

Xan Wedel (KS)
Chair
Annette Watters (AL)
Vice-Chair
Pam Harris (MT) and
Pam Schenker (FL)
Secretary

NATIONAL STATE DATA CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

*Representing a Network of 1,800
SDC/BIDC Data Centers and Affiliates Nationwide*

Julie Hoang (CA)
Richard Rathge (ND)
Carol Rogers (IN)
Robert Scardamalia
(NY)
Jane Traynham (MD)

We Bring Value-Added Census Data and Education to the User

State Data Center Steering Committee Meeting June 18-20, 2007 Suitland, MD

Monday, June 18, 2007
SDC Session

Welcome and Introductions

CLO Office - Renee, Frank, Barbara, and Maria were present, in addition to Nicole Fiol Molina (summer intern from Puerto Rico).

Renee thanked her staff for setting up this meeting.

All members of the steering committee were present except for Richard Rathge.

Steering Committee Issues

2007 SDC Steering committee Elections

Xan passed out a grid that showed the SDC steering committee term limits. Carol, Richard and Jane's positions are up for re-election. The committee encourages SDC leads and affiliates that have an interest to run.

John Blodgett will continue to host the voting system for elections. Carol offered to program the voting through Indiana's site if needed in the future.

The steering committee would like to recruit people to the steering committee to ensure that there is a good geographic representation on the committee. Also, the committee hopes that people that help lead / present at the annual meeting, may become interested in running for the steering committee in the future. Discussion also centered on how to keep past steering committee members in the loop in order to keep their expertise on important issues. One avenue is to have topic driven subcommittees.

Communications Discussion

The committee discussed ways to better communicate with the network such as:

- Putting more communications out on the clearinghouse website;
- Using a RSS feed to let subscribers know when the site is updated;
- Contacting tree states after the monthly conference call meeting and let them know what is going on - either via email or via conference call.

The committee also discussed ways to help new representatives from states:

- Prepare a SDC Welcome Wagon with information that new people would find helpful;
- Continue with the mentoring system which Xan recently started;
- Conduct conference calls between Steering Committees and tree states. Renee volunteered to look into the setup for these calls.. This could be monthly or every other month;
- Open up some conference calls to non-steering committee members to call in for the second half of the meeting for topic oriented discussions;

Other communication discussion topics were:

- Use web surveys to ask about topics and get the feedback to the network. Some suggestions were - LUCA - workshops, topics for the fall meeting; what else do we do in addition to Census activities (share knowledge that may go beyond the Census Bureau data).
- Promote and encourage use of the expertise of the network and what training is being offered. These are topics that could go up on the clearinghouse website. Start sharing by setting up a forum and a calendar.
- Use of webinars in conjunction to presentations at the annual meetings. The Census Bureau has "live meeting" but it is limited to 20 participants, but this may be sufficient. In addition Indiana University has the ability to setup webinars.
- Use of subcommittees populated with members outside of the steering committee. Subcommittee members could be invited to join the steering committee's monthly conference call based on the topic.

In addition, the committee discussed the possibility of updating the steering committee / tree state assignments.

1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Freddie Navarro, Assistant Division Chief, American Community Survey Statistical Design

Freddie covered four topics - mechanics of sampling; confidentiality; weighting and tabulation; and reliability.

Housing units that do not respond to the survey or are subsampled out are not eligible to be included in the sample. Based on the 2005 ACS, there were 1,259,653 housing units and 2,913,796 persons in sampled occupied units.

ACS sample for 2005 was 1% based on interview housing units (occupied and vacant). Sampling rates vary by state and for the US the sampling rate was about 40%. Releasing more than a 1% sample will compromise the confidentiality of the data. About 40 of the states have a sample less than 2%. For example, in California, the sample is about 1.7%. The Bureau is concerned that if they release all the data in the full ACS sample, then the ACS response rate may suffer.

