

Projections Data Users Meeting with Regional and Local Governments

November 2017

On November 15, 2017, the Cooper Center for Public Service hosted a data users lunch and meeting in Charlottesville with regional and local governments. The meeting aimed to: (1) better understand how the population projections are used by local governments; (2) share information with localities about how state agencies use population projections.

Nine people from regional and local governments attended the meeting. This report provides a summary of the meeting.

USE OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Representatives reported using population projections for school enrollment forecasts, hazard analysis plan development, transportation planning, and economic planning. Some mentioned the value of having apple-to-apple comparison with other localities. A few reported that they do not use the Cooper Center locality projections, as they develop their own, but are interested in the statewide projections.

INFORMATION ABOUT STATE AGENCIES' USE OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Since state agencies are the primary clients for statewide population projections, localities have always been interested in agency use of population projections. Information learned from the meeting with state agencies was shared with participants, especially regarding the agencies' clarification that they do not use projections for budgeting or funding allocation purposes.

OTHER

The participants shared their own experiences and approaches in developing local and regional population projections, and the Cooper Center demographers discussed why certain approaches viable at the local level would not be suitable for statewide projections. The Cooper Center staff also addressed the issue of incorporating known local population conditions into projections (through using the most recent data and keeping projections updated regularly) as well as their plan to research and develop a low-mid-high series to allow for a greater range of uncertainty and variability within the projections. Sub-county population projections, such as at the town or census

tract levels, were discussed, as was Cooper Center's availability and experience in developing scenario-based projections for small areas.

NEXT STEPS

The Cooper Center informed the meeting participants that a data users survey will be conducted early next year. The main purpose of the survey is to allow those who could not attend the meeting and who are interested in population projections to share their uses of population projections.

The reports—on the state agencies meeting, the local government meeting, and the data users survey—will be posted on the Cooper Center website in late spring of 2018.