used, it always has the same meaning and definition. If a system has an element with a slightly different definition, that element must be given a different name.

A standard “domain” of possible data values may be added to further qualify the definition of a standard data element. For example, the element “State Name” may have a list (domain) of state names attached to it. If an particular application uses state names which are not part of the domain of the standard element, then that application is not using the “standard element”, and should choose a different name for their data element.

The standardizing of data elements essentially reserves data names. The objective for developers is to utilize standard data elements wherever possible. However, developers cannot use a standard data element unless the data they are storing meets the established definition.

A data element typically has two versions of its name. The first is the Business Name version where the words in the name are fully spelled out, and every effort is made to have the name indicate accurately what the data element is expected to contain (examples: “State Name”, “Phone Number”). The second version is the Physical Name which is often abbreviated, with words separated by underscore characters (examples: “st\_nm”, “phn\_nbr”, “phone\_number”). A standard data element will have one approved Business Name, but may have several Physical Names as identified in existing legacy systems. One of the Physical Names will be designated as the standard physical name for future system development.

### 2 Scope of Standard Element Implementation

Standard data elements can be established for data that is common to multiple agencies, or to data which is created by a single agency. Common elements, where all participating agencies share in defining the standard element, are important for interagency data sharing, aggregation, and reporting.

A single agency will typically create standard data elements to promote the integration of applications and warehouses within that agency, or where agency data is potentially sharable (readable) by another agency. The standard element process will not be limited to just multi-agency common data. The process will include the ability of agencies to post their unique standard elements to the repository, and have them retrievable by their agency application developers. Agency-unique standard elements will typically not require the approval of the other partner agencies. However, a periodic review process could be established to identify elements that should be promoted to common standard elements.

The implementation of a standard data element process will take time, since legacy systems currently contain a multitude of disparate instances of data all called crop, or county, or gender, etc. The definitions of these elements must be ferreted out to see if they are the same as, or different from, the standard data element. It is particularly timely, though, in the evolution of data warehouses to promote standard elements as a tool for use in transforming and loading disparate transaction system data into common warehouse dimension tables.

Note, also, that there is a relationship between standard data elements and master reference tables (i.e. standard domain tables), since reference tables usually are built to contain the domain of a standard data element. Likewise, when building a master reference table, be sure to standardize the element(s) included in the table.

### 3 Standard Elements for System Integration

The current list of standard data elements can be found at:

<http://dln20.fsa.usda.gov/scdm/Standard/parent.htm>

All new or reengineered systems should use the standard data elements to the extent reasonable before creating new data elements. Because standard data elements are potential linkage points between systems, each system must strictly adhere to the definition of these standard elements to allow data to be combined across databases.

The elements found in this document are representative of standard elements in the online list, and are included to illustrate the types of data which can be standardized.

Standard Data Element	System of Record	Data Definition	Type
Agency Code	Standard Lookup Tables	A unique number code identifying an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Non-USDA organizations and federal/state/local agencies may also be added to the standard lookup tables. Conservation Districts, for example, are assigned an agency code of '90'. The Agency Codes table is maintained by the Office Information Profile (OIP) Data Steward.	Char 2
City Code	Standard Lookup Tables	The standard number code used to identify Cities of the United States, its possessions, and associated areas as defined within GSA Geographic Locator Codes. The GSA codes are an extension of the Federal Information Processing Standard Publication (FIPS PUB 502-155)	Char 4

