

## DATA MODULE

### Preparing Community Profiles

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

##### *Skill*

- Using software to access and analyze census data
- Identifying independent and dependent variables
- Forming testable hypotheses using quantitative data
- Quantitative writing
- Identifying population trends over time
- Translating data findings to inform decision making
- Using real world data to enhance and support key course concepts

##### *Substance*

- The fundamental Community Profile you will be preparing should adequately prepare you to understand the very basic workings of population analysis along with its connection with related professional goals and activities that may enhance your career market ability in the coming years.

#### **Basic Principles of Community Profiles**

##### **What is a “Community Profile”?**

- A Community Profile can:
  - Be as basic or as complex as you want it to or need it to be
- Be heavily oriented toward social analysis using population characteristics
- Be focused solely on specific economic trends with accompanying economic projections.
- Be geared directly towards information related to your professional aspirations in planning, in business, government, banking, health, education, sales and marketing just to name a few.

#### **Community Profile Analysis**

People are at the root of community profiling: they create the need for planning functions, and they experience the effects – for better or worse – of planning efforts. “Community Profiling” is often essential for effective planning. “Planning” are synonymous terms; they mean the same. But unless planners know who “their people” are and how their characteristics affect – and are affected by – various professional functions, planners cannot fully meet the needs of the population they are profiling. Thus, although it is not a core planning focus, such as land use or transportation, demographic analysis occupies a position of overarching importance in community profiling.

Demographic population studies segment and summarize the common denominators of everyday life such as birth, marriage, living arrangements, education, occupation, income, race, ethnicity, age, and death. Community profiles use this information to produce profiles of the diverse clienteles they serve. Just as the land use map of the community provides a physical framework for local planning, current and projected population profiles also provide an essential context. The planning process attends to ongoing changes; including population profiles thus the process provides an essential context. The

planning process also attends to ongoing changes including population growth and demographic shifts, that shape the communities future. A community profiler's effectiveness depends on the ability to synchronize the future plans for a locality with the future needs of its population or the professional entity they represent.

The fundamental Community Profile you will be preparing should adequately prepare you to understand the very basic workings of population analysis along with its connection with related professional goals and activities that may enhance your career market ability in the coming years.

Keep in mind that any Community Profile you prepare should in a general sense focus on three principle assumptions:

- That population analysis should focus on the diverse composition of a community rather than total population size
- That population change resulting from aging, migration, and ethnic shifts is linked to changing needs in functional areas
- That the anticipation of population change is essential to planning that can effectively meet future identified needs

### **Computing Capability and Data Accessibility**

Fortunately for all students seeking competence with preparing a Community Profile there is ready accessibility to microcomputer technology. Consequently, a Community Profiler's desk or computer stations has all the computing power that was once limited to mainframes. This means that your Community Profile can be conducted more quickly while facilitating the clear communication of results to the appropriate decision makers and/or the targeted public. The Census bureau's 2000 census has perfected a new data analysis and dissemination system that by way of the Internet makes census data available for any geographic area (in your case, a Census Tract). This availability enables you to custom tabulate your Census Tract data as you see fit and use this data for comparison against another Census Tract of your choice.

### **Part I – Work Elements**

With the above thoughts in mind, you will be expected to follow the Community Profile work elements identified below:

- 101 Describe in narrative form the geographic outlines of the Census Tracts you have chosen.
- 102 Prepare a brief general history of your chosen Census Tracts.
- 103 Compile in graphs, charts, table, etc. the general population economic characteristics of the Census Tract you have chosen or been assigned. (Much of the data gathered may be used as Attachments or Exhibits as part of your finished profile.)
- 104 Investigate local government sources and appropriate Web-Sites that may enhance your profile with additional pertinent data.

- 105 Compare and contrast your 2000 data for your Census Tract against 1970, 1980, and 1990 data for that same Census Tract. (How have things changed?)
- 106 Prepare in narrative form with appropriate Data Attachments and Exhibits a finalized Community Profile containing, at a minimum, the above mentioned work elements.

**Part II – Work Elements**

- 101 Prepare a second Community Profile of a different Census tract that resembles or differs from the first Community Profile.
- 102 Compare and contrast the similarities between the first and second Community Profile with particular emphasis on their differences garnered from Census Data.
- 103 Submit all finalized Community Profile data, both in hard copy form and on a computer disk.

**Keep in Mind that:**

- A. The above work should not be perceived as “Rocket Science” since much of it is simple point and click technology.
- B. Your instructor along with his assistants will be in the lab to assist you and answer your questions.
- C. Much of the work you will be doing will help future students gain Community Profiling experience.
- D. Your final grades will reflect the “experimental” efforts you will be undertaking.
- E. You will gain a clearly “marketable” skill – one we hope you will be proud of.

Finally, best of luck and remember that we are here to help you.