



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233-0001

MEMORANDUM FOR Distribution

From: Cynthia Clark
 Associate Director for Methodology and Standards

Subject: Field Infrastructure: Recruiting Activities

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@ccmail.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.

Field Infrastructure: Recruiting Activities

April 1999

Cheryl Querry
Field Division

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recruiting and retaining a competent, motivated, and representative staff of local census-takers, who are available to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends when residents are at home, and who are geographically distributed across all areas where people live may be the most important condition which affects the quality, length of time required, and overall cost of the field data collection phase of the census.

While each of the three dress rehearsal sites used slightly different strategies and methods to recruit applicants for Census jobs, each was able to recruit enough applicants to fully staff each operation and complete operations on time. Following is a summary of findings.

The majority of applicants reported hearing of the job from a friend or relative, or Census mailing (including recruiting postcards and advance notice to questionnaire).

On average, applicants were selected 50 - 65 days after taking the test.

Recruiting activities were timed appropriately.

Census mailings proved very effective, though recruiting postcards were costly when an entire area was blanketed. Newspaper and radio ads were not used much, and proved only marginally effective in bringing in applicants.

Because of the late start in gaining agency approval and endorsement, we did not hire any current federal employees to work on the dress rehearsal in any of the three Dress Rehearsal sites.

The test preparation and practice test were used somewhat to prepare applicants to take the employment, with varying levels of success.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are suggested.

We recommend continuing to recruit at local levels, among community based organizations, in order to capitalize on 'word of mouth' between friends and relatives. We also recommend Census continue to print a message about Census jobs on the advance notice to the Census questionnaire that is delivered to all households, and use recruiting postcards in hard to recruit areas.

Recruiting and testing activities should begin at least three months prior to the start of an operation.

For future operations, we recommend that recruiting materials and supplies be available in larger quantities and reorders arrive in a more timely fashion.

We recommend continuing the mention of census jobs on the advance notice to the questionnaire, and use recruiting postcards in targeted areas only, not blanketing the entire Local Census Office area.

Census should continue to seek and maintain support from other federal agencies to allow their employees to work on the Census for future operations.

We recommend Census continue to make the test preparation manual and practice test available, particularly to employment and job service centers and community based organizations. These

organizations can provide their own test preparation sessions and administer the practice test, thus saving Census recruiting resources in the field.