		<p>Information Processing Standards Publication (FIPS PUBs 5-2 and 55). A city code is only unique if it is combined with a state code and a county code.</p> <p>Example: 01 003 <b>2800</b> - City of Silverhill in Baldwin County in Alabama</p> <p>NOTE: Codes are character fields to preserve the leading zeroes.</p>	
Common Land Unit Number	CLU	<p>A globally-unique number assigned to a segment of land which meets the definition of "the smallest unit of ground that has a permanent, contiguous boundary; common treatment/management; common ownership; and a common customer association. Common Land Units (CLU) can be of many types, including cropped land, pasture, rangeland, orchards, bodies of water, forests, residential areas, feedlots, recreational areas, urban lands, barren lands, and tundra.</p>	Integer
County Code	Standard Lookup Tables	<p>The standard code used to identify Counties and equivalent entities of the United States, its possessions, and associated areas as defined within Federal Information Processing Standards Publication (FIPS PUB 6-4). A county code is only unique if it is combined with a state code.</p> <p>Example: 01 <b>003</b> = Baldwin County in Alabama</p> <p>NOTE: FIPS codes are character fields to preserve the leading zeroes.</p>	Char 3
Customer Identifier	SCIMS	<p>A globally-unique, system-generated, internal identifier associated with a USDA customer (individual or business). It is intended for internal system processing only, and is not displayed to the customer or to USDA staff. This identifier (ID) will not be used to do business with the customer. The identifier is comprised of an assigned site number from the OIP system for the office that initially enters the customer into the system, and an internally generated sequence number.</p>	Char 12
Employee Identifier	CAMS	<p>A 6-digit number generated by the CAMS system to identify an employee.</p>	Integer
Feature Identifier	Varies	<p>A globally-unique identifier assigned to a spatial feature by the system. This identifier would generally not be visible to the user, but will provide the internal uniqueness needed to maintain electronic records as they are moved and merged among computers and offices.</p>	Integer
File Identifier	Varies	<p>The unique name or value assigned to a file within a file system. Rules for forming file identifiers vary with the operating system and file management system being used.</p>	Varies
Organizational-Unit Identifier	OIP/ CAMS	<p>A unique number assigned by the Office Information Profile (OIP) system to an organizational unit (office). This number will not change, or be reused for another organizational unit. An organizational unit is an office recognized as a separate component of a federal agency, a unit of state or local government, or a unit of a related non-governmental organization such as a Conservation District. When an organizational unit officially closes, it cannot be reopened again with the same organizational unit identifier.</p>	Integer
Site Identifier	OIP	<p>A unique number assigned by the OIP system to a site. This site identifier number will not change or be reused for another site. A site is a physical location where one or more organizational units (offices) are housed in one or more buildings within close proximity.</p>	Integer

State Code	Standard Lookup Tables	The numeric Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS Pub 5-2) code for a state within the United States, or a U.S. Territory. These codes can also be found in the GSA Locator Codes system.  The following are examples: 01 = Alabama, 02 = Alaska, 20= Kansas, 29 = Missouri, 51 = Virginia  NOTE: FIPS codes are character fields to preserve the leading zeroes.	Char 2
Tax Identification	SCIMS	A federal Tax Identification (ID) number. It may be a Social Security, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or Employer ID number. Federal Tax ID's are not necessarily unique for all customers unless they are combined with a Tax ID Type Code. See accompanying Tax Identification Type Code for 'type'.	Char 9
Tax Identification Type Code	SCIMS	A code used to identify the function of the related Tax Identification. The codes E, I, and S are assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Others can be assigned to meet agency business needs.  DOMAIN: E - Employer Identification Number for businesses I - IRS Number issued for non-resident aliens S - Social Security Number F - Federal Government Agencies Null - Federal Payments not involved	Char 1
An 'integer' is a data type containing whole numbers falling in the range -2,147,483,647 to +2,147,483,647. This data type may have a different name in certain databases and languages.			

