Each year, SANDAG produces estimates of population and housing characteristics for small geographic areas. These estimates are controlled to the California Department of Finance (DOF) January 1st jurisdiction-level estimates, which are released each May. SANDAG also produces annual estimates of population by age and ethnic composition, as well as household income estimates. Estimates of employment by place of work are prepared approximately every other year.

Population and Housing

Population growth in the region is monitored through annual population and housing estimates developed in cooperation with local agencies and the California State Department of Finance (DOF). The estimates use the census as their base and are prepared using the "housing unit method," the most commonly used technique for making small area population and housing unit estimates. The components of this method are total housing units, occupancy rates, average household size, and the number of people living in group quarters (such as military barracks and college dormitories). Using building completion and demolition data and group quarters and annexation information provided by local agencies, DOF produces annual estimates for each jurisdiction. SANDAG then produces estimates for other geographic areas that are controlled to the jurisdictional totals. Profiles for these standard geographic areas are provided here. SANDAG also produces the estimates for very small geographic areas (block groups) to allow for aggregation to user-defined and other non-standard geographic areas. Profiles for such areas can be obtained directly from SANDAG.

Population by Age and Ethnicity

While it is important to address planning issues on the basis of the overall change in population size, changes in the characteristics of the population can be of equal or greater significance. For example, changes in the age structure or ethnic composition of a population affect school, health care, and marketing issues. To fill this need for information, SANDAG estimates population characteristics annually from base year census data using a cohort-component method to model components of population change (natural increase and net migration) for age cohorts grouped by sex and ethnicity. The cohort-component method presumes that most of the prior year’s population has gotten one year older. This model accounts for both population loss due to deaths or out-migration and population gain due to births and in-migration. The estimates are controlled to the Population and Housing Estimates at every geographic level.

Household Income

Income is an important indicator of the economic condition of the region and the standard of living of its residents. To estimate the region's household income growth annually, SANDAG uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey..

Employment Inventory

The employment inventory consists of three components: civilian wage and salary employment, self-employed and domestic workers, and military employment. The basis of the inventory is quarterly wage and salary employment data from the California Employment Development Department (EDD), as well as business license records from local jurisdictions, and uniformed military counts from the U.S. Navy. SANDAG controls the quarterly employment estimate to EDD’s average annual employment estimates by 2-digit NAICS for the calendar year.