

NATIONAL STATE DATA CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

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

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

State Data Center (SDC) Steering Committee Conference Call – ACS Review Pilot Project May 4, 2010 3:10 pm EST

Participants:

Steering Committee	Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office (CLMSO):	Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE)	Housing and Household Economic Statistics (HHES)	American Community Survey Office (ACSO)	Population Division
Amy Bittner Pam Schenker Lenny Gaines Jane Traynham Sue Copella Barbara Ronningen	Frank Ambrose Barbara LaFleur Nelson Colón	Linda Gage Jim Sylvester Jack Baker Jan Vink Ken Darga	Nicole Scanniello Scott Boggess David Johnson	Kai Wu Grace Clemons Dave Raglin	Jason Devine Tori Velkoff Rodger Johnson

The SDC Steering Committee was asked to join the monthly conference call for the FSCPE Steering Committee to discuss the American Community Survey (ACS) Review Pilot project. This pilot project was devised to allow SDCs and FSCPEs the opportunity to review unresolved ACS measures and provide comments and feedback to the Census Bureau. HHES has been leading this effort on the Census Bureau's end.

There are three main challenges with getting the ACS Review Pilot project off the ground:

1. The information that can be provided for the Review can only be data that is published. The Census Bureau cannot provide unpublished ACS data because not all SDC and FSCPE representatives have Special Sworn Status and there is also a logistical concern because the data would have to be reviewed at the Census Bureau's headquarters. The HHES office will have to go through all unresolved items and extract the data that will be published. There was a question regarding the ability to view all unresolved measures including ones that the Census Bureau has worked out. The problem with this is that HHES cannot manage the project this way because they do not have the resources. Another question was posed about the value to the SDCs and FSCPEs for working on this project. HHES feels that the benefit of this pilot project is receiving comments from experienced data users, which Census Bureau data analysts can then use in the future.
2. Due to the embargo suspension, data for the ACS pilot project cannot be provided until after it is published. If the embargo status is regained, there is a possibility that the data could be provided before it is released. But, even if the embargo suspension is lifted, HHES does not have the resources this year to provide the SDCs and FSCPEs with unresolved cases before the data release. However, this is something that can be considered for the future if the pilot program is a success. What is the benefit of SDC and FSCPE participation? ACS might be able to do something about data that the SDCs and FSCPEs feel does not look accurate. The review will help lead ACSO to data sources or information that strengthens the process that ACSO uses to review data. It would be helpful if SDCs and FSCPEs could see all anomalies in the ACS data, even the ones that the Census Bureau has found explanations. If all data anomalies are given to

SDCs and FSCPEs, detailed explanations will not be provided, only a clearance category is presented. To pursue this avenue, ACSO will first have to investigate the volume for number of failures.

3. The final challenge is that HHES does not have the resources to process comments from multiple respondents. This is why having one person or place for the comments to be compiled and submitted is ideal. HHES needs someone to step up for the coordination of this effort. An option posed by the SDC Steering Committee Chair was to use a SharePoint site through the SDC Clearinghouse website. To access this site, SDCs and FSCPEs would need to have an ID and password. Other options: HHES has thought about using the Embargo site, but does not know how this would work for uploading information. If the data is uploaded to a site outside the Census Bureau's firewall, there would be a limited amount of communication between the Census Bureau, SDCs, and FSCPEs. HHES will check with the ACSO about the possibility of having data posted on an outside website. FSCPEs do have the ability to upload information to a FTP site, but that would not consolidate the data into one file. The question is how secure does the site need to be to access the data and upload comments? Another concern that was raised was if the data is already published and the analyst has moved on to other projects, comments on the unresolved measures are moot for the initial data release. The benefit will be seen in the future. Then if the issue comes back in the next year's release, and if the analyst looks at past comments, it can help the current review of data. Analysts will not have a need to access the comments until the next year of data is released.

Next steps:

The best place to start in moving forward is to examine the initial proposal of the pilot project and review the list of unresolved issues. Another step would be to set up a conference call with the SDC Clearinghouse host, the SDC and FSCPE Steering Committee Chairs, and HHES. In the mean time, something as simple as collecting all the information from SDCs and FSCPEs and compiling it into a spreadsheet and sending it to the Census Bureau could be accomplished for the initial stage of the project. There could even be a spreadsheet submitted for each group, SDC and FSCPE. The SDC and FSCPE Steering Committee Chairs volunteered to coordinate the efforts of this pilot project.

Call adjourned 3:55 pm EST for the SDC Steering Committee.