

The last several years I have been in the position of providing data assistance to colleagues and the public as the manager of a coordinating agency within the SDC network. I have learned so much and enjoy being that data liaison as it has helped me to grow in my capabilities to help others. I have a background in public administration, public policy, statistical analysis, higher education, and I utilize a wide variety of software, including GIS, to assist in my work. I am currently rebuilding our www.illinoisdata.com web site that incorporates all Census data for Illinois, including mashups with several other state and federal data sources. I have also built other web data portals incorporating Census data such as the www.enterprisezonesillinois.com site and the <http://dashboard.il60by25.org> site scheduled to be published late January 2016. Each of these projects have enabled me to understand how the Census Data is configured for mapping and the linkages of such complex data. If elected I promise to maintain a sense of humor while looking for ways to improve upon the legacies left behind. I find all of this work very exciting and I look forward to working with the steering committee whether I am elected or not! Thank you so much for all the hard work everyone has volunteered!

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

The steering committee is the glue that maintains the network between the lead agencies, coordinating agencies and all the affiliates. The importance of that role cannot be understated, the provision of the listserv has proven invaluable to me as a member, not just to learn new topics, but also learn who is who throughout our country. I believe that is the most important role and why so many agencies do what they do without compensation or recognition. The steering committee provides the benefits that make it worthwhile supporting the BAS or providing annual reports. There are many other roles, but the networking and education opportunities are primary.

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

My utmost goal would be to bring back the in-person conference. I do not anticipate the Census Bureau being able to provide the funding that has been enjoyed in the past, but it may be possible to do a conference where attendees pay to attend and perhaps the Bureau could help to sponsor, along with other potential vendors. These are all discussions that would need to take place to make sure it fits within expectations of the network and the Bureau, but I believe it would be possible to make this work. The online conference was appreciated, but we lost that ability to network and meet people in-person, which I found so valuable. Learning how others are using the various tools and watching demonstrations in-person have been lost and I really miss that! I am not very imaginative on applications, but when I see other applications I can see how our state could benefit from something

similar. I have a background in conference planning as I was an Executive Director for three associations providing everything from membership management to securing keynote speakers. I would be happy to volunteer and generate some excitement around this idea to see if we could secure some sponsors and make it happen!

A secondary goal would be the provision of webinars. I realize this is also a long discussion because it can be costly and difficult to maintain, but if there is a possibility to get something like this started it may work for those unable to attend the conference stated above!

A third goal would be to reach out and expand the network within Illinois. We have certainly had our challenges the last few years and one way to be more efficient is to ban together those that use the Census data so that there is a centralized communications hub so we can help ourselves internally.

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

These are challenging times so it would be to continue providing the communications services already provided as these are certainly cost-effective, such as the clearinghouse and listserv. Determining how to expand will depend on the volunteer abilities and how to skillfully keep costs very low on any initiative. If planning an annual conference there could be locations throughout the country that offer much cheaper hotel and facility costs. I am not familiar with the networks in other states, but we could certainly use a boost in membership and more activities to maintain interest in Illinois. Participating in the national steering committee would help me learn how other states are communicating and maintaining their state networks in the hopes of forging new partnerships.

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

I have witnessed issues on the listserv with data that the network seems to find and while I know the Bureau has checks and balances in place before publishing the network certainly assists in finding potential problems as it seems like many of the participating agencies are intimately working with the data. It is a big plus as a user on the listserv to be able to ask questions about data that is needed but not provided, such as a category under Education Attainment for certifications or credentials. The federal government has asked that the country focus on having at least 60% of the population being conferred at least a credential or certification by 2025, but there is no data collected on that population. The closest we can find is only how many obtained that level, but they could also hold an associate's and

a bachelor's degree, so the way the question was worded they could be counted three times in the database. The question needs to be asked so it is mutually exclusive to get a more accurate figure. From a public policy standpoint these are important issues to address and the network provides insights and assistance so we all do not have to reinvent every wheel.

The publications and various press releases that are generated stir a lot of interest, at least here in Illinois where we have a lot of residents moving out! This was the first year that I participated in writing up press releases about this phenomenon, where they are moving to, what are their race/ethnicity backgrounds etc. and it gained a lot of popularity. These are opportunities made possible through the recent change allowing coordinating agencies to have embargo access, which really helped to make all the difference from our perspective in getting the word out there as to what is trending in our state and locally. I can see where other agencies could benefit from the exposure of writing the press releases and being recognized as the "go-to" for data assistance, but I am not sure how many take advantage of the opportunity.