

Research Data and Regional Planning Agencies

For those who are not familiar with California regional planning agencies, here is a recap of responses to my email inquiry from Erik Johnson, public information coordinator for the Sacramento regional planning agency, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).

1. Census State Data Center (SDC) Program - overview information located at:
www.census.gov/sdc/www/

The State Data Center (SDC) Program is one of the Census Bureau's longest and most successful partnerships. It is a cooperative program between the states and the Census Bureau that was created in 1978 to make data available locally to the public through a network of state agencies, universities, libraries, and regional and local governments.

The SDCs also provide training and technical assistance in the use of Census Bureau data for research, administration, planning and decision making to local governments, the business community, researchers, and other interested data users. The expertise of the national State Data Center network has proved to be a valuable source of feedback to the Census Bureau on data use, the operational aspects of decennial and economic census and survey programs, and the various federal-state-local partnership programs that support Census activities.

A list of California SDCs is at www.census.gov/sdc/www/casdc.html

Many SDCs can help data users obtain not only census data, but also referrals to other datasets that may be helpful and important.

2. FedStats - www.fedstats.gov/

A website with data and statistics from more than 100 agencies throughout the federal government. Can be very helpful in a number of settings.

3. California Data - The California Statistical Abstract that is published online (no longer in paper format) and available online through the California Department of Finance unit at:
www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/FS_DATA/STAT-ABS/Statistical_Abstract.asp

There are literally hundreds of tables of state and county level (in few cases major city as well) datasets including sections on Population, Labor Force & Employment, Income & GSP, Health & Welfare, Construction, Transportation & Public Utilities, etc.

4. Our Blueprint project leader wanted me to pass on the following:

I'd just add that attendees should check in on city and counties periodically to see if they're doing general plan updates or big planning and visioning projects because those will have impacts on data once they've concluded. Erik referred to the Blueprint project because of extensive community involvement in the overall process. You can read more about the Blueprint project at www.sacregionblueprint.org/