

THE COLUMN

Newsletter of
the Virginia Institute
of Government

Fall 2010

Congratulations
2010-2011 Wallerstein
Scholarship Recipients



James Ervin
Tierra Howard

INSIDE

Training Calendar
Fall 2010
Second Wednesday Series

3

Online Compensation
Survey System
Has your locality
subscribed?

3

EBIS
Your invisible
staff person

3

SEI & LEAD
Discount for
Institute members

4

New Decade, New Estimates

Fifty years and still counting beads

MICHAEL SPAR

The Demographics & Workforce Group at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service has a long history of producing demographic data and analyses for the Commonwealth. Among all of the data, reports, and research we produce, the annual series of population estimates is probably the best known. However, while many have heard of and use population estimates, most people do not know just how widespread their use is or how critical they are to state and local government planning in Virginia.

POPULATION ESTIMATES WIDELY USED

The Cooper Center has a longstanding history of involvement with the population estimate program. In the early 1960s, the Cooper Center (then known as the Tayloe Murphy Institute) started producing the official population estimates for Virginia, which measure the number of people living in each county and city.

Over the past fifty years, use of the population estimates has grown tremendously by state agencies, local governments, private industries, and the general public. The state legislature and some agencies, such as the Department of Education and the Compensation Board, use population as the basis for the allocation and distribution of revenue and funds. Local governments use changes in population to measure growth and to plan and budget for the future. Retail businesses are always mindful of areas of population growth so they can locate near their customers. Even the general public uses population estimates every day when making decisions such as

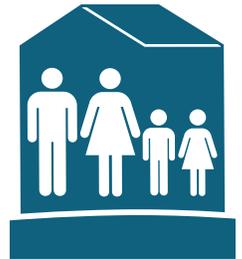
where to retire or considering topics like the increasing obesity rates of Virginia's children.

CALCULATING THE ESTIMATES

Since the early 1960s, the population estimates have undergone many improvements. The Demographics & Workforce Group at the Cooper Center conducts ongoing research to ensure we are using current best practices and producing accurate results for our population estimates program.

For the last ten years the Cooper Center's population estimates have been produced using a methodology called "ratio-correlation."

The ratio-correlation method has been extensively tested and shown to be a reliable method for county-



level population estimates. The method, in a nutshell, tracks population change in each locality since the latest U.S. decennial census based on five population indicators:

- Housing stock,
- Public school enrollment,
- Births,
- Drivers' licenses issued, and
- Personal exemptions claimed on state income tax returns.

Changes in these population indicators provide statistical measures of population growth or decline and provide an accurate means for calculating the annual estimates of population size.

REFINING THE ESTIMATES

The Demographics & Workforce Group is nationally recognized for research quality and for the accuracy of our population

continued on page 2

“Every January the Cooper Center will release one official data series providing the final population estimates for each locality for the previous year. This will help reduce any confusion as to which estimate series should be used.”

continued from page 1

estimates. For the last two decades the Cooper Center’s county and city population estimates have been shown to be more accurate than population estimates prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau. Furthermore, the Census Bureau recently contracted the Cooper Center to help improve the accuracy of Bureau estimates.

In 2007, the Demographics & Workforce Group was one of five organizations nationwide to be awarded a federal grant to conduct research and advise the Census Bureau on how to improve their estimates program. The Cooper Center’s research provided a detailed evaluation of the accuracy of several variations of the housing-unit method, and compared the results to the estimates produced by the ratio-correlation method. Our research suggested that while the housing-unit method generated highly accurate estimates in some localities, the ratio-correlation method was more accurate overall.

Earlier this year, the Demographics & Workforce Group became the only organization to receive multiple awards when it received two out of eight available grants from the Census Bureau. We are now conducting in-depth research on estimate methodology that will provide definitive answers to the question: What is the best method for making population estimates in the next 10 years? We will evaluate the ratio-correlation and housing-unit methods separately using the 2010 U.S. Census results as a benchmark.

FUTURE OF VIRGINIA’S ESTIMATES PROGRAM

The Census Bureau-sponsored research now underway will be completed in late 2011. At that time we anticipate making several enhancements to our own population estimates program. The first major improvement will be the elimination of the “preliminary” population estimate series. Every January the Cooper Center will release one official data series providing the final population estimates for each locality for the *previous* year. This will help reduce any confusion that exists among data users as to which estimate series should be used.

We are also working toward methodological enhancements, based both on the results of our research with the U.S. Census Bureau and the availability of information from a new data source, the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (See *THE COLUMN* Fall/Winter 2008). Information collected in this large survey may prove useful in producing reliable population estimates.



Michael Spar is a research associate in the Demographics & Workforce Section at UVa’s Cooper Center for Public Service. Contact him at 804/371-0202 or mas6g@virginia.edu or visit our website at www.coopercenter.org/demographics.





**VIRGINIA
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENT**

THE COLUMN is published twice a year by the Virginia Institute of Government as a service to state and local government officials and professionals. The Institute is part of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.