## 4 Elements Migrating to Common Definitions

In addition to the standard elements for system integration listed above, there are a number of data elements currently used in numerous systems which should be migrated to a common definition as systems are reengineered. The element definitions listed below should be used when this data is included in new systems. These elements include:

Data Element	System of Record	Data Definition	Type
Agency Office Type Code	CAMS/OIP	Number codes peculiar to each Agency to describe various types of offices in their organization. For non-USDA agencies and organizations, codes will be maintained by the OIP Data Steward.	Char 2
Business Name	SCIMS	The name of a non-individual which transacts business with a USDA office. This can be a business, group, partnership, family-owned farm or ranch, etc. to which the servicing office provides assistance. In the case of a family farm or ranch operation, the business name can be the same as the individual's name.	Char 75

<p>Business Type Code</p>	<p>SCIMS</p>	<p>A code to identify the specific classification for a business enterprise.</p> <p>DOMAIN: 02 - General Partnership          03 - Joint Venture          04 - Corp w/Stockholders or Limited Liability Company          05 - Limited Partnership          06 - Estate          07 - Trust-Revocable          08 - Federal Owned          09 - State Owned          10 - Churches &amp; Other Charitable Organizations          11 - County Owned          12 - City Owned          13 - Public School          14 - Bureau of Indian Affairs          15 - Indians Represented by BIA          16 - Corp with No Stockholders          17 - Trust Irrevocable          18 - Individual Operating as a Small Business          19 - Group of Individuals          20 - Indian Tribal Venture          Null - Unknown (default)</p>	<p>Char 2</p>
<p>City Name</p>	<p>GSA Locator Codes</p>	<p>The full City, Town, Community or Municipality Name. Note that for a mailing address, this may be the city where the Post Office is located.</p>	<p>Char 28</p>
<p>Common Customer Name</p>	<p>SCIMS</p>	<p>The name a customer is commonly called or known as. This may be a more familiar form of a proper name or variation of the legal name. Contents are free format. The default contents for individuals is the concatenation of first name, middle initial, last name and suffix with multiple spaces removed. Names from foreign countries and other cultures may be formatted differently. The default contents for businesses are the full business name, or perhaps, an acronym.</p> <p>View the Common Customer Name as what would be placed on the top line of a mailing address. If the person is a well-known customer, the name may be 'Ted' instead of 'Edward'.</p>	<p>Char 75</p>
<p>Congressional District Code</p>	<p>Standard Lookup Tables</p>	<p>A code representing a territorial division of a state from which a member of the United States House of Representatives is elected. Each district is based on population. For example, the state of California has 52 congressional districts and the state of Texas has 30 districts.</p> <p>The Congressional District Code is only unique when combined with a state code. <u>See Appendix A.</u></p> <p>DOMAIN: Refer to FIPS PUB 9-1 dated November 1990.</p>	<p>Char 2</p> <p>Or, Char 5, see Appendix A</p>
<p>Country Code</p>	<p>Standard Lookup Tables</p>	<p>A code that uniquely identifies the country where a customer's residence or business address is located.</p> <p>Examples: US-United States (default), CA-Canada, MX-Mexico, TH-Thailand</p> <p>DOMAIN: Refer to the FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) PUB 10-4; or the GSA Locator Codes.</p>	<p>Char 2</p>

