Melissa Stefanini (TN)

Melissa Stefanini is the Director of the State Data Center, the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates member and the Governor's Liaison for the state of Tennessee – housed at the Boyd Center for Business & Economic Research at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Melissa worked for the Boyd Center for five years as a research associate and returned after receiving her master's as the SDC Director in 2015. She has a bachelor's in Economics from Winthrop University and a master's in Agricultural Economics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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

I see the primary role of the Steering Committee as facilitating communication between the network and the Census Bureau. The committee should be the collective voice of concerns and ideas to and from the states, as well as work together to create an annual meeting that accomplishes the role of getting everyone on the same page.

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

As a steering committee member, I would have two primary goals:

1. To continue to nurture the relationships between programs. As the FSCPE member and Governor's Liaison for my state, I hope to serve as an overlap between the programs. I wish to facilitate the work that is already being done to better the communication between the State Data Centers, FSCPE members, Census Information Centers, Data Dissemination Specialists, Governor's Liaisons as well as other programs with the Census Bureau.

2. To provide a fresh perspective. I'm relatively new to the network (1.5 years in) and a part of the millennial generation. I hope to bring a complementary viewpoint on using technology and social media for data dissemination and promoting data products. As a millennial, I hope to share ideas on how to reach the generation that thrives on rapid and concise information at their fingertips as 2020 quickly approaches.

3) What is your vision for the SDC network for 2019 and beyond?

My vision for the network is to continue learning and growing with the Census Bureau. The network's ability to provide quality training and assistance to our residents will continue to improve and as technology progresses, so will we. With 2020 on the horizon, the network will be integral in promoting the decennial census and getting that complete count.

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

A better question may be what can't we do to add value. The network is a group comprised of individuals with different backgrounds, skill sets, and perspectives. This provides a unique opportunity to use the network as beta testers and problem solvers!

• We, as a network, are the everyday data users that work with and regularly assist other data users. We are the consumers of the Census Bureau's data products and, as such, provide thoughtful/valuable feedback on existing and future projects.

• We can help establish efficient methods of sharing data with the data users – we have an understanding of what data the users are after, how they want to pull the data and how to communicate information with them.

• The states' SDCs possess local knowledge that can make Census data more accurate and local contacts that can facilitate relationships with other agencies.