

Charles Rynerson

My career as a demographer now spans 30 years, with experiences ranging from knocking on doors doing surveys and enumerations, to building estimate and forecast models, to hundreds of speaking appearances. But nothing in my work is more rewarding than direct contact with data users, whether one-on-one or in workshops. People who discover that the data they need is easily accessible and typically free of charge sincerely appreciate the public service that comes bundled with local expertise and context. It is their feedback that keeps me engaged in my job.

1) What do I think the primary role of the Steering Committee is or should be?

The primary role of the Steering Committee is to maintain and strengthen the partnership between the Census Bureau and the SDC network for the mutual benefit of all parties -- the states, the Bureau, and the data using public.

2) What would my primary goal(s) be as a member?

My primary goal as a Steering Committee member is to engage the entire network, including restoring the in-person annual meeting and providing products or services that benefit the state affiliate networks.

3) What is your vision for the SDC network for 2017 and beyond?

Every decennial census has unique challenges, but technology and culture are evolving so rapidly that the 2020 Census will be unlike any before in terms of data collection and civic engagement. In 2017 and beyond, the SDCs will be needed to connect their state and its people to the Bureau's effort to count everyone. State and federal leaders who understand the benefit of partnerships and promotion should be willing to make investments that will pay off in the form of a more efficient enumeration and a more complete count.

4) What do you think the SDC network can do to add value to Census data?

Census data is more accessible than ever before, with data dissemination provided by journalists, bloggers, and programmers. This is exciting for those of us who remember waiting for output from summary tape queries, and it gives the Census Bureau valuable exposure to a wide audience. But the SDC network adds value by providing expertise to help users--including local policy makers, investors, scholars, and the media--use data responsibly. If we can help people understand the data and its nuances, they are less likely to make mistakes that might be misleading or costly.