Unless otherwise noted, articles are written by Institute staff. For additional information, contact Billie Easton.

Virginia Institute of Government
700 East Franklin Street
Suite 700
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2318

804/371-0202

PHONE

804/371-0234

FAX

column@virginia.edu

E-MAIL

www.VaInstituteofGovernment.org

INTERNET

INSTITUTE STAFF

DIRECTOR

John P. Thomas
434/982-5545
jpt6n@virginia.edu

**ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR**

Tedd E. Povar
804/371-0202
tep3e@virginia.edu

**TRAINING
DIRECTOR**

Billie E. Easton
804/371-0202
bee2u@virginia.edu

**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
DIRECTOR**

Mary Beth Witherell
434/982-5702
meh4q@virginia.edu

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Danika Mansfield
804/371-0101
dgm9h@virginia.edu



**WELDON COOPER
CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**
University of Virginia

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS

SECOND WEDNESDAY SERIES—Fall 2010

In partnership with Chesterfield County

Lower Registration Fee: ~~\$100~~ \$75 per person
Classes are held at UVa's Richmond Center from 8:30 am–3:30 pm. Lunch and materials included.

Contact Billie Easton at 804/371-0202 or bee2u@virginia.edu, or visit www.VaInstituteofGovernment.org.

Customer Service in the Public Sector: Putting Citizens First

OCTOBER 13

For employees at all levels, especially those in direct contact with customers

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em—Motivating & Retaining Employees

NOVEMBER 10

For supervisors, team leaders, managers, and directors



Staying Legal: Employment Law Basics

DECEMBER 8

For supervisors, team leaders, human resources staff, and those responsible for ensuring compliance within the organization

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

CSS

System welcomes participation of neighboring states

Subscription renewals for the Institute's Compensation Survey System (CSS) for FY11 are encouraging, particularly during a time of little, if any, change in local government salaries and benefits. The system, only 5 years old, is becoming part of the information fabric of Virginia local government. We are committed to working with our subscribers to maintain and grow the system.

The CSS has been strengthened by new participation from North Carolina, West Virginia, and Maryland localities many of which, as border communities, are part of Virginia's labor market. The Institute has been working with our contractor, Tech Net, to encourage border-state involvement, and sees this as an important development in the growth of the CSS. Each newly participating state and its local government subscribers add considerable value for all users of the system.



(EBIS) Email Broadcast Information System

The beat goes on

The Institute's Email Broadcast Information Service (EBIS) remains active, handling a wide range of topics. While many questions focus on community and local government fiscal stresses, others concern providing quality citizen services. Recent topics include:

- Cemeteries that are abandoned by private owner
- Enterprise Zones used to assist distressed retailers
- Employee Training Plan templates
- Customer Service guidelines/manuals
- Abandoned Property registries

The Institute realizes that with recent staff reductions, many localities have decreased capacity for doing research, developing new programs and policies, and gathering data. We stand ready to help fill these gaps and encourage our members to ask for our assistance. Let us be your "invisible staff person."



For CSS and EBIS contact Tedd Povar at 804/371-0202 or tep3e@virginia.edu.

UPCOMING

**SECOND WEDNESDAY
SERIES, FALL 2010**

See page 3 for details



**Customer Service in
the Public Sector**
October 13, Richmond



**Love 'Em or Lose 'Em—
Motivating &
Retaining Employees**
November 10, Richmond



**Staying Legal:
Employment Law Basics**
December 8, Richmond

To register:

Contact Billie Easton
at 804/371-0202 or
bee2u@virginia.edu

University of Virginia
700 East Franklin Street, Suite 700
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2318



VIRGINIA
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENT

**Virginia Institute
of Government
Advisory Committee**



Ed C. Daley, *chair*

- R. Michael Amyx
- Elsie M. Barnes
- James D. Campbell
- James K. Conant
- Ray A. Conner
- Joe T. May
- Anne H. Moore
- David A. Nutter
- James J.L. Stegmaier
- Patricia S. Ticer
- David J. Toscano
- Elizabeth D. Whiting

John P. Thomas, *ex officio*

COOPER CENTER'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

If your locality is an Institute member, you can attend one of the Cooper Center's nationally recognized leadership programs at a **10% discount**. All programs are held at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

**SEI (Senior Executive
Institute)**

SEI is an annual, two-week residential program for senior local government managers.

SEI 2011 Schedule
July 17-29
July 27-29 (Alumni)

Contact Melanie Gillies at
434/982-5512 or mbg4b@virginia.edu.



**Senior
Executive
Institute**

**LEAD (Leading, Educating,
and Developing program)**

LEAD is a one-week residential program for department/division heads and senior staff.

LEAD Remaining 2010 Schedule
November 7-12

LEAD 2011 Schedule
February 27-March 4
April 3-8
October 16-21
November 13-19



Contact Carmie Rodriguez at
434/243-5031 or carmie@virginia.edu.