For 2001 to 2004, the ACS full sample were released (only at the state level), but safeguards were in place to protect the data. The sample size was similar to Current Population Survey (CPS).

CPS releases the entire file in the PUMS file - population \geq 100,000 (state, county, metropolitan, and principle city). Their sample is about $\frac{1}{4}$ the ACS sample and it is hierarchical. There are times where the weights represent other areas and should not be used to tabulate estimates for specific areas. The CPS design is a state based sample with select PSUs within a state. Sample size is about 60,000 housing units per month.

For the ACS sample, the housing unit is selected systematically from a sorted list, while the person sample is based on a cluster. The cluster is defined as the household. In addition to the standard ACS confidentiality procedures, more protection is taken. No geographic level except PUMA is released and additional edits are done. For example, age is topcoded as is income.

For the ACS PUMS, there are separate weights for housing units and for persons. PUMS weights should be very close to the ACS weights. To create a weighted estimate for a race category and income, add the household weights. Also, users are encouraged to calculate standard errors and factor them into their analysis. There are 2 methods for reliability - direct standard errors using replicate weights (same methodology used for the full ACS); and generalized standard errors using design factors (what was used for the Census 2000, it is a simpler approach, but the results are not as accurate). Design factors were calculated for 2005, and will not be recalculated every year, may do again after 2010.

If you are concerned that 1 year at 1% does not provide reliable data, multiple years of ACS PUMS can be tabulated together. If this is done, then the estimate is not a one-year estimate, then it is a two-year estimate. If the statistic does not typically change much over time, then this would be okay. However if you are looking at an impact of a recent social program (looking at unemployment rate) you may not want to combine the data. If you combine 2 years of data, need to adjust the weights (divide by the number of years). The Bureau will be providing guidance on how to combine data across years.

The last 2 slides presented showed the difference between the ACS full sample and the ACS PUMS as well as the 2000 PUMS. The ACS PUMS are comparable to the full ACS but with the smaller sample resulting in a trade off on reliability.

The steering committee inquired as to whether it is possible to have a higher level of PUMS data available at a higher geographic level - (greater than 1% at the state level only)? The Bureau agreed to consider the request and assess if it will be possible to release the entire ACS sample at the state level.

ACS Custom Tabulations Discussions

Doug Hillmer, Assistant Division Chief for Data Products, American Community Survey Office

Doug's office will put out a list of all custom tabs that have been done by quarter. The office has had a few cases recently where the customer wanted a local custom tab, and in these cases it would have been good to direct them to the State Data Center to respond first. The steering committee agreed to have these requests directed to the SDCs. In addition, if the request just requires reformatting, the state data center would be happy to assist with these requests.

Doug gave an update on the joint project for defining rural statistical areas (see past steering committee meeting minutes). He passed out a Department of Commerce joint project agreement that would need to be signed by each state that is participating. The goal for the first round (end of this year) is to publish ACS 2006 for areas and to determine geographic areas. The project would require states to look at the data. They will do this in 2008 with 2007 sample and 2009 with 2008 sample. This project would also help to better define PUMAs. The Bureau is also working with Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (ERS) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) on this project.

Another goal is to look at 65,000 and 100,000 population thresholds and compare the data. What best meets the needs for a rural area? If discontinuous areas are allowed, then areas with similar demographics could be combined to meet the threshold. Doug handed out a sheet with 6 questions or topics that will be pursued under this project.

The steering committee indicated that it "would be useful for the rural states to have "remainder of state" published along with the counties in the single-year products; and that the rural states would be interested in an ACS pop size component of the state, such as counties with less than 20,000, counties with 20,000-64,999, and counties with 65,000 or more". Also, the suggestion was made that the Bureau may wish to pursue other Commissions and Mike Ratcliff said that they would talk to ERS and ARC about this.

Statistical Area Guidelines Discussion

The steering committee reviewed the Federal Register notices to determine if the committee should respond to them or let individual states respond on their own. The notices discussed were from Friday April 6, 2007, volume 72, number 66 - Census County Division (CCD) and Equivalent Entities Program for the 2010 Census - proposed change and proposed criteria; Census Designated Places; Census Tracts; Block Groups.

