

Data Reliability and Validity

The Department views data reliability and validity as critically important in the planning and assessment of its performance. As such, the Department makes every effort to constantly improve the completeness and reliability of its performance information by performing “data scrubs” (routine examination of current and historical data sets, as well as looking toward the future for trends) to ensure the data we rely on to make day-to-day management decisions are as accurate and reliable as possible and targets are ambitious enough given the resources provided. In an effort to communicate our data limitations and commitment to providing accurate data, this document includes a discussion of data validation, verification, and any identified data limitations for each performance measure presented. The Department ensures each reporting component providing data for this report meets the following criteria as outlined in the OMB, Circular A-11, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*, Section 230.2 (e), paragraph 3:

Performance data need not be perfect to be reliable, particularly if the cost and effort to secure the best performance data possible will exceed the value of any data so obtained. Agencies must discuss in their assessments of the completeness and reliability of the performance data any limitations on the reliability of the data. Additionally, agencies should discuss in their PARs efforts underway to improve the completeness and reliability of future performance information as well as any audits, studies, or evaluations that attest to the quality of current data or data collection efforts.