An Overview
of the Indiana
State Data Center Network

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It only takes a match to start a raging fire. The match in this case being the Indiana Census Users Service Project (ICUSP) and the resulting fire being the national State Data Center Network. From the humble beginnings of that pilot project in Indianapolis emerged a resource network that now includes all fifty states, Puerto Rico and other outlying areas. As early as 1972 user feedback demanded that officials in Washington D. C. search for a way to simplify for the public the procedure for obtaining federal statistics. The solution for removing the bureaucratic barriers was the experimental ICUSP program. The idea of accessing the growing quantity of federal data at a local level appealed to users and subsequently the ICUSP program became a working model for future State Data Centers.

The State Data Center program began developing circa 1978 and by late 1979 the segue from ICUSP to Indiana State Data Center (SDC) was nearly complete. In February of 1980, Governor Otis Bowen announced the signing of the joint statistical agreement between the U. S. Census Bureau, the State of Indiana, and Indiana University. The agreement provided for the establishment of the Indiana State Data Center to improve the distribution of information throughout the state. The joint statistical agreement specifies cooperative efforts on the part of the federal and state components. By following the guidelines set forth in that agreement, the following objectives can be met:

1) Provide an institutional structure at the state level to disseminate census statistical products;

2) Provide an increased flow of information about the Census Bureau's statistical products to users;

3) Provide more comprehensive data access assistance to users;

4) Moderate the cost of acquiring census data;

5) Direct user feedback on data problems and needs to the Census Bureau.

Specifically, the agreement states the Census Bureau will provide free copies of machine readable data (tapes) to the lead agency and free copies of printed reports to each lead and affiliate agency. The Census Bureau will also provide technical assistance to the State Data Centers ranging from explanations of software to staffing workshops. To uphold its commitment, the SDC must help publicize the availability of census data, provide assistance to the user community, and generally pass on expertise gained through training by specialized Census Bureau personnel. This involves issuing newsletters,

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sponsoring training workshops, and acting as a reference library of Census Bureau publications and tapes. No external funding is provided for these activities, so that state must pay for these services.

The structure of SDC's vary from state to state, as does the specific services offered by each. At the state level three agencies are involved. In Indiana the lead agency is the Indiana State Library. The State Data Center facility is located on the second floor of the building in the reference area. The Indiana Department of Commerce and the Indiana Business Research Center, located at Indiana University, are the other two coordinating agencies in Indiana. The designated state agencies band together to use their individual as well as combined strengths and resources to dissiminate the data and provide assistance to the users.

Each SDC is required to contact appropriate agencies throughout the state to form an affiliate data center network. The number of affiliates a state is allowed to have depends on the state's population. With this network in place, data users have access to census statistics via agencies that are knowledgeable about local needs and problems. The affiliate may be in your own hometown or close enough that a long distance call may not be necessary. The twenty-nine affiliates in Indiana's network range from ALSA's to regional or local planning commissions. Each of the agencies must maintain a publicly accessible collection of Census Bureau reference and statistical publications relating to their local service area. The affiliates provide assistance to patrons in locating and using requested data with knowledge gained from attending training workshops sponsored by the SDC. Affiliate centers also sponsor local training sessions and seminars, promote Census Bureau and ISDC activities, and refer inquiries to the

ISDC, state agencies, or other appropriate organizations when necessary. A current list of participants in the affiliate program is included with this article.

SDC personnel at the coodinating agencies provide user training, offer consultation on data access and use, handle inquiries and maintain library facilities. Tape processing is handled exclusively by the Indiana Business Research Center, charging on a cost recovery basis. The collection housed at the lead agency is comprised mainly of statistical materials with emphasis on Census Bureau reports, maps, microfiche, tapes, and diskettes. Also collected are select state documents that contain statistics pertaining to Indiana (i.e. *Indiana Vital Statistics and Indiana Labor Force Estimates*).

