



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

From: Cynthia Clark
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Subject: Field Infrastructure: Welfare to Work

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 in the Census 2000 operation. This report will be available July 30th.

Field Infrastructure: Welfare to Work

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bureau has historically taken great efforts to hire individuals on public assistance. President Clinton's Welfare-to-Work Initiative heightened the necessity to target recruiting efforts among this population. The Bureau's recruiting strategy primarily centers around partnerships. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Census field staff partnering with government, community, and non-profit service providers to recruit and hire welfare recipients.

Recruiters in all three dress rehearsal sites successfully partnered with state and local social service offices, non profit agencies and other organizations to recruit welfare recipients.

Transportation for field jobs was an obstacle experienced by all three sites. There were additional obstacles that were not common to the three sites. These included reduced benefits, childcare, lack of driver's licenses, lack of telephone, competitive labor markets, delays between recruiting, testing, and hiring, state reporting requirements, and limited testing space.

The recruiters in dress rehearsal were able to overcome the obstacles with some very creative ideas. Columbia and Sacramento minimized the transportation problem by placing many of their welfare applicants in office positions in the Local Census Office (LCO) resulting in the formation of car pools for some and greater utilization of public transportation for others. Those persons in Menominee without telephones were personally contacted by current Census staff who passed information on to them. To reduce the lag time between recruiting and hiring, Sacramento provided agencies with updated hiring schedules on a regular basis and thus minimized the problem of applicants losing interest in the jobs. Sacramento also secured a memorandum of agreement with California's Employment Service to provide automated hiring reports and in the future for the state to provide clear guidelines and support to Census staff to reduce problems in meeting reporting requirements.

Columbia found it very difficult to select welfare applicants due to relatively low test scores of many of the applicants referred by agencies made it difficult to reach those applicants. Sacramento indicated the lagtime between recruiting, testing, and hiring applicants was problematic in retaining interested welfare recipients in the hiring pool. The average lagtime ranged from 45 to 60 days.

To determine the number of welfare recipients hired, the staff relied on the statistics reported on the voluntary identification Form OPM-1635. This was the only information which could be used to report new WTW hires. Columbia, Menominee, and Sacramento also received referral lists at the time of testing from some of their partner agencies which allowed them to get a sense of how welfare recipients fared in testing and hiring.

Columbia hired 71 welfare recipients, but a breakdown was not given for field or office hires. Menominee hired two field staff, but none were selected for office positions. Sacramento hired 200 recipients for field and/or office positions.

Welfare-to-Work Hiring Goals for Dress Rehearsal

Sites	WTW Hiring Goal for DR	Total Actual WTW Hires for DR
Columbia	121	71
Menominee	2	2
Sacramento	49	200
Total	172	273

Columbia's lower hiring can be attributed to the fact that the majority of jobs required field work (i.e., enumeration) in primarily rural areas. Thus transportation was generally required, so the lack of transportation available to welfare applicants in these areas made it difficult to recruit and hire those applicants.

Sacramento's high rate of hiring can be attributed to the fact that they focused on partnering with local agencies early on in the operation to recruit and hire welfare recipients.

Columbia stated that the benefits reduction element made it difficult for their partners to provide any additional assistance, especially because of the short-term nature of the positions. However, Sacramento reported success with its partners. Partners in Sacramento helped in coordinating the test preparation, scheduling, and testing of applicants that were referred from the various agencies. Menominee did not report any additional assistance from their partnering agencies.

Columbia and Sacramento distributed the test preparation manuals to their partner agencies. Menominee did not report. Sacramento had the greatest success with the partners using the manuals. According to staff in Sacramento, the manual helped prepare the applicants for the test, and thus Sacramento had great success in testing, recruiting, and hiring Welfare-to-Work applicants. Columbia's success with the manual was minimal.

Overall, Welfare-to-Work recruiting efforts in the dress rehearsal areas were successful. Despite several real barriers – insufficient transportation, disconnected telephones, fear of reduced benefits - Census staff in DR sites successfully hired welfare recipients. In every site, Census staff successfully partnered with local agencies and organizations to identify welfare recipients. Moreover, Census staff responded to the special needs of the Welfare-to-Work population by being flexible and creative, thus enabling a number of welfare recipients to obtain employment with the Census Bureau.

Despite the general success of Welfare-to-Work hiring in each of the Dress Rehearsal areas, difficulties encountered in each area illustrate the need for Census staff to be well-equipped to adapt and/or respond to a range of difficulties that are associated with recruiting and hiring welfare recipients. Whereas partner agencies and organizations generally provide the key assistance needed to facilitate Welfare-to-Work recruiting efforts, there are occasions when they are not always in a position to assist.

The barriers that were encountered by the Census staff will likely reemerge as obstacles to recruiting and hiring welfare recipients in other areas as operations continue for Census 2000. Also, with Welfare-to-Work programs varying from state to state, there will undoubtedly be other issues Census staff will be forced to address. Identifying ways to enable staff to address these issues with the support of partner agencies will be key to the continued success of hiring for this initiative. We recommend the following for the future recruiting:

[Headquarters] Develop and/or provide updated information on assistance programs (i.e., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, etc.) to help the field recruiting staff. Also continue to work with national organizations associated with assistance programs to facilitate recruitment.

Continue to form close partnerships with local social service agencies and community-based organizations, taking special effort to clearly denote the roles and expectations of Census and the partners.

Set goals within the context of local population characteristics.

Target applicants early.