

## COUNTY NAME

## STANDARD

Data following this standard should conform to the following:

DATA TYPE	Character
SYNTAX	County name, up to a maximum of 50 characters
RANGE	Letters A-Z and punctuation marks
RECOMMENDED FIELD NAME	COUNTY

## INSTRUCTIONS

As of the approval date, this data element will be used in any new automated system, data set, database, or information application, including new Geographic Information System (GIS) data and applications. This data element will also be used in any major modifications to existing systems or versions of these data-related items that use names to uniquely identify counties, and other entities treated as the equivalents of counties for legal and/or statistical purposes, in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the possessions (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, U.S. Minor Outlying Islands, and Virgin Islands) and freely associated areas (Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands) of the United States, and the trust territory of Palau.

Staff are strongly encouraged to utilize this data element in existing systems, data sets, databases, and information applications. Where existing systems and data-related items are not in compliance, they should be modified to achieve compatibility and implement this data standard.

Counties in different states can have the same name. Therefore, in data systems concerned with the identification of counties in more than one State, the county names must be used in conjunction with the full State name and/or its corresponding two-letter alpha code.

The Service data standard for State Name and Alpha Code can be viewed [here](#). It references the full State names and unique two-letter FIPS alphabetic codes for representing the 50 States, the District of Columbia and the outlying areas of the United States, and associated areas.

County names, State names, and the two-letter State alphabetic codes will be handled as separate data fields in any new or modified automated system, and will not be combined in a single data field.

## SAMPLE DATA FOLLOWING THIS STANDARD

None available.

**RELATED REFERENCE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

**Important Notice:** Effective September 2, 2008, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced in the [Federal Register, Volume 73, No. 170](#) (73FR 51276), that the Secretary of Commerce approved the withdrawal of 10 FIPS Publications, including FIPS 6-4. These FIPS were withdrawn because they are obsolete or have not been updated to adopt current voluntary industry standards, federal specifications, federal data standards, or current good practices for information security.

**Transition from FIPS to ANSI:** The U.S. Census Bureau is the maintenance agency for the 2-digit and 3-digit codes for states, counties, and equivalent entities. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the maintenance agency for codes of named populated places, primary divisions of counties, and other locational entities covered under the former FIPS 55-3, "Codes for Named Populated Places, Primary County Divisions, and Other Locational Entities of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Outlying Areas".

The FIPS 55 guideline is being redesigned by the USGS to use the Identifier (ID) codes from the [Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#), which never change. This new proposed standard will be submitted for approval and accreditation by the [American National Standards Institute](#) (ANSI). Refer to the **FIPS 55 PUBLICATION CHANGE NOTICE** below, effective January 1, 2006, for USGS contact information and details on the proposed standard.

While the USGS has proposed adoption of the GNIS Identifier as the standard code for named places and county subdivisions, the GNIS ID for states, counties, and equivalent entities is a **supplemental** code that does not replace 2-digit state and 3-digit county codes maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Applicable policies:

[Part 274, FW 2, Establishing Service Data Standards](#)