Any Indiana resident may borrow materials from the ISDC collection by coming to the State Library to check them out. Services and consultation of staff members are available at no charge to patrons. Photocopying materials and duplicating of microfiche can be done on a cost recovery basis. In addition to decennial censuses and the intercensal estimates and surveys, the SDC lead agency has access to thousands of federal and state documents through the State Library's document collections. These collections allow Data Center staff the privilege of utilizing Census Bureau publications for all states as far back as the first census in 1790.

Another resource available SDC patrons is STATIS (previously known as INDIRS). STATIS, *Statistical Information System*, is the statistical component of Indiana University's Economic Development Information Network. STATIS is a menu driven socio-economic database that can be accessed by ISDC and State Library patrons free of charge. Pre-defined tables of census and noncensus data are available for various geographic

levels via modem hookup. The Indiana Business Research Center maintains the system from their computing facility in Bloomington and regularly up-dates the tables culling data from federal and state documents.

Assistance is available on topics such as population estimates and projections, sources of data, definitions and concepts, and interpretation and use of data. Subject areas covered by tapes, microfiche and reports include, but are not limited to, population, housing, agriculture, transportation, wholesale and retail trade, construction, mineral and service industries, and governments. Requests for data come from a varied cross section of the public. Governments use the census data for research and grant applications, legislators use the information when formulating bills, students use the statistics to defend or refute points made in papers they prepare for classes, businesses utilize the numbers to choose site locations or to see if there is a market for their product, and planning agencies and community groups use census data to get a clearer picture of geographic area.

There are a couple of limitations to be aware of when contacting the ISDC. The ISDC is not an Indiana branch of the United States Census Bureau. Questions concerning census or survey enumerators or topics such as Bureau employment are to be directed to the Census Bureau Regional Office in Chicago. Also, the ISDC does not sell census publications. Ordering information like prices and stock numbers can be obtained through the ISDC, but the collection is for reference purposes only. All purchasing must be done through the Government Printing Office or the Census Bureau's Data User Services Division.

If you have ever experienced problems in getting statistics, try again—but this time try the State Data Center network. Inquiries may be initiated without an appointment by telephone, mail or personal visits. Below are the addresses and phone numbers needed.

Indiana State Data Center
and Affiliates

Indiana State Data Center
Indiana State Library
140 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-3735 or 232-3733

Indiana Department of Commerce
Economic Analysis
1 North Capitol
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-8959

Indiana Business Research Center
I. U. School of Business
Bloomington, IN 47405
(812) 335-5507

Anderson Public Library, Anderson, IN (317) 644-0938 (Madison)

West Central Indiana Economic Development District Terre Haute, IN (812) 238-1561 (Clay, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion, Vigo)

Area 7 Reference Center Terre Haute, IN (812) 232-1113 (Clay, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion, Vigo)

Southeastern RPC Versailles, IN (812) 689-5505 (Dearborn, Jefferson, Ohio, Ripley, Switzerland)

Southern Indiana Development Commission Loogootee, IN (812) 295-3707 (Daviess, Greene, Knox, Lawrence, Martin)

Southwestern Indiana & Kentucky RCG Evansville, IN (812)426-5117 (Gibson, Pike, Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick)

Four Rivers ALSA-Area 13 Evansville, IN (812) 428-8218 (Daviess, Dubois, Gibson, Knox, Martin, Perry, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh, Warrick)

River Hills Economic Development District Jeffersonville, IN (812) 288-5440 (Clark, Floyd, Harrison, Scott, Washington)

SIALSA New Albany, IN Local 948-8639/1-800-892-2740 (Clark, Crawford, Floyd, Harrison, Orange, Scott, Washington)

Indiana 15 RPC Huntingburg, IN (812) 683-4647 Crawford, Dubois, Orange, Perry, Spencer)

CIASLA-Area 8 Indianapolis, IN (317) 269-1733 (Boone, Hamilton, Hendricks, Handcock, Johnson, Marion, Shelby)

Community Service Council Indianapolis, IN (317) 923-1466 (Boone, Hamilton, Handcock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, Shelby)

Morrisson-Reeves Public Library Richmond, In (317) 966-8291 (Fayette, Franklin, Rush, Union, Wayne)

