

Minutes: February 9, 2006 LED Steering Committee Conference Call

Members Present: Greg Weeks, Cynthia Swain, Wande Reweta, Jeremy Wu, Jennifer Marks, Henry Jackson, George Putnam

Agenda items and discussion:

1. LED Training – Census Bureau training did not happen in conjunction with the State Workshop, as it has in years past, because no face-to-face classroom style training is funded. Gary Yakimov is conducting training when a state pays for him to train within their state. In Colorado, ACCRA is bringing Gary in, and students are paying a fee.

Greg said we need analyst training and training on how to operate websites. Jennifer said e-learning modules are coming to the Census Bureau website in a few weeks. There are four modules: Site Tour, QWI Online, Industry Focus, and On The Map. These are for casual users and only show how to navigate the site.

Bryce Stevens, who left the Census Bureau about a year ago, was working on a matrix describing who needed training and what type was needed. Someone could continue this matrix where he left off.

Webinar type training is possible outside the Census Bureau firewall.

The Steering Committee decided to pursue a “train the trainer” approach. Each state can flag one trainer. That person can learn to be a trainer at a central class, then go back to their state and train others. The states will make this happen without Census Bureau support. The LMI Institute should be willing to help coordinate such a class in one central location. Greg will ask both the LMI Institute and all member states what they think of this idea. Data ferret could be added to this training.

2. QWI Definitions

We have good descriptions of each basic variable, but those descriptions are scattered. The Industry Focus tool shows derived measures, for which we don't have good descriptions. We need excellent definitions for every variable on the website, in the right place. Now there is a blue circle with an italic '*i*', next to each variable. You click on the '*i*' and get a pop window with a definition that is not always the best. To find more information, you may need to look through technical papers in the library. Instead, we could have a pop-up window with a better simple definition and three choices: expanded definition, example, equation. This way, users could drill down to more information, if needed.

Jennifer will poll Steering Committee members for their opinions on how best to define variables on the Census Bureau website.

In March, the Census Bureau will fix inconsistencies in naming conventions across the measurements in all website tools.

3. Steering Committee Membership – Cynthia will check her LMI Director email list against the Census Bureau website to be sure it is up to date. She will work with Census to put together a perfect list. Greg will use this list to poll the member states on the amendment changing Steering

Committee member terms. Ultimately, all member states must vote on new Steering Committee members.

4. Annual State Conference – Jennifer thanked everyone who helped put together the agenda. She got quite a few positive comments about the content of the conference. Greg pointed out that although many people helped draft the agenda, it was Jennifer who got many of the speakers.

Since presentations showing the uses of QWIs were so well received, the Steering Committee will collect reports that states are now producing on QWIs, and success stories. Jeremy will put them on the Census Bureau website.

5. Technical Subcommittee - Steve will give Cynthia his list of subcommittee members. She will find any missing email addresses and set up a conference call with all members of both the Steering Committee and the Technical Subcommittee. This will be the first meeting of the subcommittee and the presence of the Steering Committee will stress how important their work is. Henry has contributed a list of issues he would like this subcommittee to address.

6. Program Updates from the Census Bureau

a. The MOU between the Census Bureau and BLS is still being reviewed. The wording is settled but the document is not signed yet. Federal employment data will be sent to Census and added to the LED program.

b. The On The Map tool was formally released on 2/3. Version 1.0 is loaded on the Census Bureau website under Quick Links. Two maintenance releases are scheduled for 5/31 and 10/31.

Greg is working on getting partners within Washington state to help pay the \$30,000 fee for 2004 OD data. He would like to reward those partners. They can not be rewarded by receiving LED data that is restricted to others, since LED data is public use. Washington can add value to that data by joining it with other sources, as a reward. Illinois already adds value to OD data and charges a subscription fee. Alabama and Illinois are the only two states, so far, paying to get 2004 Origin Destination (OD) data.

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