Crop Code			
Farm Number		An identifier attached to all land units under control of a particular "operator". The land units may have different owners. Land units may come and go from the farm as interest (i.e. lease, ownership) in the land units changes. An "operator" is the person or business which actually controls day-to-day operation of the farm.	Char 7
Legal First Name	SCIMS	Identifies the legal first name of an individual.	Char 20
Legal Last Name	SCIMS	Identifies the legal last name of an individual.	Char 35
Legal Middle Name	SCIMS	The second or alternate legal name of an individual.	Char 20
Mail Delivery Address	US Postal Service	<p>This is the address line immediately above the City/State/Zip line and contains the street address, post office box number, rural route number and box, or the highway contract route number and box. This address is where the mail will be delivered, regardless of other address information on lines above it. For mail addressed to offices in a multi-unit building, the suite or room number should be included at the end of this delivery address line. In applicable cases, this would be the office number for the mailroom. When it is necessary to reduce the length of the delivery address line, you must place the office number or other unit designator on the "Mail Information Line", which would appear immediately above the "Mail Delivery Address".</p> <p>Examples: 236 SUNSET AVE RM 101          PO BOX 184          RR 3 BOX 10          4321 MAPLE ST</p> <p>Example where the mail room is a different address:          Farm Service Agency          County Executive Director, Suite 210 &lt; Mail Information Line          1400 SOUTH MAIN ST SUITE 100 &lt; Mail Delivery Address          STERLING, MO 55512-3450 &lt; City, State, Zip</p>	Char 50
Name Prefix	SCIMS	<p>Identifies the prefix or title used in an individual's name.</p> <p>The following are examples: Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., The Honorable</p>	Char 15
Name Suffix	SCIMS	<p>Identifies the freeform optional suffix used in an individual's name.</p> <p>The following are examples: Jr., Sr., I, II, III, MD</p>	Char 10
Phone Number	SCIMS	A domestic or foreign phone number. The domestic telephone number includes the area code and a 7-digit local phone number. The length and format of foreign telephone number will vary, but will generally include a country routing code and may include a city routing code. Initial numbers dialed to access international services may be specific to a particular long distance company, and should not be included in this data field. Formatting characters such as dashes, periods, etc. are not allowed.	Char 15
Phone Extension Number	SCIMS	Telephone number extension used when several phones share a common phone number.	Char 6

Race Code	SCIMS	<p>This code indicates the race and ethnicity of an individual and is used for civil rights purposes. The structure for reporting race/ethnicity has recently changed from a system of codes to a system of Yes/No indicators. This is to allow an individual to specify multi-racial heritage.</p> <p>A one-character field (domain: Y or N) is needed for each of the following:</p> <p>Race values: American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian or Pacific Islander Black White Other</p> <p>Ethnicity values: Hispanic</p> <p>This element needs further research.</p>	Char 1 (Multiple)
Sex Code	SCIMS	<p>A code which indicates the sex of an individual. In the case of a business, it may indicate the sex of the business owner or principal officer.</p> <p>DOMAIN: Individuals F - Female M - Male Null - Unknown</p> <p>Businesses F - Female-Owned Organization M - Male-Owned Organization O - No clear male/female Organization</p> <p>This element needs further research.</p>	Char 1
State Abbreviation	Standard Lookup Tables	<p>The Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) abbreviation for a state within the United States. Also known as the United States Postal Service (USPS) abbreviation.</p> <p>Examples: AL = Alabama, AK = Alaska, AZ = Arizona</p>	Char 2
Street Delivery Address	US Postal Service	<p>This is the street number and street/highway/route where the site is physically located. If someone wanted to visit the office, they would use this address. Do Not use a Post Office Box for this address.</p> <p>Examples: FEDERAL BLDG, 6330 MAPLE ST, RM 201 14TH AND MAPLE 12 MILES NORTH OF JASPER ON HWY 85 500 S. BROADWAY</p>	Char 50
Tract Number		<p>An identifier given to a collection of land units under the same ownership. This tract identifier is assigned by FSA, and is only unique within a county. An "owner" is a person or business having deed to the land.</p>	Char 7
Zip Code	US Postal Service	<p>The first five or all nine digits of the address zip code. Do not include dashes.</p>	Char 9

## 5 Standard Elements for Integrating Financial Systems

Financial system elements are addressed separately in this document because they may have definitions and sources of data different from most program delivery systems within the agencies. For the most part, financial data structures are dictated by basic financial and accounting principles having a long history of usage and development, and which are outside of the realm of USDA to alter significantly. The National Finance Center dictates certain data constructs for interfacing with its systems, as well, and provides much of the integration of financial data across agencies that exists today.

Part of the reengineering efforts within the Service Center partner agencies will deal with answering such questions as:

- What is the cost of operating a Service Center?
- What dollar amount of program activity is generated by an office?
- How can funds be better managed to meet local situations, i.e. disasters, economic incentives, customer out-reach, implementing national priorities?
- What return is gained from the investment?

