

## Walter Schwarm, California

### 1. Brief Biography

Walter Schwarm has been the Director of the California SDC within the Demographic Research Unit since 2016, participating in the Census SDC program as the coordinating agency for a statewide network of 5 regional data centers and 35 affiliate data centers in the most populous state in the nation. Walter joined the Demographic Research Unit in the California Department of Finance in 2006 working with Julie Hoang in the SDC before leading the population projection assignment. From 2003-2006 he was the Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Regional Research Institute at West Virginia University, modeling interstate service sector trading linkages while maintaining the West Virginia population projections. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics from Colorado State University in 2002.

### 2. What special perspective or goals would the nominee bring as a Steering Committee member?

When the SDC program was created in 1978 the goal was to provide an effective vehicle for data dissemination. While this has been one of the longest and most successful partnerships, significant changes have occurred in the areas of data collection, dissemination, and analysis and it is time to position the program for future partnership.

- I would like to see the Steering Committee work with the Census Bureau on improving program support, such as identifying a key Census Bureau employees with the technical expertise to field questions and give timely responses.
- As we enter Census 2020 and following decade will see a wide variety of data and products flowing from the Census Bureau, we need to ensure that data users at all levels have a voice in the development of the policies, tools, and applications used to disseminate and interact with that data.
- We need to find ways to further promote the SDC's value within the Census Bureau and work to reestablish a more balanced communication flow.
- The SDC network's strength is in the combination of our abilities, some of us have small staffs and little resources but much passion, some of us have more resources, some more time. I would hope that we can work to provide greater means by which these varying talents and abilities can be brought together to strengthen our network.

In this time of challenges like Disclosure Avoidance, institutional change within the Bureau, changing demographic, and political climates, we need to be an active voice not only for our local affiliates but also for all data users to ensure that policies and procedures, well intended or not, do not fundamentally damage our collective ability to analyze, inform and advocate for ourselves and our data users.

3. What aspects of the SDC program do you value most?

Data Centers are frequently called upon to provide assistance and support to a wide range of Census operations including training, recruitment, promotion, address and geographic programs, product review, and testing. Over the years, our network has gained in-depth knowledge in all of these areas because we use data intensively, and, because we serve as the face of the Census Bureau in our respective states. I value our ability advocate for our local networks, to provide guidance, and to collaboratively create resources not only locally, but across the SDC network as a whole.