**Metadata Policy Sample**

# Purpose

# The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the creation, management, and dissemination of metadata associated with datasets published by [Agency]. This policy aims to ensure data quality, consistency, and interoperability, facilitating data discovery, accessibility, and reuse.

# Scope

This policy applies to all datasets created, collected, or maintained by [Agency].

# Definitions

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **Metadata** | Structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource. |
| **Metadata standards** | Guidelines and specifications for creating, managing, and maintaining metadata |
| **Metadata repository** | A central location where metadata is stored and managed. |
| **Dataset** | A collection of related data elements organized in a structured format. |
| **Data Steward** | An individual responsible for managing a dataset and ensuring its quality and metadata accuracy. |
| **NIEM Core** | A framework designed to facilitate the exchange of information across different domains, such as justice, public safety, emergency management, and health which is part of the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM). |

# Policy

All [AGENCY] employees must adhere to established metadata standards when creating, managing, or using metadata.

## Metadata Standards

All metadata must conform to the following standards:

* **NIEM Core:** A standardized set of data components that can be used across multiple domains to ensure interoperability and consistent information exchange.
* **Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Metadata Standard**: A standard for geospatial metadata.

For federally funded projects, your agency may need to adhere to ISO 19115 which is an international standard for describing geographic information and services.

## Metadata Model

* The [AGENCY] Metadata Model defines the minimum set of metadata that must accompany all data created or acquired by [AGENCY]. To provide a framework for managing metadata on the Open Data Portal, categories have been defined and all metadata will be categorized according to these categories.
* All Agency information systems are expected to include the following data elements in each of the following categories.

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| **Element** | **Description** | **Example** |
| **Title** | A descriptive name of the dataset | Food Banks |
| **Description** | A summary of the dataset, including its purpose and contents | Donations and Population served by the Localities as reported by Federation of Virginia Food Banks |
| **Agency** | The entity responsible for publishing the service or resource. | VDH, VEC, USDA |
| **Date** | The date when the dataset was created or published | 01/01/2022 |
| **Classification** |  | Tier 0-3; Highly Confidential |
| **Categories/Subject** | Keywords or phrases describing the dataset’s content | Economic, Environmental, Public Safety |
| **Update Frequency** | Planned refresh or update cycle | Annually, Monthly, Daily, Hourly, Ad hoc |
| **Format** | The file format of the dataset | CSV, JSON, XML |
| **Optional** | | |
| **Source** | Information about the origin of the dataset. | CRM Production system |
| **Identifier** | A unique identifier for the dataset | COVODGA1000A |
| **Rights** | Information about rights held in and over the dataset, including licensing | Public domain, COV only |

## Metadata Creation and Maintenance

* Metadata must be created at the same time as the dataset and updated whenever the dataset is modified.
* Confidential or sensitive information must not be included in metadata without proper authorization.
* Change management and version control processes must be used to ensure proper auditing and management.
* Metadata records must be reviewed annually by the Data Stewards to ensure they remain accurate and relevant.
* Metadata will be retained for data that has been deleted including the date of deletion for a period of two years after the deletion date.

## Quality Assurance

* Data Owners in conjunction with their designated Data Steward shall monitor and verify the quality of system metadata to ensure it is accurate, consistent, and reliable.
* Metadata must be reviewed by a second party to ensure accuracy and completeness before publication.
* Automated tools may be used to check for compliance with metadata standards and identify errors.

## Publication and Accessibility

* A metadata repository must be established, or the agency may use ODGA’s centralized metadata repository, to store and manage metadata.
* Metadata must be in a machine-readable format to facilitate data discovery and reuse.
* Metadata must be made accessible to authorized users in a timely manner.
* Data Owners in conjunction with their designated Data Stewards shall implement and maintain appropriate security measures for system metadata, including setting access permissions and ensuring encryption as needed.
* It is recommended that Metadata be made available to all Commonwealth of Virginia employees unless a data set is specifically requested to have its metadata restricted.

## Compliance and Enforcement

* Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all departments and individuals involved in dataset management.
* Non-compliance may result in corrective actions as determined by the [Agency] leadership.

## Training and Support

* Training sessions on metadata standards such as NIEM Core and best practices will be provided to all data stewards and relevant personnel by the [Agency] Data Governance team and the Office of Data Governance and Analytics (ODGA)
* Ongoing support and resources will be available through the [Agency] Data Steward and the Office of Data Governance and Analytics (ODGA).

## Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed and updated annually from the approval date, or more frequently if appropriate. Any staff members who wish to make any comments about the Policy may forward their suggestions to [AGENCY Contact].

## Related Policies

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| **[AGENCY] Policies, Standards and Procedures** |
| Data Governance Policy |
| Data Protection Policy |

The [Agency] adheres to all Commonwealth Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM) policies and standards for security and architecture [Policies, Standards & Guidelines | Virginia IT Agency](https://www.vita.virginia.gov/policy--governance/policies-standards--guidelines/).

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|  | **VITA Related Policies** |
| IT Information Security Policy - SEC519 |
| Information Security Standard - SEC530 |
| IT Risk Management Standard - SEC520 |

# Version History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version Number** | **Revision Date** | **Description of Change** | **Author** |
| V1 | 5/29/2024 | Initial Draft | Chris Burroughs |
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