These questions all require new ways of integrating data across information systems - both program and financial. Achieving this integration will require that data elements not traditionally found in financial systems be added to those applications. Some potential data elements are listed in Section 1 of this document. For example, a financial transaction may carry on office identifier which relates it to a physical location.

Likewise, program-related systems may need to carry additional financial data. A transaction may carry a program account number and a budget object code which identifies a basic category of expense, i.e. salary, equipment, contract, etc.

The following data elements are seen as potentially useful in answering managerial questions such as those posed above.

Data Element	System of Record	Data Definition	Type
Fund		A sum of money or other resource to be used only for authorized purposes.	
Executing Organization		A number indicating the organization where the financial activity occurs.	
Sub-Organization		A further breakdown of the organization code that groups (or separates) organizational activity across the organization structure (e.g. Farm Loan (Ag Credit) or AC activity).	
Program Code		The activity administered. A number code representing a specific type of service offered by the USDA .	CHAR

Budget Object Code	OMB, USDA-OFM	A numbered classification structure for expenditure identification. OMB controls the first two digits, USDA-OFM controls the third and fourth digits of the BOC classification.	CHAR 4
Fiscal Year		The twelve month period between October 1 and September 30 in which an accounting entry is posted.	CHAR 4
Fiscal Month		A number representing the month within the fiscal year. October is represented by 01, November by 02, December by 03, etc.	CHAR 2
General Ledger Account Type Code		A code which classifies a general ledger account as a asset, liability, equity, revenue, expense, extraordinary or statistical/memorandum account. (AKA ACCOUNTTYPE)	
Vendor Identification		A unique code assigned to represent entities such as employees, contractors, government agencies, producers, etc. (AKA VENDOR)	
Vendor Category Code		A code that designates a vendor as government, non-government, or employee classifications.	
Vendor Name		The name of the vendor.	
Vendor Address		The delivery address of the vendor or, if a traveler, the office to which they are assigned (ex. WDC/FMD).	
Vendor City Name		A City, Town, Community or Municipality Name. (AKA City Code)	
Vendor State Code		<p>he Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) abbreviation for a state within the United States. Also known as the United States Postal Service (USPS) abbreviation. (AKA State Abbreviation)</p> <p>The following are examples:</p> <p>AL - Alabama, AK - Alaska, AZ - Arizona, MO - Missouri, KS - Kansas</p>	
Vendor Zip Code		A United States Postal Service (USPS) code. The first 5 digits identify the delivery office. The remaining 4 digits identify a specific delivery segment, such as a city block face, a floor of a building, a department within a firm, a group of post office boxes, etc. (AKA Zip Code)	

## 6 Establishing Standard Elements for Shared Data

A number of systems are maintained by a single agency, but provide read-only data for sharing by partner agencies, i.e. one agency is the source of data, and the other agencies consume that data. The National Soil Information System (NASIS) database, as an example, is maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. It contains data useful to the partner agencies. NRCS has set the definition for key elements in the NASIS database. When other agencies use the NASIS data, they use the element definitions established by NRCS to determine the meaning of the data contained in the database.

Data Elements used in identifying a soil survey area.

Attribute Logical Name	Logical Data Type	Description
area_type_name	character	The name of a particular type of area. Area type names include "state", "county", "mlra", etc.
area_symbol	character	A symbol that uniquely identifies a single occurrence of a particular type of area (e.g. Lancaster Co., Nebraska is NE109).
area_name	character	The name given to the specified geographic area.
soil_survey_area_status	character	Identifies the program operational status for the soil survey. Examples are Published and Project.
correlation_date	date	The date expressed as MM/YYYY of final correlation of the soil survey area.

Data elements used in identifying a soil map unit (in addition to those required to identify the corresponding soil survey area).