Stone Hills ALSA-Area 10 Bloomington, IN (812) 339-2271 (Greene, Lawrence, Monroe, Owen)

Area XI Agency on Aging Columbus, IN (812) 342-9009 (Bartholomew, Brown, Decatur, Jackson, Jennings)

Northwestern Indiana RPC Highland, IN (219)923-1060 (Lake, LaPorte, Porter)

Kankakee-Iroquois RPC Francesville, IN (219) 567-9432 (Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, White)

Northwest Indiana ALSA Merrillville, IN 1-800-552-8950/local 736-0631 (Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Pulaski, Starke)

Michiana Area COG South Bend, IN (219) 287-1829 (Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall, St. Joseph)

ALSA 2 Reference & Referral Center Misawaka, IN 1-800-222-7001/local 679-4068 (Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall, St. Joseph)

III-A Development District Kendallville, IN (219) 347-4714 (Huntington, Lagrange, Noble, Steuben, Whitley)

Northeastern Indiana RCC Fort Wayne, IN (219) 428-7309 (Adams, Allen, Dekalb, Wells)

Tri-ALSA Fort Wayne, IN (219) 424-6664 (Adams, Allen, Dekalb, Huntington, Lagrange, Noble, Wells, Whitley)

Wabash Valley ALSA-Area 4 Crawfordsville, IN (317) 362-2242 (Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Warren, White)

Ouabache RPC Peru, IN (317) 473-4473 (Cass, Fulton, Howard, Miami, Tipton, Wabash)

Area 5 Reference Center Kokomo, IN (317) 457-3242 (Cass, Fulton, Howard, Miami, Tipton, Wabash)

Ball State University-Bureau of Business Research Muncie, IN (317) 285-5926 (Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison, Randolph)

EIALSA Muncie, IN (317) 286-8935 (Blackford, Delaware, Grant Herny Jay, Madison, Randolph)

SIALSA-Area 11 & 12 Columbus, IN (812) 372-0691 (Bartholomew, Brown, Dearborn, Decatur, Jefferson, Jackson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, Switzerland)

Examples of Requests Received at the Indiana State Data Center

To plan for a retirement home, a company requested data concerning householders over 65 who made more than $20,000 a year in specific sectors of Florida's metropolitan areas.

Persons moving to a different location in the U. S. call in need of cost-of-living indicators, crime rates, unemployment rates and other quality of life measures before they relocate.

In order to receive federal disaster funds after tornadoes devastated a rural area in eastern Indiana, the Indiana Department of Commerce acquired information from the SDC to ascertain the impact on the generally lower income area.

A pizza restaurant chain needed data such as the number of housing units without complete kitchen facilities, income ranges, age groups, and marital status in order to determine the best location for one of its future sites.

For a tourism study, graduate students used data showing the number of establishments from an annual survey done by the Census Bureau to develop a paper showing trends in the Indiana hotel/motel and restaurant industries.

Companies that have to meet affirmative action requirements phone the SDC to get equal employment opportunity statistics for their areas. An example would be a request for the number of computer programmers in Wayne county who are black and female.

School corporations call in need of projected school age populations to plan for building expansion; when day care centers are anticipating expansion, they are interested in the number of single parent families with children in their service area.

For school projects, college as well as grade school students need background information for papers or need to develop community profiles. These pupils are in need of data concerning square mileage, population, number of families, and housing unit counts as well as a wealth of other demographic characteristics.

A future dentist wanted to know the average income of dentists in various cities throughout the state and also a breakdown of the number of dentists per 1,000 people in the different counties of Indiana.

A store owner studied the demographics of the area his customers were from and also the saturation rate of businesses in the counties surrounding him in order to decide the prices and lines of merchandise to carry.

When planning for road and highway improvements, transportation departments ask the SDC to provide county to county commuting patterns.

Reporters (newspaper and television) call the SDC to get various pieces of data. One recent request was for farm population statistics and the number of farms covering a period of years to show the downward trend in the agriculture profession in Indiana.

How many pickles can a pickle picker pick?

You may not care about pickle productivity, but to answer any questions of fact that you do care about. . .

ASK YOUR LIBRARIAN.