These notices suggested the elimination of CCDs and changes to CDPs such that they must consist of a core area; be a contiguous cluster of census blocks; and may not be located within another incorporated place or another CDP. There were also changes to census block groups and census tracts.

The deadline for response to the Federal Register notice was July 5, 2007. Mike Ratcliffe briefed the committee on these changes and their implications and summarized the major changes.

The block groups are the most substantial proposed change - raising the minimum population threshold to 1,200 from 600 (300 for Indian reservations), due to data reliability. This increase affects over 50% of the block groups in the country. It would have a substantial impact to small area geography and data availability. Some geographies use block groups for small statistical data (building permits for planning), etc. in addition to Census data.

The Bureau's concern with the ACS is that you may not get as much of the detailed socioeconomic data if the block group definition does not change. The change for census tracts would be to lower the census tracts to a minimum of 1,200 and keeping the maximum at 8,000 (optimum has been about 4,000). The Bureau is trying to get the word out regarding the implications of changing the definitions versus the reliability and availability of the ACS data.

Discussion included questions regarding building radius based tabulations. Disclosure rules may not allow this, but the Bureau has been looking at displaying data by grids and variable sized grids.

Part of the notice includes changing the block / CDP boundaries such that they do not have to follow physical features. This is because the Bureau will have latitude / longitude for each address. The voting districts do not have to follow physical features and should this flow over to other geographies.

No substantive changes to CDPs, just that there is some population or housing. This is in response to the elimination of the minimum population for CDPs in 2000. The Bureau would not recognize CDPs that were coexistent for towns and townships in the Northeast and in Minnesota, etc. (12 MCP states)

The question that the Bureau had was do governments use CCDs. The comments to date are to retain CCDs. They have learned why they need to be retained. Health programs are analyzed by CCDs in the Pacific Northwest and policy decisions are being made in the health community. Tennessee requested that they drop CCDs and use County Commission Districts. The Bureau is contemplating shifting them to a Minor Civil Division state and use Tennessee County Commission Districts for the subcounty geography. These geographies need to remain stable for the decade. There are 28 MCD states.

The responses thus far for block groups have been that areas do not want the threshold increased. New Jersey would like their townships treated as places and this will be addressed in publication (since there were duplications in 2000).

There needs to be coordination in the delineation of the census tracts, etc. The plan is for the Bureau to mail out materials (MAF/TIGER partnership software) all the boundaries and line work, update the boundaries using the software. Publish final criteria in early 2008; identify participants (start with 2000 list and try to go to regional planning councils); mail out in the late summer 2008; 4 months to review and update the materials; Census Regional offices will do initial review; upload into MAF/TIGER database. Spring / mid 2009, should have most of the statistical area boundaries in the database and it will sit until 2009 BAS is complete and there will be time for review by the SDCs.

Business Meeting and 2007 SDC National Meeting planning Session

The committee discussed a variety of ideas to make the annual meeting better based on feedback from past meetings. A sample of ideas was:

- Set up a session at the annual meeting for the steering committee to meet and greet their tree states.
- Committee members could send out a short note to their tree states after each steering committee monthly phone call to fill them in on what was discussed (not official meeting minutes).
- A "new members" session to explain the program and what is available and what is not available i.e. "tips for new members".

- Identify the steering committee by attaching ribbons to the badges. Identify new members as well or first time attendees by a colored ribbon as well.
- Introductions of attendees should be done initially on the first day.
- Encourage all presenters to provide a handout.
- Budget ample time for questions.
- Include sufficient breaks.
- Use of tracks to offer information to both the experienced SDC'er as well as the newcomer.

The 30th anniversary of the SDC network is in 2008, so the committee discussed planning and promoting the annual meeting with this in mind.