Attribute Logical Name	Logical Data Type	Description
mapunit_symbol	character	The symbol used to uniquely identify the soil mapunit in the soil survey.
mapunit_status	character	Identifies the current status of the map unit.
mapunit_name	character	Correlated name of the mapunit (recommended name or field name for surveys in progress).

Elements used in identifying a soil map unit component (in addition to those required to identify the corresponding soil survey area and map unit).

Attribute Logical Name	Logical Data Type	Description
component_name	character	Name assigned to a component based on its range of properties.
slope_gradient	floating point	The difference in elevation between two points, expressed as a percentage of the distance between those points. (SSM)
texture_class	character	An expression, based on the USDA system of particle sizes, for the relative portions of the various size groups of individual mineral grains less than 2mm equivalent diameter in a mass of soil.
terms_used_in_lieu_of_texture	character	Substitute terms applied to materials that do not fit into a textural class because of organic matter content, size, rupture resistance, solubility, or another reason.
texture_modifier	character	A term used to denote the presence of a condition or component other than sand, silt, or clay.
class_determining_phase	character	Phase criterion other than slope, texture, and flooding used to identify soil components.

Attributes used in identifying a soil map unit component horizon (in addition to those required to identify the corresponding soil survey area, map unit and component).

Attribute Logical Name	Logical Data Type	Description
horizon_designation	character	The concatenation of three kinds of symbols (four data elements) used in various combinations to designate layers within the soil. (SSM)

## Appendix A – Format for Congressional District Codes

Two-digit number codes are used to represent the congressional districts of each multi-district State of the United States; e.g., the First Congressional District is identified as "01", the Second Congressional District as "02" etc. For a State whose representative is designated "at large", the Congressional District is designated as "00". For an entity with a nonvoting delegate--the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands of the United States--the representational area is designated as "98". For those entities with no representation in the Congress--the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, and the several U.S. minor outlying islands--the area is designated as "99".

To make the number unique, the congressional district code must be preceded by the State numeric code, e.g., the First Congressional District of Arizona would be coded "0401", with the first two digits (04) representing the FIPS State numeric code. All single digit congressional districts must have a leading zero.

The number of representatives allocated to a State, and therefore the number of congressional districts in a State, may change as a result of reapportionment following each Federal decennial census of population. Even without such change, the boundaries of districts may be altered through legislative action by the States or legal action in the courts. Accordingly, where data systems relate to the districts of more than one State and/or Congress, the State and congressional district codes should be followed by a three-digit code to identify each Congress; e.g., the First Congressional District of Arizona for the 95th Congress and the 101st Congress would be coded "0401095" and "0401101," respectively, where the first two digits represent the State, the third and fourth digits identify the congressional district, and the fifth, sixth, and seventh digits designate the number of the Congress. When single and/or two digit codes representing the number of the congress are used in conjunction with this three digit representation, leading zero(s) are required where appropriate.

Source: FIPS PUB 9-1 dated November 30, 1990.

## Appendix B - Establishing Unique Identifiers

The standard elements “Site Identifier” or “Organizational Unit Identifier” should be incorporated into every data store. One of these two identifiers may be made part of each record key to produce nationally unique record identifiers. The objective is to ensure uniqueness in record keys so that data can be easily moved between computers, and so that data can be queried and downloaded from a national/regional server or from another office without clashes. These standard elements can also be included as separate data fields for use as foreign keys to data in the OIP system. The ‘Site Identifier’ should be used when data is not specific to a particular organizational unit or agency at a physical office location. The ‘Organizational Unit Identifier’ should be used to tie the data to a particular organizational component regardless of where it is physically located, and whether or not it moves to a different location.

## Appendix C – References

- Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) <http://www.itl.nist.gov/div897/pubs/index.htm>
- GSA Locator Codes <http://www.gsa.gov/glc/>
- Office Information Profile (OIP) System <http://oip.usda.gov/>