



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census
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MEMORANDUM FOR Distribution

From: Cynthia Clark
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Subject: Evaluation Study of Nonresponse Followup and
 Quality Check Personal Interview Enumerator
 Training Programs

I am pleased to present the executive summary of one of the evaluation studies for the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal. The dress rehearsal was conducted in three sites — Columbia, South Carolina; Menominee County, Wisconsin; and Sacramento, California. The evaluation studies cover detailed aspects of eight broad areas related to the census dress rehearsal — census questionnaire, address list, coverage measurement, coverage improvement, promotion activities, procedures addressing multiple options for census reporting, field operations, and technology.

The executive summary for each evaluation study is also available on the Census Bureau Internet site (<http://www.census.gov/census2000> and click on the link to “Evaluation”). Copies of the complete report may be obtained by contacting Carnelle Sligh at (301) 457-3525 or by e-mail at carnelle.e.sligh@cmail.census.gov. Please note that the complete copy of the following reports will not be publically released: reports regarding procedures addressing multiple options for census reporting and the Evaluation of Housing Unit Coverage on the Master Address File.

The evaluations are distributed broadly to promote the open and thorough review of census processes and procedures. The primary purpose of the dress rehearsal is to simulate portions of the environment we anticipate for Census 2000, so we can identify and correct potential problems in the processes. Thus, the purpose of the evaluation studies is to provide analysis to support time critical review and possible refinements of Census 2000 operations and procedures.

The analysis and recommendations in the evaluation study reports are those of staff working on specific evaluations and, thus, do not represent the official position of the Census Bureau. They represent the results of an evaluation of a component of the census plan. They will be used to analyze and improve processes and procedures for Census 2000. The individual evaluation recommendations have not all yet been reviewed for incorporation in the official plan for Census 2000. These evaluation study reports will be used as input to the decision making process to refine the plans for Census 2000.

The Census Bureau will issue a report that synthesizes the recommendations from all the evaluation studies and provides the Census Bureau review of the dress rehearsal operation. This report will also indicate the Census Bureau’s official position on the utilization of these results the Census in 2000 operation. This report will be available July 30th.

Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal

Evaluation Study of Nonresponse Followup and Quality Check Personal Interview Enumerator Training Programs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dress Rehearsal Nonresponse Followup and Integrated Coverage Measurement/Post Enumeration Survey enumerator training evaluation project had two objectives: determining if the training provided to the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal enumerators resulted in skilled employees who were able to perform at an acceptable level and determining what, if any, improvements in the training packages are needed for Census 2000.

The evaluation study data show that, through training, skilled enumerators were successfully developed during the dress rehearsal. Study results also indicate areas for improvements in composition and delivery in training programs.

NONRESPONSE FOLLOWUP ENUMERATOR TRAINING

- * The training materials were, generally, well laid out and of sufficient detail. Trainers reported that the verbatim training guide was written in a manner that required minimal preparation time on their part; generally, kept the attention span of the trainee and allowed both experienced and inexperienced enumerators to participate. Trainees and trainers believed the training video presented a realistic image of the work of the enumerator and the challenges involved in data collection.
- * Those trainees who were exposed to field work indicated that it played a major role in their preparedness for actual interviewing. Although a part of the training, not all classes engaged in field work.
- * Most enumerators said that their trainers were organized; read verbatim guides thoroughly; and were concerned about their trainees.
- * The early and final reviews of enumerator performance indicated that enumerators were able to successfully do their jobs.
- * Working with maps was consistently identified as an area that needs improvement in the training materials.
- * Training materials were not indexed and not coordinated with those distributed to the trainees, sometimes resulting in the inability of the trainees to follow along with the trainer.
- * Enumerators indicated that more time was needed for role-playing and field work.
- * Enumerators reported being well prepared to read questions as worded. Observation reports, however, indicated they did not always follow these guidelines, neither in the training classroom nor during interviewing.
- * The two operational skill areas where enumerators consistently said they felt less prepared to execute were “completing the long form” and “following proxy procedures”.
- * Many of the problems identified by the trainers and trainees were the result of late arrival or inadequate supply of training materials.

- * Enumerators consistently reported that upon completing training they felt they needed more guidance and training on dealing with the public.

QC/PI ENUMERATOR TRAINING EVALUATION RESULTS

- * The training materials were generally well laid out, with appropriate attention to detail and accuracy.
- * Participants with and without previous computer experience both reported that they felt competent to use the laptop computer to interview at the completion of training.
- * Enumerators expressed the need to have more trainer-trainee interaction in place, in addition to more practice interviews and walk-throughs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NRFU TRAINING

- * Identify major topics in the NRFU Enumerator Manual with indexes for quick reference and match its organization and content with the Training Guide. Add a table of contents to the Classroom Workbook to help improve navigation. Consolidate and organize all trainee materials in one binder. Add clearer and more consistent labeling of examples of forms.
- * Modify the amount of time spent on training for specific NRFU tasks, such as:
 - Working with Census maps (since enumerators may be assigned to unfamiliar areas).
 - Completing the long form.
 - Using continuation forms, emphasizing the importance of accurately copying identification information on continuation forms.
 - Developing interviewing skills, especially those dealing with reluctant respondents and refusal avoidance.
- * Increase the amount of emphasis placed on the importance of being able to answer respondents' questions about census concepts and NRFU operations. Include in the Job Aid a list of the respondents' most frequently asked questions and the suggested answers.
- * Include additional training on interviewer safety particularly as it applies to the local area, and add a "Dos and Don'ts" fact sheet on protocol and safety issues to hand out during training.
- * Ensure that the field work portion of training is actually completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QC/PI TRAINING

- * Combine trainee materials into a comprehensive, indexed interviewer's manual.
- * Use more practice interviews and role playing, at more frequent intervals, throughout training.
- * Develop a field work component with subsequent classroom discussion of the experiences during field work.

- * Consider adding a video on interviewing skills to the QC/PI training program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NRFU AND QC/PI TRAINING

- * Place additional emphasis on instructing enumerators to read questions exactly as written, to use flash cards, and to record only respondents' answers. Explain the importance of these procedures in the context of collecting accurate data.
- * Supplement reading of verbatim script with visuals, flipcharts, posters, and audiotapes.
- * Include time for a "dry run" in the crewleader classroom training. Ensure that crew leaders who conduct enumerator training have on-the-job training that includes field work before actually training.
- * Develop a system to ensure timely delivery of training supplies including accurate maps.
- * Ensure that packages of materials are sent to the appropriate destination. If necessary use color coding scheme to differentiate materials (i.e., for rural and urban sites).
- * Include suggestions of alternative training schedules in the training manual which allow for flexible scheduling of training.
- * Develop a more thorough end-of-training assessment which is closely tied to defined training objectives.
- * Conduct an evaluation of Census 2000 NRFU as well as QC/PI training which examines the relationship between enumerator training, data quality, and enumerator performance.