Some ideas for sessions and / or breakout sessions that were discussed during the 3 day meeting were:

- Calculating statistical significance
- Data Ferret
- Microdata Access - CPS
- ACS - aggregate samples
- ACS - multiyear estimates
- ACS PUMS
- Tree state meet and greet
- Newcomer welcome session
- Geography update - LUCA briefing
- Partnership program - field
- Census 2010 planning update and impact for SDCs
 - Communication contract - update
 - DADS II contract - Advanced Query for 2010
 - Complete Count Committee
- SDC led sessions
- Methodology
 - Oversampling
 - Undercounting
 - Unduplication - LUCA
 - Small multi-unit enumeration
- Management of 2010 from the field - regional offices
- Small multi unit enumeration
- LED on the map
 - How states are using the data
- Buying data - what sources are out there
- Residency rules - comparing 2010 Census and ACS
- ACS multi-year research results
- County-to-county migration data
- Multi-racial issues
- SDC Basics
- Reception / Exhibitor combination at the hotel

Tuesday, June 19, 2007
Joint Sessions (CIC/FSCPE/SDC)

Welcome and Introductions

Renee Jefferson-Copeland

Linda Gage - Steering FSCPE

Xan Wedel - Steering SDC - presentation of a "bell" to CLO to get meetings started

Enrique Lamas - Chief Population Division

Howard Shih - Chair CIC

Preston "Jay" Waite, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer

These are exciting times at the Census Bureau, as we are gearing up for the 2010 Census.

Staffing announcements: The President nominated Dr. Steve Murdock to be the new Director of the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau also filled 2 key positions - Marilia Matos - Associate Director for Field; Teresa Angueira- Associate Director for Decennial Census.

Update on SIPP (Survey of Income and Program Participation) / DEWS (Dynamics of Economic Well-being System).- SIPP has had some challenges, very complicated processing system (caused data to not be timely); long and detailed questionnaire (interview every month for 4 years). DEWS was to be a very quick and full court press to fix the issues that were identified. Initially it was thought that there was going to be a 4-month gap between the discontinuing of SIPP and the start of DEWS. It then became evident that the data gap was going to be more than 4-months, it would be more like 16-months. The Bureau wanted to test the improvements while doing SIPP during this next panel and then incorporate the changes into the following panel of SIPP. Since the plans initially called to move to DEWS, the funding is not sufficient to do a full panel. 21,800 households in SIPP - is all that they can fund at this time, which is not a full panel (45,000). There are legislative bills to try to fund it completely, but that is a long way off.

It was thought that the same categories needed to be on the "short form" and on ACS. There was not enough room within the classifications of membership within a household, so the decision was to omit "foster children", since it was the smallest group. Also, if a grandchild is present, that child should be indicated as such on the response, not "foster child". The Casey Foundation and others wanted this category, so a compromise was reached and "foster child" will be on the ACS, but not on the "short form".

LUCA is coming and letters have gone out to the highest elected officials. They believe that they have made major improvements in LUCA this time. In August an invitation letter will go out to local governments. Other improvements for LUCA: MAF/TIGER is realigning the streets; free software to local governments; various methods (options) for participation; states can participate. **There is nothing that a local government can do that is more important than participating in LUCA.** The 2010 is a census of housing units, so it is important that the address list is accurate.

The questions for Jay Waite revealed the following:

- The Bureau found duplication of people in 2000. Finding the duplicates is not as much the issue as it is how to resolve the duplication. Even sending enumerators out to verify does not always unravel the duplication (both addresses say that person lives there).
- Local governments should identify the group quarter, as it is harder to identify than in the past.
- There really isn't any wiggle room in LUCA, unless they shorten the time for communities to review the feedback. The Bureau starts putting questionnaires in the mail in July 2009.

Census Bureau Update

The American Community Survey Update

Susan Schechter, Chief, American Community Survey Office

Susan presented an overview of activities during the past six months and what is coming for the next six months. The upcoming release will include group quarters. Those tables that can have group quarters will have "total population". There will be tables for the 7 major group quarter types. There will be a disconnect between the 2005 and 2006 data. The profiles have been reorganized and changed a bit. There will be a link to show when to use intercensal population estimates; and guidelines for comparing 2006 ACS and Census 2000 and 2006 ACS and 2005 ACS. By early July they will be able to send out a sample of what they are proposing and get feedback from the networks. Currently under discussion is a traffic-light approach for data comparisons; do not compare (red), compare with caution (yellow), and ok to compare (green), but there may be a need for an orange classification.

The 2006 ACS data, tables, and profiles will be released in August and September. Group quarter profiles will be in the last release.

She reviewed highlights from the 2007 methods panel (grid vs sequential questionnaire design). The sequential questionnaire performed better (persons at the top, instead of rows). The second test is getting ready to be launched - "field of degree", for those that have a bachelors or higher. One version contains a fixed list of categories where another is an open-ended question.

The proposed 2008 ACS Content Changes are based on the 2006 content test - 7 population questions; 5 housing questions; 3 new questions. There is currently a Federal Registry Notice and the Bureau hopes to get clearance from OMB by end of July 2007.

The Multi-Year Estimates are period estimates not point in time estimates, based on the geography in the most recent year and also adjusted to meet the value of the dollar in the most recent year. Please review the data and give feedback to the Bureau on the multi-year estimate research. The first production of multi-year estimates will be released in 2008, based on 2005-2007 data.

Susan discussed the NAS (National Academies of Science) recommendations including:

Funding levels

Currently president's budget only allows for testing of efficiencies, not a fully-funded methods panel

Developing a comprehensive program for user education, outreach and feedback

How the Bureau can take in the feedback from data users. They need to develop a feedback mechanism in order to meet the needs of data users especially with the challenge to help users understand multi-year estimates. There is a variety of data users with a wide array of needs.

Research and evaluation ideas

The Bureau has been doing research and evaluation since 1996. The program has been extended and more formalized. Susan outlined the criteria that is needed for research projects and highlighted the 44 projects that have been undertaken.

Questions and discussion shed light on:

The draft of ACS reads - "do not include" deployed military. The ACS is controlled to the population estimates, but there is no way to adjust the estimates for some of the "deployed". The population controls of military that are deployed are at the national and state level, but may not be at the county level.

For the 2006 ACS, only large states will have group quarter estimates.

Now is a good time for users to suggest display options for ACS data in American Fact Finder (AFF). One suggestion would be to get a single display to show the 1, 3, and/or 5-year estimate(s) side by side.

The recommendations call for an "advisory group", and the SDC, CIC, and FSCPE networks represent a large array of users. The Bureau currently has "groups" and is trying to determine how to use the groups / organizational advocates that are in place and determine how to do this without setting up a new "advisory group".

Some concerns about the ACS are the appearance of a disconnect with those receiving the ACS and not know if they should be "filling" it out if it is a seasonal residence. Also, others see it as being intrusive. People do not understand the value of the information.

The SDC network receives calls for assistance with data from the ACS and wants to ensure that we are giving out the same information as the Bureau. An inquiry was made as to whether the Bureau has a script of the "importance", etc. The Bureau is preparing a list of Frequently Asked Questions for ACS.

The introduction of group quarters into ACS has caused confusion regarding HIPAA laws. The Bureau has worked with NCES and NCHS regarding FERPA and HIPAA respectively. They will also work with state health departments as suggested.

GQ Enhancement for Decennial

Jim Farber, Program Manager for Survey Redesign, Decennial Statistical Methods Division

To update the group quarter inventory the Bureau is acquiring multiple files (FSCPEs and others), merging them, and having them validated in field operations. Over representation is good, because it is easier to have field staff delete a record than it is to have them identify and add a new record.

Someone else will take over the role of program coordinator, as Jim has moved on to a new job. The Bureau will invite FSCPE participation this fall and it will come from management. The group indicated that this letter should go to the FSCPEs directly. The timeline shows a long period for response / acceptance of files. Final specifications will be released in November 2007. This gives time for intermediate feedback and iterations of files back and forth with the FSCPEs. Final records must be received by May 1, 2008. Final file specifications will be coming; and there will be options for the file layouts. There needs to be a group quarter name and address, and should be a Census 2000 tabulation block and tract and also latitude and longitude for each record.

Questions and discussions led to the following:

It was suggested that if the FSCPEs do not elect to participate in a state, that the SDCs fill the gap and be invited to participate. It is still unknown whether there will be funding for this effort.

A suggestion was made to add Excel as a format, since it is an export option in most GIS applications. Also, in the past, states have tried to submit to the Bureau Regional Office dates for 'spring break', so enumerators do not show up during this time. It would be good if there was a way to incorporate this into operations, knowing that the enumerators should verify and contact the group quarter in advance to determine if the dates are good for canvassing.

County-to-County Migration Data Products - ACS

Doug Hillmer, Assistant Division Chief for Data Products, American Community Survey Office

Open discussion session to exchange ideas. He was joined by Kin Koerber and Celia Boertlein from the Journey to Work and Migration Statistics Branch

Kin summarized a presentation / paper that he made to PAA regarding state-to-state flows using the 2005 ACS. The full paper is on the Census Bureau's website. The paper looked at the reliability of the data and the state-to-state migration flows. About 2/3 of the estimates can be considered to have acceptable reliability - (estimate significantly different from 0). The paper looked at ins / outs and net migration and they seemed to be reasonable. The data got a bit fuzzy when you looked at subpopulations (65+, foreign-born, etc.). They are continuing to do research on this topic. This was based on the one-year data and they will also look at the 3-year estimates.

The Bureau has looked at net migration flows and population controls but they have not looked at IRS data. A discussion also centered on whether county-to-county flows would be useful for very small areas.

Planning Database Update

J Gregory Robinson, Special Assistant for Demographic Analysis, Population Division
Antonio Bruce, Demographic/Mathematical Statistician, Population Division

The discussion centered mostly on the tract-level planning database that was used for Census 2000. This database included a range of housing, demographic, and socioeconomic variables and provided a systematic way to identify hard to enumerate areas.

The Bureau has developed a hard-to-count score based on 12 factors. They are looking at more sophisticated ways (factor analysis) to develop this score. The planning database can be used to systematically profile the characteristics of the population on a hard-to-count continuum. For example, the planning database shows how low mail response rates are associated with concentrations

of renters, high poverty rates, and other specific variables. It can be used to help identify areas with concentrations of linguistically isolated households.

For 2010, enhancements will include mapping capabilities and will be online and will combine more sophisticated reports. The Bureau plans to test the enhanced version in the 2008 dress rehearsal sites.

CLO Update

Annual Report Update

Barbara LaFleur, Customer Liaison Office

If states do not submit their report, then the Bureau will not pay for their travel to the annual meeting.

Steering Committee Planning Meeting

Planning for the Annual Meeting

The steering committee continued to discuss topics for sessions and / or breakout sessions. This discussion continued into Wednesday morning. The discussion also centered on what "computer-based" sessions that may be offered and the possibility of having concurrent sessions.

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

SDC Session Planning Session

Planning for the Annual Meeting

The steering committee continued their discussion and planning for the annual meeting.

Subcommittees

The steering committee discussed the formation of subcommittees. These subcommittees would be open to anyone in the network. Some possible topics for these subcommittees could be:

- ACS Concerns and Rural Issues - Project in the Census Bureau to define rural areas
- Training / Live Meeting Sessions
 - Geography - contiguous vs. discontinuous
 - PUMS
 - Weights
- Communications / Website / Federal Agency Programs
- ACS Products and Profiles
- SDC Products
- Mentors
- LUCA Response Team

The formation of subcommittees will be discussed further at the annual meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm