



U.S. CENSUS MONITORING BOARD

***Report to Congress
April 1, 1999***

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FIELD OFFICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Nationwide Network: In March 2000, the Census Bureau (Bureau) will use the United States Postal Service to deliver census forms to the vast majority of households that have a mailing address. The postal delivery strategy includes an advance letter, a questionnaire mailout, and a reminder card for those who do not initially respond. The Bureau anticipates that approximately 72 million households will respond by mail.

To find and count the estimated 46 million households that fail to return a form by mail, as well as those people living in unconventional quarters, the Bureau is in the process of establishing a nationwide network of temporary offices and staff.

To pay for and manage the Bureau's workforce for Census 2000, a temporary administrative infrastructure has been planned. This infrastructure functioned well in all three dress rehearsal sites and the Board expects the same during Census 2000.¹

Major administrative infrastructure functions include developing a system of competitive pay rates and position descriptions. The

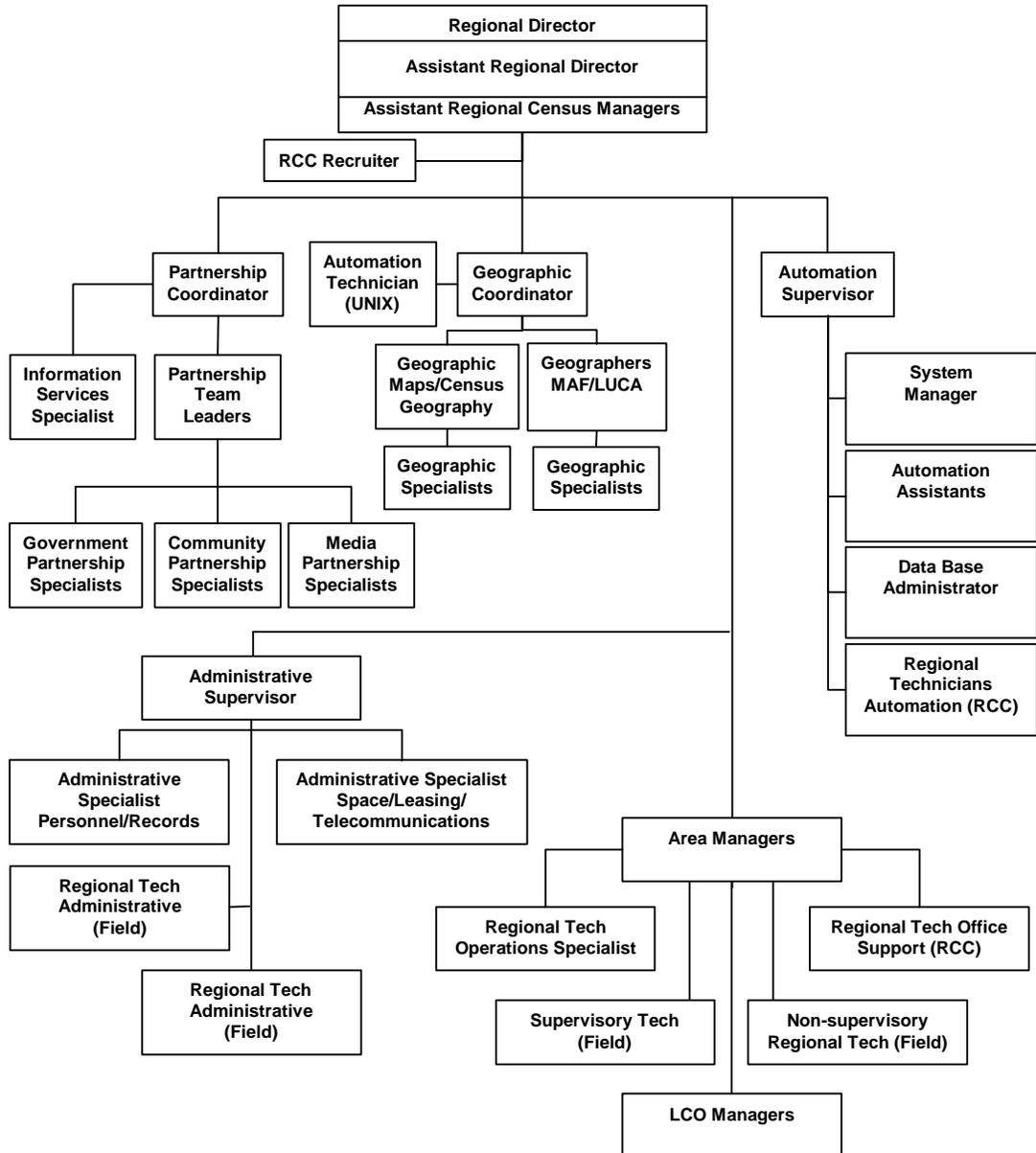
Decennial Census Offices

Regional Census Centers (RCCs)	12
Census Field Offices (CFOs)	402
Local Census Offices (LCOs)	520
National Processing Center (NPC)	1
Data Capture Centers (DCCs)	3

Source: 22 February 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General Reports: STL-11052-8-0001, IPE-10753, ATL-11050-8-0001 / (all) September 1998.

REGIONAL CENSUS CENTER (RCC) ORGANIZATION



Source: 22 February 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations.

Bureau has also created a bonus/incentive pay system aimed at yielding quality data, staff retention, and high productivity.²

Decennial census offices fall into one of two major orientations: **field** or **data**. Data facilities are responsible for mailing census materials (including census forms) and tabulating data received from mailed-back forms and field facilities. Data offices include the Bureau's National Processing Center (NPC), permanently located in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and three temporary decennial Data Capture Centers (DCCs), located in Phoenix, Arizona; Pomona, California; and Essex, Maryland.

Field offices are temporary, decennial census facilities directly involved in the process of address listing, field enumeration, or non-response follow-up (NRFU). Field offices include 12 Regional Census Centers (RCCs), 402 Census Field Offices (CFOs), and 520 Local Census Offices (LCOs). More detailed descriptions of field offices are below.

Regional Census Center (RCC): The 12 RCCs, located near one of the Bureau's 12 permanent regional offices, are the center of the temporary office network in each region. RCCs manage all census field data collection operations and address listing through a network of

**Jobs in the Field:
Enumerator (Census Taker)**

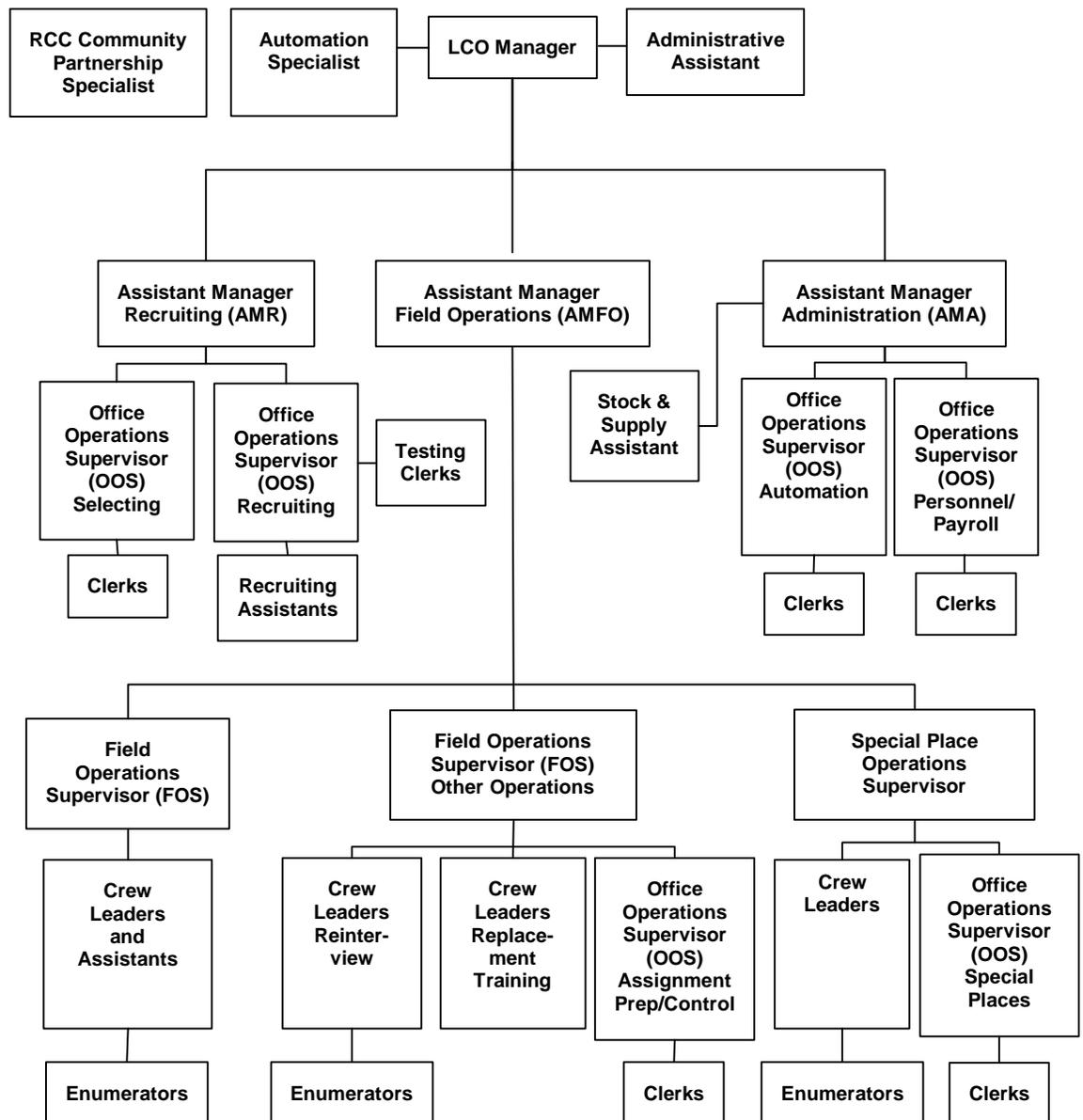
An enumerator is the backbone of NRFU. Enumerators are responsible for locating households, listing addresses, and conducting interviews. The Bureau tries to place enumerators in their own neighborhoods or communities. In order to find people at home, enumerators work evenings and weekends.

An enumerator is trained to locate and list addresses, explain the purpose of the census to residents, ask questions as worded on census forms, and record answers. An enumerator meets with his or her crew leader daily to submit completed assignments and discuss progress.

Crew leaders and enumerators often spend their entire working day in the field, reporting into the LCO only occasionally for additional assignments.

² "Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-taking Methods", US Census Bureau, January 1999, VIII-3.

LOCAL CENSUS OFFICE (LCO) ORGANIZATION



Source: 22 February 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations.

CFOs and LCOs. They also produce address maps and coordinate the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. The average size of an RCC is 150 employees, answering to the Regional Director for that region.

Census Field Office (CFO): The 402 CFOs are responsible for field listing of addresses, a process that begins and ends before Census Day. Comprised of a five-or-six-member staff, CFOs hire the initial group of LCO administrative staff. Once staffed, however, LCOs report to the Area Manager in the RCC.

Local Census Office (LCO): The 520 LCOs are distributed nationwide, and are tasked with the actual enumeration of the country beyond the mail-out and mail-back of questionnaires. They are the point men and women for non-response follow-up (NRFU), the process by which the Bureau attempts to collect a census form from each household that fails to return one by mail. Census takers, or enumerators, operate out of LCOs. The average size of an LCO staff is approximately 60 employees, although staffing levels vary depending on the assignment area and the NRFU workload.

Each enumerator is assigned an area and a list of households to visit during NRFU.

Enumerators generally work alone, although special circumstances may call for two or more enumerators to work together for safety or efficiency. Enumerators report daily to their crew leader. Generally, a crew leader and an assistant

**Jobs in the LCO:
Local Census Office Manager
(LCOM)**

An LCOM is responsible for the general supervision and administration of the LCO, including field operations. Responsibilities include the direct supervision of six employees and the indirect supervision of 400-600 employees, comprised mainly of enumerators and crew leaders. Job requirements include interviewing assistant manager candidates, evaluating employees, and hiring, promoting, and reassigning staff. The LCOM promotes the census via public and media appearances, including radio and television interviews. The LCOM continually reviews and analyzes cost and progress reports to make sure census operations are conducted within prescribed schedules and budgets.

**Jobs in the Field:
Crew Leader**

A crew leader and an assistant supervise, train, observe, and review the work of a team of as many as 16 enumerators. Each crew leader meets with his or her enumerators on a daily basis.

Crew leaders report directly to the LCO Field Operations Supervisor.

supervise a crew of 16 enumerators. Approximately 30 crews may be based in an LCO during peak activities.

Space Acquisition: Acquisition of office space is being made through "Joint Venture 2000"³ with the General Services Administration (GSA). The venture is essentially GSA's contract with the Bureau to take care of obtaining the temporary office space, furniture, supplies, and equipment the Bureau needs to conduct the 2000 Census. In order

to keep costs low, GSA favors renting from its own nationwide network of office space, but will rent from outside sources when needed.

The contract with GSA is going well. The Bureau is satisfied with the work that GSA is doing. Finding spaces within budget constraints has been difficult at times but GSA is meeting its goals in this area.⁴

Converting these spaces into functioning offices entails purchasing computer hardware and software; and establishing voice and data line connections. This process has been running smoothly.

Acquisition of automation equipment is contracted through

**Jobs in the LCO:
Assistant Managers**

Three assistant manager positions exist under the direct supervision of the LCOM. The positions are Assistant Manager for Field Operations (AMFO), Assistant Manager for Administration (AMA), and Assistant Manager for Recruiting (AMR). With oversight responsibility for over 400 employees and their the successful completion of group quarters enumeration, reinterview, and non-response follow-up, the AMFO is responsible for more staff than the two other assistant managers.

³ *Building the Census 2000 Foundation: An Update to the Census Advisory Committees*, March 16, 1999.

⁴ Ibid.

Unisys Corporation. Voice and data telecommunications are being provided by Government Telecommunications Incorporated and various other contractors and subcontractors.⁵

All RCCs, CFOs, and LCOs are now either opened or are on schedule to be opened. As of February 21, 1999, at least 700 spaces had been leased.⁶

Type of Office	Opening	Closing
RCCs	November 1997 - March 1998	September 2000
CFOs	June - September 1998	July 1998 - January 1999
LCOs	September 1998 - November 1999	October 2000
Be Counted Sites/ QACs	March 2000	(Late) April 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau briefing to CMB on Human resources related issues February 22, 1999; Census 2000 Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-Taking Methods, US Census Bureau, January, 1999, p. VII-3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-taking Methods, US Census Bureau, January, 1999, VIII-1, 2; US Census Bureau briefing to CMB on Human Resources related issues February 22, 1999.

FIELD OFFICE STAFFING

Workload: The Bureau's goal is to obtain a completed questionnaire for every housing unit identified in Census 2000. The majority of those forms (the Bureau now estimates 61 percent) will be returned voluntarily by mail. The remainder – about 46 million forms – will be collected during an operation known as Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU).⁷

Most of this operation will be conducted by enumerators – part-time census employees that go door-to-door to addresses that fail to return a census form. Enumerators make up the majority of the field staff during NRFU. During the 1990 census, about 300,000 employees worked in the field during peak activities. Staff turnover necessitated hiring and training (from census start to finish) more than 550,000 field employees to fill those 300,000 positions.

Due to a number of changes – in the population to be counted and in the plan to count it – more enumerators will be needed for Census 2000 than originally planned. There are more people – 118 million households in 2000 compared to 107 million in 1990. The Bureau anticipates more households will fail to return a census form by mail – 46 million estimated non-respondents in 2000, compared to 35 million in 1990. Also, in compliance with the January 25, 1999 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the Bureau dropped its plan to canvas only a sample of non-respondents, and will conduct 100% follow-up – by sending an enumerator to every household that does not return a form by mail.⁸

Basic Enumeration: NRFU is scheduled to begin on April 27, 2000, and run for ten weeks. Local Census Office (LCO) managers and crew leaders will assign each enumerator a list of addresses in their area that have not returned a census form by April 16. Each enumerator will be instructed to visit each address as many as three times, and make as many as three follow-up phone calls, in order to obtain a response from the people at each address. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the enumerator is instructed to

⁷ NRFU is scheduled to run from April 27 to July 7, 2000.

⁸ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Updated Summary: Census 2000 Operational Plan* (Washington, DC, February 1999), 3.

get “proxy data” – information about people living at the address from a third party such as a neighbor, a letter carrier, or someone else who might have some idea about the household. If all else fails, the enumerator makes a judgement of whether or not the address is occupied. Bureau headquarters will then “impute” people into the household – assign the household characteristics similar to those of neighboring households.

Targeting: Some enumerators will have a harder assignment than others. The Bureau’s research has identified specific areas that will probably be hard-to-enumerate (HTE) in 2000. Useful criteria to identify these areas have been listed and quantified by Bureau professionals in the Planning Database (PDB). The PDB “provides a systematic way to pre-identify potentially difficult to enumerate areas that should be flagged for special attention in Census 2000.”⁹

The PDB measures about 20 variables that describe a hard-to-enumerate census tract¹⁰, such as a high percentage of renters, multiunit buildings, no telephones, low-income families, and single-parent, crowded or minority households. Non-English-speaking households and linguistically isolated areas are also identified, and the non-response rate for the 1990 Census is considered. These variables are scored and summed. The higher the score, the harder the neighborhood is to count.¹¹

The PDB distinguishes between hard-to-enumerate and easy-to-enumerate neighborhoods. Any neighborhood with a score over 90 and a 1990 non-response rate over 43% is considered “very hard to

⁹ J. Gregory Robinson and Antonio Bruce, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *The Planning Database: Description and Examples of its Targeting Capability* (Washington, DC September 18, 1998 (revised October 5, 1998)), 2.

¹⁰ A census tract is an area containing approximately 4,000 people and 1,700 households. There are over 60,000 census tracts in the country. A tract is drawn to group households with common demographic characteristics, and generally represent a neighborhood. In this discussion of the PDB, “neighborhood” is used interchangeably with “census tract.”

¹¹ J. Gregory Robinson and Antonio Bruce, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *The Planning Database: Description and Examples of its Targeting Capability* (Washington, DC September 18, 1998 (revised October 5, 1998)), 3.

count.” A score of less than 30 and a 1990 non-response rate less than 25% is considered “easy to count.”¹²

According to the PDB, about 54% of the neighborhoods in the country are easy to count, and probably will not need any extra attention. About 5% of neighborhoods – 2,689 – are very hard-to-count, and will probably have high undercounts unless something extra is done.¹³

The PDB successfully predicted the neighborhoods with low response rates during the 1998 Dress Rehearsals. In addition, partnership specialists are expected to use and update the PDB during the summer and autumn of 1999. A working group is converting the PDB into user-friendly format for this purpose.

Career professionals at the Bureau concluded, “The predictive effectiveness of the planning database and hard-to-count(HTC) scores has been proven ... in the 1990 census, 1995 test census, and the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal ... That is, we can target right now the groups of tracts that will likely have low response rates in the absence of any special attention.”¹⁴

Special Enumeration: Section IX-F of the Bureau’s January 1999 operational plan consists of two pages listing brief descriptions of eight strategies to improve enumeration in HTE areas.

Strategies include the use of the Planning Database (PDB), and the Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC), Be Counted and language assistance programs discussed elsewhere in this report.

In addition, some areas will be identified for special treatment in the mailout / mailback and non-response follow-up phases of the census. “Areas will be designated for the targeted methods, such

¹² Ibid., p.4

¹³ Ibid., p.4

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 2

as urban update leave (UUL), update/enumerate (UE), and team and blitz enumeration, that will be used in Census 2000.”¹⁵

The Board has asked for greater detail regarding the Bureau’s tactics to improve the count in targeted areas. In response, Bureau officials have cited the “tool kit,” a series of special techniques that could be used by Regional Directors to count HTE areas. The Board requested a copy of detailed tool kit procedures, but the tool kit has not been formalized to this degree.

Rather than a collection of formalized procedures, the “tool kit” referred to by the Bureau is the collected knowledge and experience of its current staff – in particular its Regional Directors who meet regularly to share information.¹⁶

The Board recognizes and appreciates the institutional knowledge of the Bureau’s Regional Directors, and their ability to employ ad hoc enumeration techniques that will improve the count in HTE areas. We also recognize and concur with the Bureau’s commitment to providing those directors with “maximum flexibility” in enumerating HTE areas in their region.¹⁷

However, the Board also believes that the Bureau should formally document special enumeration procedures to be used in targeted HTE areas. The Bureau should prepare such documentation – standardized texts, instructions or manuals – for national distribution and use during Census 2000. Such documentation will ensure that valuable knowledge acquired during one census is not lost to the next due to staff turnover or retirement.

Staffing Needs: Targeting HTE neighborhoods should include identifying what skills or background an enumerator needs to most effectively canvas the neighborhood. The professionals at the

¹⁵ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-Taking Methods* (Washington, DC, January 1999), IX-8.

¹⁶ February 26, 1999 Letter from Census Monitoring Board Liaison to Census Monitoring Board.

¹⁷ Associate Director of Field Operations, February 22, 1999 briefing to the Board

Bureau have recognized that more and better data will be collected when the enumerator who knocks on a door looks and sounds like the person who answers it. This is especially significant in HTE neighborhoods (including neighborhoods where English is not the first language), where fear or distrust of government will be reinforced by an unfamiliar face on the doorstep in the evening. Ideally, enumerators should live in the same neighborhood as the people they enumerate. At the very least, they must share a common language.

The Bureau has made it a priority to hire “indigenous” enumerators: people who live in the area they canvas. The Bureau also reports that hiring multilingual enumerators, including non-citizens legally authorized to work in the U.S., is a priority. These are excellent objectives that will improve the accuracy of the census.

We agree the Bureau should make focused efforts to identify the staffing and language needs in neighborhoods they have already identified as hard-to-enumerate in 2000. Without these efforts, the Bureau cannot recruit, hire and train a workforce best suited to reduce the differential undercount of minority communities during NRFU.

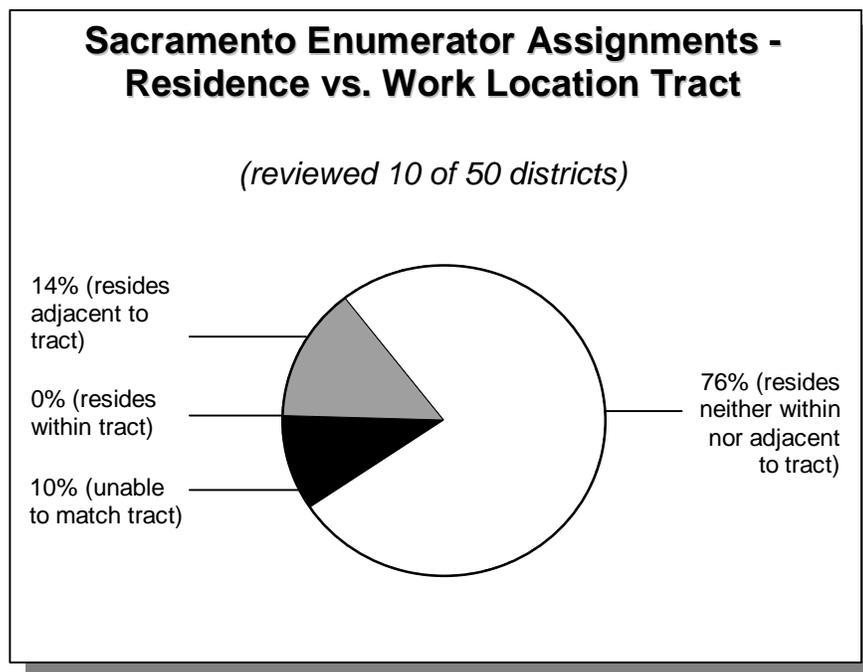
Indigenous Enumerators: The Commerce Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported that efforts to assign enumerators to work in or around their own neighborhoods during the 1998 dress rehearsal were largely unsuccessful. In Sacramento, the OIG found that, of 154 enumerators selected at random, none were assigned to work in their own neighborhood.¹⁸ The South Carolina site had similar problems, attributed largely to impractical and inaccurate Bureau maps that could not be used to match an enumerator’s home address to a census tract.¹⁹

¹⁸ Department of Commerce, Office of the Inspector Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001 (Washington, DC, September 1998), 8.

¹⁹ Department of Commerce, Office of the Inspector Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001 (Washington, DC, September 1998), 11.

The Bureau responded with its intention to improve recruiting maps and to identify enumerators' home census tracts during recruiting. The OIG agreed the Bureau's proposed improvements should address the problem.

We believe additional efforts should be focused on HTE areas. HTE neighborhoods should be identified and highlighted in the assignment area for each local census office (LCO). Staffing goals (a minimum number of Spanish-fluent enumerators, for instance) should be set for each HTE neighborhood, and incorporated into recruiting efforts in that area.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, Final Report ESD-10784-8-0001, September, 1998.

Temporary Employment of Non-Citizens: As part of its recruiting efforts to ensure the full enumeration of HTE neighborhoods, the Bureau will face special challenges in communities with large concentrations of recent immigrants. These families are the most likely to be linguistically and culturally isolated, and may not be aware of the Bureau's unbroken track record of strict confidentiality. For those newest Americans who were victims of political, religious

or ethnic persecution in their countries of origin, the idea of reporting any personal information to the federal government may be very intimidating.

Identifying and hiring field staff who are able to bridge these barriers of language and culture will be vital. However, many of those most qualified to carry out an effective enumeration of these households are likely to be recent immigrants themselves and may not yet be U.S. citizens.

The Bureau recognizes that the hiring of non-citizens who are authorized to work will be needed, but current regulatory and statutory restrictions may hamper effective recruitment of qualified non-citizens.

Current federal regulations allow the Bureau to hire non-citizens when necessary, but only in rare cases when no U.S. citizen is available.²⁰ As a result of this restriction, the Bureau must qualify its recruiting messages, warning non-citizens they will be considered for employment only after the pool of citizens has been exhausted. This will likely have the effect of discouraging non-citizens from applying at all.

In addition to regulation, §602 of the Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations act for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary generally bars the hiring of non-citizens by the U.S. government with certain limited exceptions. Among those exceptions are emergency appointments, the hiring of temporary translators, and the employment of international broadcasters employed by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA).

Given that an effective strategy to fully count HTE areas will require the hiring of qualified non-citizens, the Board recommends that the Bureau be given an exemption from current barriers to the employment of non-citizens. The exemption should apply only to the hiring of a non-citizen where 1) the individual to be hired is lawfully present in the United States and authorized to work, and 2) the position to be

²⁰ 5 CFR 338.101, 5 CFR 316.601.

filled is a temporary one necessary to carry out the 2000 Decennial Census.

Pay Strategy: Hiring and retaining an adequate number of field staff for Census 2000 is an ongoing concern. In March 1998, the Bureau estimated that 100% follow-up would require 59,000 enumerators in addition to the 300,000 staff already planned. Also, another 25,000 – 30,000 would be needed to verify all vacant housing units (another improvement announced after the Supreme Court ruling).²¹ Those estimates placed staff levels somewhere below 400,000. However, the Director of the Census Bureau told the Board in March 1999 that, “500,000 is not going to be enough.”²² Senior Bureau officials have told the Board that more detailed estimates of staffing levels are being assessed, but were unavailable when this report was being prepared.

A rudimentary projection of the staffing level needed in 2000 can be derived from the ratio of workers-to-workload in 1990. In 1990, approximately 300,000 field staff were responsible for 35 million non-responding households: just under 120 households per employee. If the Bureau maintains the same staff-to-household ratio in 2000, follow-up for 46 million households will require about 400,000 field employees during peak activities.

²¹ General Accounting Office, General Government Division, *2000! Census – Preparations for Dress Rehearsal Leave Many Unanswered Questions*, GAO/GGD-98-74, March 1998, 35.

²² U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, 8 March 1999.

	1990 Census	2000 Census
Total Households	106 million	118 million
Non-Responding Households	35 million	46 million (estimated 61% mail response)
NRFU Workload (households/ field employee)	117	117*
Field Staff (during peak activities)	300,000	400,000*

*Projected using 1990 household/field employee ratio.
Source: 1990 Procedural History

Fortunately, all three dress rehearsal sites demonstrated the Bureau's improved ability to recruit and retain staff. Staff turnover was significantly lower than expected, and acceptance rates of census jobs were much higher. Where the Bureau anticipated 100 percent turnover in each site, turnover was only 41 percent, 19 percent, and 13 percent in the Wisconsin, California and South Carolina sites, respectively.²³

One factor in the improved hiring is the Bureau's relatively new policy of paying competitive pay rates in each LCO area, based on local prevailing wages. The Bureau plans to pay enumerators 75 percent of the prevailing wage rate.

²³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal Report Card – Evaluation of the Standards for Success* (Washington, DC, February 1999), 6, 12, 20.

Offering competitive pay, while common practice in the private sector, is a drastic improvement over previous censuses. Bill Hill, a 30-year career census professional and former Director of three regions, testified that, prior to 1990, the Bureau erred when it “paid

the same piece rate in Manhattan that we did in Cincinnati, Richmond and Memphis.”²⁴ Since retaining employees will save the time and cost of recruiting and training thousands of others, this improvement is an excellent example of how sound management will realize economies of scale in Census 2000.

Presently, the Bureau is further refining its program, to “smooth” wage rates across

metropolitan areas and labor markets and ensure that staff receive similar pay for counting similar areas. This is sound management, and should be standard practice in the future.

In addition, the Bureau and Congress are working aggressively to expand the pool of potential census employees. Recent legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Census Dan Miller (R-FLA) and Representative Carrie Meek (D-FLA) would allow people on public assistance, as well as former members of the uniformed services, to work for Census 2000 without any loss of their federal assistance.²⁵ Similar provisions have been made for federal and military retirees. The Bureau is also working with states to ensure that recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families can work for Census 2000 without risk to benefits.

²⁴ U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, March 8, 1999.

²⁵ H.R. 683.

Training: The Bureau's method of training field staff has remained essentially unchanged over the past few decennials. Instructions are presented to a class of trainees via lecture and discussion, delivered verbatim from a training guide. A "pyramid" system is used, wherein each employee, after a few days or weeks of on-the-job experience, trains the people he or she will supervise. For example, LCO Managers train their Field Operation Supervisors (FOSs), who train Crew Leaders, who, in turn, train enumerators.

Census 2000 Training: RCC Managers

- | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 day RCC Management Overview classroom training.• Job-Specific classroom training for selected RCC Managers — 1 day per training course.• Crisis Communication and media skills training for selected RCC Managers — 2 to 3 days.• Various "Just-in-Time/Operational Briefings" for Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Census Managers, and Area Managers — 1 to 3 days per session. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source: February 22, 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations.

Depending on the position, training includes two-to-four days in the classroom, followed by a half-day in the field for enumerators, and various briefings and additional training sessions for others. It should be noted that enumerators for the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation (ACE) will receive essentially the same training as NRFU enumerators, with some additional training customized to the ACE procedures, such as the use of laptop computers.

The advantage of verbatim training is a consistent message delivered to hundreds of thousands of employees in a manner that controls cost and timing. The disadvantage is that training is delivered primarily by newly-hired employees – not career professionals with years of practical knowledge and field experience.

Census 2000 Training: LCO Management Teams

- **LCO Management Overview classroom training — 4 days.**
- **Job-Specific classroom training for LCO Managers, Assistant Managers, and LCO Automation Technicians — 1 day per training course.**
- **Media skills training — 1 to 2 days for LCO Managers.**
- **Various “Just-in-Time”/Management Operational classroom training sessions for LCO Management Teams — pre-classroom self-studies for 5 sessions and 1 day of classroom time per session.**

Source: February 22, 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations.

The Bureau’s evaluation of training during the 1990 census reported that, “some trainees felt [the training] tended to assume ideal conditions, and did not fully prepare them for emergencies or hard-to-enumerate situations.”²⁶

Although it would be impossible to plan for every eventuality, examination of the training manuals used in the 1998 dress rehearsal tends to reinforce this concern. The Commerce Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported:

We found a number of shortcomings in the training materials used during the dress rehearsal. For example, student training manuals contained errors and confusing acronyms, did not always match up with instructor manuals, and did not have indexes for finding topics and answering questions. Furthermore,

²⁶ 1990 Census of Population and Housing – History, Field Enumeration, p. 6-25.

videos referenced in the manuals were not always used. As a result of these training shortcomings, we found that enumerators were not always prepared and occasionally mishandled questions and problems during enumeration. Census needs to improve training materials to ensure enumerators are better prepared.²⁷

Census 2000 Training: Enumerators

- **2 1/2 day classroom training on NRFU duties and responsibilities.**
- **1/2 day of interviewing practice in the field.**
- **On-the-job training for marginal performers — given by Crew Leaders in the field.**

Source: February 22, 1999 briefing from Associate Director for Field Operations.

The Bureau responded to the OIG with plans to add indices and improve materials, including more rigorous review of manuals before their distribution. These are necessary improvements to the basic enumeration training. However, the Board concurs with career professionals who have noted that customized training would further benefit those enumerators assigned to HTE areas. Retired Regional Director Bill Hill testified:

We must evolve away from the one-size-fits-all mentality we have taken censuses with.... This administration, rightly so, trumpets our national diversity. Census procedures should deal with that diversity through diverse means.

²⁷ Department of Commerce, Office of the Inspector Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001 (Washington, DC, September 1998), ii.

Critical to success of this is to get these plans and the philosophy of this in your manager training... prepare special training for enumerators who will work the hot spots.²⁸

Regional and local staff and partners, those geographically closest to the population being counted, will often be the best judges of how and where to apply additional efforts. In 1994, the National Research Council's Panel to Evaluate Alternative Census Methods reported:

Clearly, a large-scale program of ethnic enumerators would require a significant change in traditional training methods. More resources would have to be available to train enumerators, and the process would take longer. It would be foolhardy to hire people and provide them with insufficient training. But the program would be well worth it if the program contributed to reducing the differential undercount – particularly if it was tied to an ongoing organizational structure.²⁹

Concerns with the Bureau's training have been documented since the 1990 census. In particular, customized training to improve the count in HTE areas, including linguistically isolated areas, would be beneficial to reducing the differential undercount.

Training manuals are being updated subsequent to the dress rehearsal experience, but were not available at the time this report was prepared. The Board will review these materials upon their completion.

²⁸ U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, March 8, 1999.

²⁹ Duane L. Steffey and Norman M. Bradburn, ed., *Counting People in the Information Age*, Panel to Evaluate Alternative Census Methods, Committee on National Statistics, Committee on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1994), 82.

COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEES

Plans for Census 2000: The Bureau can benefit from partnerships with local and tribal governments by increasing awareness and participation in the census. Governments and organizations participating in the partnership program stand to improve their representation and disbursement of money from the federal government. Furthermore, local governments can assist the Bureau with traditionally undercounted populations by forming Complete Count Committees (CCCs). For Census 2000, the Bureau has increased its emphasis from 1990 on encouraging local governments to form CCCs.

In May 1998, the Bureau's Regional Directors sent letters to the highest elected officials of local and tribal governments in their regions to invite them to develop CCCs. With this letter, the Bureau sent out a handbook on CCCs. Each Regional Office also developed suggested guidelines for local governments on how to set up a CCC, including how to recruit members and a proposed sub-committee structure.

While CCCs are designed according to Bureau guidelines, they are established, staffed and managed by local and tribal governments. This was not always clear during the dress rehearsals.

Local and tribal governments should continue to take the lead in creating Complete Count Committees. However, clear expectations should be established between the Complete Count Committee and the Bureau regarding funding and responsibilities.

The Bureau can provide in-kind contributions, assistance with forming a committee and some administrative support, but the Bureau cannot provide money to a local government for the CCCs activities.

CCCs are created primarily to raise local awareness of the census. Often, CCCs have representatives of community based organizations that have good relationships with traditionally undercounted populations. Ideally, these representatives can act not only to increase awareness about the upcoming census but can help the Bureau identify where the Bureau needs to increase efforts.

For example, community based organizations can help identify pockets of non-English speaking residents or encourage those who might otherwise be wary of government officials to open their doors to a Bureau employee.

Each party – the Bureau and the CCC – adds value to the partnership. However, this effort cannot meet its goal of improving the census in local areas, with local input, unless each party clearly understands the other's role. The Board recommends that all expectations, financial or otherwise, between the CCC and the Bureau be clearly established from the beginning of the relationship.

We recommend that all local and tribal governments form or join Complete Count Committees. When possible, local governments should dedicate staff to their CCCs to ensure the CCCs complete the work they set out to do. If a town feels it is too small to conduct its own CCC, it should find out if the county or state is forming a CCC, and join the effort.

We also recommend Members of Congress contact local governments in their districts to encourage them to form Complete Count Committees. With exactly one year left to Census Day, the time to form a CCC is now. Any local government that has not yet formed or joined a Complete Count Committee should contact the Bureau for more information and suggestions on how to create such a committee.

Once an official agrees to develop a CCC, he or she is asked to invite representatives from the community. Committees may include, but are not limited to, representatives from business, media, civic, religious and educational institutions and organizations to promote the census. These representatives are appointed as volunteers to the CCC in order to raise awareness of the census in their community and to encourage every member of their community to fill out a census form.

As of this report, over 4,000 governments across the nation have established CCCs and the Bureau receives confirmation of new

CCC's daily.³⁰ These CCCs cover most of the country due to smaller governments working with larger governments. For example, Maple City of 500 people with a part-time Mayor may not have the resources to develop their own CCC, but Maple City will participate in Maple County's CCC. Cities, counties and states continue to set up their own CCCs as Census Day nears.

While the Board has not seen a detailed Complete Count Committee listing for the entire nation, we have seen the listing for the Seattle Region. According to the Seattle Regional Office, most of the local governments not forming CCCs are towns with populations of less than 10,000 people. All six states in the Seattle Region formed or are forming state-wide Complete Count Committees. Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon and Washington have CCCs up and running, while California is in the process of forming their state-wide CCC.

The Board agrees that federal funds should be made available for cities and towns to conduct CCCs.

During the dress rehearsals, CCCs were hampered by a lack of resources and funding. For instance, in South Carolina, the CCCs were asked to raise money in order to promote the census dress rehearsal. Since most of the members of the CCCs represented charitable organizations (themselves dependent on a limited pool of contributors for funding), this request was not well-received, and strained the relationship between the Bureau and the CCCs.

The CCCs were obliged to fund their activities through local means, usually the local government. The City of Sacramento dedicated members of their staff to assist with CCC needs. Local funding even extended to the census itself when the Menominee Indian Reservation allowed the Local Census Office (LCO) to use the Tribe's copier.

Some cities can afford to create a line item expense in the city budget for CCCs but some cities cannot afford any funds or can only afford very limited funds to be dedicated to this endeavor.

³⁰ Tim Olsen, Joint Advisory Committees, Meeting on the Census 2000 Partnership Program, U. of MD, College Park, March 15, 1999.

Dress Rehearsal Experience: The Bureau encouraged each of the dress rehearsal sites to establish Complete Count Committees. In the dress rehearsals, the CCCs were composed of representatives of local government and various community-based organizations. The CCCs were established to raise community awareness about and participation in the census, particularly in populations that are historically undercounted. Examples of hard-to-enumerate (HTE) populations include minority communities distrustful of the government and people living in this country with limited English proficiency.

Local government officials appointed representatives to the CCC based on the recommendations sent from the Bureau. Representatives from organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, homeless organizations, churches, and social service organizations were invited to participate in CCCs, along with local government representatives and business representatives. The strategy was to include everyone with a stake in an accurate count – at least one person representing each HTE component in that local area along with representatives of the local government and business community.

Members of the Complete Count Committees believed that they would be able to provide suggestions to the Bureau to localize the promotion and execution of the census. CCC suggestions included: site locations to distribute Be Counted forms, site locations for Questionnaire Assistance Centers, how to recruit temporary employees in HTC neighborhoods, and how to assist in promotion and outreach. Local officials expressed frustration, however, that many of their recommendations received no response from the Bureau.

The Bureau needs to define a mechanism whereby each CCC recommendation is heard, reviewed, and receives a timely response.

Complete Count Committees should be encouraged to make recommendations to customize local advertising, identify and count

HTE neighborhoods, hire enumerators, or make other localized efforts to improve the census. Given the number of CCCs nationally, not all of these recommendations can or will be implemented by the Bureau. However, CCC members have a right to notification, and explanation, when the Bureau does or does not implement a recommendation. The Board found that insufficient communication and follow-up during the dress rehearsals resulted in a high degree of frustration on the part of local partners.

Some of the CCC members gave suggestions to localize the media campaign that CCC members felt were never included during the dress rehearsals. CCC members suggested that more information on how to obtain assistance to fill out the questionnaires be clearly advertised. Furthermore, the CCCs provided numerous suggestions regarding where to locate signs, suggestions for coordination, and targeted media, which were overlooked. The inability to provide input and coordination to the media campaign occurred irrespective of the receptiveness of the partnership specialist.³¹

CCC members were also supposed to be instrumental in identifying potential enumerator candidates from HTC neighborhoods. While some CCC members felt their efforts to recruit candidates were successful because their recruits were hired, some CCC members felt their qualified referrals were unjustifiably turned away.³²

³¹ See *Hearing of the Census Monitoring Board*, December 16, 1998, pg. 136, testimony of Tom Burruss, "I was pretty upset about the amount of time that I spent working on this and talking to people in a lot of meetings and to see no change made, predominantly because the people that were local here had no real authority to make those changes."; see also *Hearing of the Census Monitoring Board*, August 5, 1998, testimony of Anita Floyd, pg. 23, "We started to feel a little bit like all of our work was just kind of a side show, because the stuff that we were feeding to the census people, there was no follow-through."

³² See *Hearing of the Census Monitoring Board*, December 16, 1998, testimony of Steve Ybarra, 141, "My next-door neighbor, I sent her down to be an enumerator. The only job she was qualified for was as a file clerk. Now, how is a student who is fully bilingual and tested in Spanish and English only qualified as a file clerk?"; see also *Hearing of the Census Monitoring Board*, August 5, 1998, testimony of Reggie Alexander, pg. 23", There appeared to be little effort on the part of the Bureau, with the assistance of the consortium members, to identify and recruit members of special population groups for potential
Continued...

The Bureau can alleviate this public relations problem, and take greater advantage of local resources during Census 2000, by improving communication with local partners through clearly defined procedures.

The effectiveness of the relationship of the Partnership Specialist to Complete Count Committees depends upon an evenly-spread workload.

The communication liaison between the CCC and the Bureau is the Bureau's local Partnership Specialist. The importance of the number of CCCs working with a Partnership Specialist is illustrated by the difference between what happened in South Carolina and what happened in Sacramento and Menominee. Sacramento and Menominee were single jurisdictions served by one CCC and one partnership specialist. The South Carolina site, which was composed of 11 counties and over fifty municipalities, was also initially served by only one partnership specialist and a part-time assistant.

When the Sacramento and Menominee CCCs had numerous suggestions for improvement regarding the census process in their respective jurisdictions, both were able to easily contact their respective partnership specialists. But despite this access, they were still unable to solve persistent problems. In South Carolina, the refrain from the CCCs was that they had little contact with the partnership specialist assigned to their area. The ability of the partnership specialist to effectively relay information to the CCCs was restricted by the geographic area for which the partnership specialist was responsible.

The CCC offers local and tribal governments and community based organizations the opportunity to have input into the effort to count their local area and constituent groups while the Bureau can gain entry into hard-to-enumerate (HTE) communities. This is an

employment." This testimony was further substantiated by the Inspector General's review of enumerator selection and placement. *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience*, Report of the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Commerce, September 1998, pp. 7-9.

excellent concept and can be effective to reach traditionally undercounted populations, if properly executed.

PARTNERSHIP SPECIALISTS

The Partnership Program is a vital component of the Bureau's Outreach activities for Census 2000. As a part of the overall Marketing Program, Partnerships will be combined with the paid advertising campaign, the census questionnaire direct mail program, conventional media relations, and other promotional programs such as "Census in the Schools" to increase awareness and to inspire participation in the census.

The Partnership program is a multidimensional campaign with national, regional and local components. The Partnership Coordinators and Specialists are given the responsibility of integrating a national plan to the regional implementation strategy while balancing a multitude of interests.

Moreover, Partnership Coordinators and Specialists are specifically directed to "improve mail response rates" and should "reflect the Bureau's belief that the foundation for broad-based participation in the census must be built at the community level."³³ The coordinators and specialists can play a role in ensuring an accurate and fair census – and they directly address the differential undercount.

By ensuring access for the enumerators to the hard-to-enumerate communities, by assuaging doubts regarding confidentiality, and by ensuring awareness of the census and the importance of the census to hard-to-enumerate communities, the Partnership program can directly confront the differential undercount and the barriers to counting every person living in America.

Therefore, the Partnership Program should not be viewed as a mere public relations campaign. Coordinators and specialists have a real role and real responsibilities in Census 2000. The persons who are hired and who will be hired must represent the diverse communities in the U.S., have the requisite skills and receive the necessary training for the job.

³³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Stage 1 – The Census Bureau and the Regional Office Training Package* (Washington, DC, 1999), Tab 2, 3.

1990 Outreach Efforts: In 1990 the partnership efforts centered around three programs: the National Services Program (NSP), the Census Awareness and Products Program (CAPP), and the Census Education Project Promotion (CEPP).

- NSP served as the Bureau's point of contact with national nonprofit organizations representing traditionally undercounted populations. The goals of this program were to increase awareness and to gain the participation of these organizations and their regional and local affiliates. Bureau staff contacted over 300 national organizations, provided informational briefings and negotiated for their support in promotion and recruitment efforts.
- CAPP was a community-based outreach program designed to reach service providers with minority clients and community and religious leaders, to obtain their support for and endorsement of participation in the census.
- CEPP was an effort to educate children about the census. Information kits were mailed to every elementary and secondary school principal, as well as the school district superintendent for each county.³⁴ The kits contained lessons, work sheets and suggested activities and background information for teachers.³⁵

More than 373,000 kits were sent out in two waves. Of these kits, 57,000 were Spanish supplements and were distributed based on the percentage of Hispanic population.³⁶

The Bureau also coordinated an effort with State Data Centers (SDC) and State Coordinating Committees. The active participants numbered 201 for state agencies and universities and over 1,200 regional and local organizations. SDCs or other state agencies assumed responsibility for promotion and outreach. However, these activities were normally authorized and organized by Governors' offices. Promotional committees decided how to

³⁴ 1990 Procedural History, p. 5-40.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 5-39.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 5-40.

approach the campaign from the state's interest. The Bureau provided camera-ready copies of promotional materials for the committees to customize and also sent a variety of posters and leaflets.

2000 Outreach Efforts: For Census 2000, the Partnership Program has been integrated into the Census 2000 marketing program. The Bureau intends to provide partners with a greater range of participation options.

The Bureau is also striving for increased integration among the national, regional and local levels for Census 2000. National partners who may have regional and local outlets have been identified and targeted for participation. The national program has grown from 300 national partners in 1990, to over 400 thus far for Census 2000. Regional partnership efforts are also focusing on data collection, recruitment and promotion to integrate the partnership, marketing and field elements of the census.

In order to accomplish this ambitious program, the Bureau identified three categories of needed skills for specialists: governmental, community and media.

Program Development: The Partnerships program has four phases of development: planning, education, motivation and follow-up.³⁷

- Planning: Planning began in September 1996 and continued through July 1998. During the initial hiring stage, 12 governmental specialists were hired and trained in 1997 in preparation for the dress rehearsals in Sacramento, South Carolina, and Wisconsin. The governmental specialists were responsible for developing the Partnership Program Implementation Plans specific to each site.
- Education: The education phase began in August 1998 and should continue through January 2000. The objectives for this stage are to form relationships at the regional and local levels

³⁷ Briefing to the Board, Brenda August, Chief of Partnerships Branch, March 15, 1999.

and to increase the stakeholder awareness and willingness to coordinate with the Census Day effort. The final wave of specialists, support staff and team leaders will be hired and trained in FY 99. The specialists will continue to implement the strategies identified earlier, such as the development of regional and local implementation plans. Also, during this time, partnership specialists are directed to obtain partnership agreements with regional and local partners, including governments and other organizations, and to develop materials and schedules for outreach and promotion.³⁸ Community and media specialists were also directed to start development of outreach and media strategies.

- Motivation: Launching directly from the education phase of the program, the motivation phase will begin in February 2000 and continue through April 2000. The purpose of this phase is to identify, educate, and form outreach partnerships with regional and local partners. The Bureau plans to integrate the input of the specialists to the paid advertising, the community outreach, and the field non-response follow-up to the information and efforts by the partnership specialists.

In particular, all of these activities must happen in the hard-to-enumerate communities and neighborhoods. The specialists have a unique opportunity in Census 2000 to develop a relationship between the census operations and the hard-to-enumerate community's leaders, gatekeepers, and other trusted representatives. During this phase, the Bureau intends to provide Partnership Specialists with a user-friendly electronic database, the Planning Database,³⁹ to target hard-to-enumerate (HTE) areas. The Planning Database will provide an initial guide for specialists, to be supplemented by additional field outreach to capitalize on the unique perspectives of the local partners.

Identifying HTE neighborhoods and developing an appropriate enumeration strategy is a vital function of the partnership

³⁸ In FY 98 government specialists were hired and trained along with the first wave of *community* and *media* specialists.

³⁹ See Section II for a description of the Planning Database.

coordinators and specialists. Identification, education and outreach of trusted partners in HTE neighborhoods must take place in order to improve non-response follow-up (NRFU) in those neighborhoods.

As the National Academy of Sciences' Panel to Evaluate Alternative Census Methods concluded in its final report: "[D]eveloping local ties that work – that is, that help to reduce the differential undercount by creating a participatory spirit...is not an overnight operation."⁴⁰ Efforts (identification, communication and outreach) directed at HTE communities where the differential undercount occurs should be given high priority by the Bureau, and should be at the forefront of partnership efforts.

The Academy panel noted that "implementing an in-depth, localized, network approach will demand an enormous change in the culture of the Bureau, for which, for perfectly understandable reasons, centralized control and standardized methods have been paramount."⁴¹ Developing tailored local strategies to ensure effective partnership is paramount to the success of the census.

- Follow-Up: The Bureau's coordinators and specialists will work to identify and reach out to the communities and neighborhoods throughout the preparation and implementation of Census 2000. However, as the census moves from mail response to non-response follow-up, the role of the partnership coordinators and specialists changes. The follow-up phase takes place between May and August 2000, and focuses on supporting NRFU by raising community awareness and continuing to encourage people to be counted.

⁴⁰ Duane L. Steffey and Norman M. Bradburn, ed., *Counting People in the Information Age*, Panel to Evaluate Alternative Census Methods, Committee on National Statistics, Committee on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1994), 80.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The Partnership Program will conclude by August 2000, when field activities are completed. At that time, regions will conduct debriefing sessions as part of the evaluation report. Partners will be thanked in a number of different ways, including ceremonies and activities that highlight their participation.

Recruitment, Hiring and Placement: Initially the Bureau planned to hire 300 partnership specialists. The number has been increased to 620, providing at least one specialist to each local census office (LCO). Currently, 12 regional partnership coordinators and over 300 partnership specialists have been hired. The Partnership Program organization includes the following positions and responsibilities:

- Partnership Coordinators: The partnership coordinators will develop and give direction to the team leaders for planning development and implementation of the partnership strategy. A critical function of the coordinator is the coordination of local activities with national efforts and the update of Regional Census Centers (RCC) and LCO staff of the status of Census 2000 partnerships. In addition to the coordinators, all of the partnership specialists will work with team leaders from each region to assist in the coordination and implementation of regional plans.
- Government Specialists: The government specialists develop partnerships with state, local and tribal governments by negotiating agreements and assisting in the development of the TIGER (Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing) Improvement, Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA), and the Be-Counted programs. They are responsible for coordinating the Complete Count Committees (CCCs).

Additionally, maintaining communication with state/local/tribal governments as well as regional corporations and businesses and civic groups about recruitment, census activities and the overall partnership strategy is vital in gaining the support of these partners.

- Community Specialists: The community specialists are instructed to develop relationships with local/regional affiliates

and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local businesses and community groups. Their priorities include identifying strategic locations for Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) and Be-Counted sites, targeting certain areas that will require additional outreach and promotion efforts, and working with Complete Count Committees (CCCs) to encourage the community to cooperate with enumerators during NRFU.

- Media Specialists: The media specialists, in addition to supporting the national paid advertising campaign and the other marketing initiatives, are responsible for responding to local media inquiries and for writing locally tailored articles, press releases, radio scripts and speeches. Specialists will arrange and conduct press conferences, press briefings and editorial board meetings. A critical component of the media specialist's job is to coordinate local media partnership activities with other media specialists, RCCs, LCOs and headquarters staff to mount an integrated campaign to enhance public participation in Census 2000.

Recruitment priorities should continue to revolve around selecting qualified indigenous applicants including those applicants with specific language skills for linguistically isolated communities.

The placement of the partnership specialists is vital. The Board has not yet received a briefing on the specifics of the partnership plan. We intend to examine the process by which specialists with particular skills are assigned to particular LCOs.

Training: The Bureau's goal is to provide all specialists with broad knowledge of the census operations as well as enhancing specific skills geared toward communication and negotiation.

Training takes place in five stages:⁴²

- Stage one: two weeks of on the job training in the RCC.

⁴² Associate Director for Field Operations, February 22, 1999 briefing to the Board.

- Stage two: four and half days of classroom training on partnership building and preparation for implementation.
- Stage three: five days of media training, three days of communication skills and inter-cultural communications workshops and three days of negotiation skills training.
- Stage four: one and half day LUCA workshop.
- Stage five: partnership development skills.

In addition, Partnership Coordinators and Team Leaders receive leadership training involving four days of classroom training, two days of follow up, and additional sessions every six months in selected RCCs.⁴³

Coordination and Communication: Communication and coordination play a key role in the success of the partnership endeavor.

To enhance coordination and communication, partnership specialists will be provided, as needed, with pagers, cellular phones and office space at LCOs.

The Partnership branch of the Census 2000 Publicity Office (C2PO)⁴⁴ and the Partnership and Data Services Program Branch (PDSP) of the Field Division⁴⁵ have established a number of mechanisms to ensure that effective techniques are shared between regions, including a monthly bulletin – *Partnership Specialist Update*. This bulletin highlights the best practices of various regions, identifies fact sheets and promotional materials as they become available, and provides updates on national and regional efforts.

⁴³ Associate Director for Field Operations, February 22, 1999 briefing to the Board.

⁴⁴ C2PO is the Census Bureau division responsible for the Census 2000 Marketing Program.

⁴⁵ The Field Division of the Census Bureau has the responsibility for all field operations during Census 2000.

Several regions have “best practice” kits in which they describe techniques that tend to be successful in the field. In addition, an electronic Partnership Exchange bulletin was established by PDSP to highlight these techniques.

Finally, the Bureau will provide pre-prepared articles for specialists, designed for distribution to local newspapers and newsletters as educational or informational tools. The articles reinforce consistent themes from the national advertising and promotional efforts, while allowing partnership specialists to tailor messages to the local community.

In those areas with many Complete Count Committees, the Bureau should dedicate enough staff to maintain a manageable workload. The effectiveness of the relationship of the Partnership Specialist to local governments depends upon an evenly-spread workload.

During the dress rehearsals, Menominee and Sacramento had only one CPS and one governmental unit each, while Columbia had one CPS for more than 50 jurisdictions. In 2000, some specialists will be responsible for only one jurisdiction while others will be responsible for many. Because the specialist acts as the primary liaison between the CCC and the Bureau, suggestions from several CCCs to the Bureau should not be bottlenecked through a single specialist.

The effectiveness of the relationship between the Bureau and the CCCs may be compromised if the partnership specialist is stretched between too many demands for localization of the census by CCC members.

QUESTIONNAIRE ASSISTANCE CENTERS (QACs)

Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) will be established in public places to help people complete a census form. They are intended to be a key part of the Bureau's plans to improve response in hard-to-enumerate (HTE) areas, and particularly to help people with limited English proficiency. QACs are also set up to assist people without access to telephones or who may have low literacy skills, and are an important part of counting traditionally undercounted populations.⁴⁶ Publicly accessible locations such as community centers, social services offices and large apartment buildings are among the kinds of sites that will serve as QACs.

Staffing: The 1995 Census Test and the 1998 Dress Rehearsal found that to ensure adequate access to a QAC, paid Bureau staff will be critical.⁴⁷ During the dress rehearsal, the Bureau had varying success with volunteers staffing the assistance centers. For example, at a public library in South Carolina, "the volunteer stopped coming [after two days] when the volunteer realized that no one was coming in for help."⁴⁸ In Menominee, volunteers staffed all three QACs. One volunteer stopped staffing the site after it was apparent people were not requesting assistance. The other two volunteers (interviewed by the OIG) valued the role QACs could play to improve responses to the census.⁴⁹ Sacramento had paid staff on-site at QACs.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 22. Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001/September 1998.

⁴⁷ The Census 2000 Language Program: Lowering Barriers to Census Participation, A Business Case Analysis, p. 9. July 1998.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 20. Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001/September 1998.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Activities at Menominee Indian Reservation and Chicago Regional Census Center Show That Improvements are Needed for Census 2000*, p. 37. Inspection Report No. IPE-10753/September 1998.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 21. Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001/September 1998

For 2000, 15,000 paid temporary (3-week) employees will staff the QACs to supplement the volunteers running the QACs. According to the Bureau, 15,000 staff members would be sufficient to staff one QAC in approximately 25 percent of all neighborhoods during the mailout / mailback phase.⁵¹

Site Selection: During the dress rehearsals, there were varying levels of success for each location. Some of the problems with site selection can be attributed to the lack of clear and consistent instructions for determining locations for QACs. For example, in Columbia, SC, two partnership specialists were responsible for identifying QAC locations, recruiting, and training volunteers to staff the centers.⁵²

In Sacramento, because there was “little guidance from the Bureau or local partners, Sacramento’s [city] managers selected sites themselves.”⁵³ For Census 2000, the Bureau states that Regional Census Offices will seek advice from local partners and will use the “hard-to-count” index as determined by the Planning Database⁵⁴ to select sites.⁵⁵ This process is critically important to the success of QACs.

The Bureau is currently developing criteria and procedures for determining the placement of QACs. **The Board urges the Bureau to finalize QAC site selection procedures as soon as possible, so staff at the local and regional level can begin reviewing possible QAC sites in consultation with local partners.**

⁵¹ The Census 2000 Language Program: Lowering Barriers to Census Participation, A Business Case Analysis, p. 9. July 1998.

⁵² U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 20. Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001/September 1998.

⁵³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 20. Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001/September 1998.

⁵⁴ See Section II for a description of the Planning Database.

⁵⁵ The Census 2000 Language Program: Lowering Barriers to Census Participation, A Business Case Analysis, p. 9. July 1998.

The Board believes QACs can serve a valuable function, if they are placed in useful areas and publicized. The Board recommends the Bureau focus efforts on working closely with local partners, and using the Planning Database to identify areas where QACs can best reach traditionally undercounted populations. Follow-through with local partners should be a priority.

The Bureau plans for QACs to be accessible beyond “traditional work hours.” QACs will be open during morning hours to reach seniors and homemakers, all day Saturday and Sunday and after work hours to reach hard-to-enumerate populations.⁵⁶

Publicity: There were varying levels of QAC utilization at the three dress rehearsal sites and QACs were not widely publicized. In its analysis of QACs, the OIG found that local organizations felt “an individual seeking in-person assistance would have difficulty determining where the centers were located.”⁵⁷ **The Board recommends that promotion be improved for QACs in 2000, including advertising locations and hours of operation. Although there were differences in site selection and staffing during the dress rehearsal, the Board agrees that the level of activity will increase with better publicity of QACs, an improved site selection process and paid staff.**

In Sacramento, there was little differentiation between Be Counted sites and QACs.⁵⁸ Be Counted sites are designated high-traffic areas which the Bureau will stock with Be Counted forms, but which will not be staffed. **The Board recommends that the difference between QACs and Be Counted sites be clarified for 2000 among decennial Bureau personnel and the public. This explanation should be incorporated into the training process.**

⁵⁶ March 22, 1999 Memorandum from the Census Bureau to the Census Monitoring Board.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 21. Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001/September 1998

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Sacramento Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 20. Audit Report No. ESD-10784-8-0001/September 1998.

Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Program: The OIG reports that Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) centers will more effectively and efficiently assist respondents with filling out their forms than Questionnaire Assistance Centers.

The Board supports the Bureau's decision to implement both the Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC) and the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) programs. We believe QACs will be a critical component in providing assistance to Limited English Proficient populations and others that will be hard to enumerate. The QACs are one of the mechanisms for distributing Language Assistance Guides to help respondents fill out their forms. Also, the QACs will be important for some members of populations that were undercounted in 1990 who may not have telephones in their homes and would therefore have difficulty accessing Telephone Questionnaire Assistance.

Presidential Members' Position: Several of the challenges with the QACs during the dress rehearsal are attributed to the fact that they were volunteer-run. The regional partnership coordinator for South Carolina recommended that the Bureau hire paid staff to assist volunteers in operating the QACs.

For 2000, 15,000 paid temporary workers will staff the QACs for three weeks to supplement the work of the volunteers. QACs will be open from March 8, 2000 through April 27, 2000.⁵⁹ Acting Inspector General Johnnie Frazier stated, "I think the Census Bureau is reacting by making sure that they use paid people now as opposed to volunteers. They will be able to control that a lot better."⁶⁰

Congressional Members' Position: The Congressional Members are reluctant to ascribe the ineffectiveness of QAC sites in the dress rehearsal to failure on the part of local partners. Rather, the mistakes made in choosing QAC locations are consistent with the Bureau's insufficient coordination and follow-through with local partners during the dress rehearsals.

⁵⁹ March 22, 1999 Memorandum from the Census Bureau to the Census Monitoring Board.

⁶⁰ U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, 6 November 1998.

According to firsthand testimony from local partners in the South Carolina dress rehearsal site, community groups were extremely frustrated by the Bureau's reluctance to accept recommendations from local partners. Complete Count Committee member Anita Floyd testified, "We started to feel a little bit like all of our work was just kind of a side show, because the stuff that we were feeding to the census people, there was no follow-through."⁶¹

Similar concerns with Bureau follow-up were reported by the OIG, which noted that the regional partnership coordinator "recognized that locations contacted in the fall of 1998 should have been contacted again before the start of the Be Counted campaign [in April 1998] to ensure their commitment."⁶²

Furthermore, the examples of volunteers leaving inactive QACs are more reflections on inefficient site selection and inadequate promotion, rather than reflections on staffing. It is not unreasonable for an alert volunteer to leave a QAC after two or three days of inactivity.

The Congressional Members of the Board believe that the Bureau can reduce difficulties and increase the effectiveness of QACs by employing the Planning Database and working closely with local partners to pre-identify QAC locations that will best serve traditionally undercounted communities.

⁶¹ U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, 5 August 1998, 23.

⁶² Department of Commerce, Office of the Inspector Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001 (Washington, DC, September 1998), 22.

BE COUNTED PROGRAM

The Be Counted Program is designed to provide a means for people to be counted who may not have received a census form or believe they were not included in the census. Be Counted forms are geared to those populations that have historically been hard-to-enumerate, and will be available from March 31 through April 11, 2000.⁶³

The Be Counted form is an unaddressed questionnaire which will be available in six languages and distributed at locations such as city halls, libraries and targeted locations frequented by historically hard-to-enumerate populations, such as certain churches, restaurants or community centers.⁶⁴ Be Counted questionnaires will be printed in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog (Filipino), Vietnamese and Korean.

The Bureau has already incorporated feedback from the Commerce Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), based on dress rehearsal experience, and plans to limit the scope of the Be Counted Program to "include only sites identified in consultation with local partners in hard-to-enumerate areas."⁶⁵ Also, the duration of the Be Counted campaign has been abbreviated, from four weeks in the dress rehearsals to eleven days during Census 2000.⁶⁶

Unduplication: A potential increase in duplicate responses through the use of Be Counted forms was a concern prior to the dress rehearsals. However, extensive duplication did not prove to be a problem, in part due to the minimal response to the Be Counted Program.

⁶³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan – Workflow and Schedule* (Washington, DC, March 17, 1999).

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 22. Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001/September 1998.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, p. 23. Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001/September 1998.

⁶⁶ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan – Workflow and Schedule* (Washington, DC, March 17, 1999).

Be Counted forms undergo an unduplication process that requires the forms to be geocoded and checked for duplicate responses upon receipt and may require field verification.⁶⁷ In addition, the Bureau added a question to the form which asks respondents if they have filled out another census form during the past week.⁶⁸

The dress rehearsal results “indicate that additional error caused by the multiple response operations should be minimal both in overall effect and as a percent of all errors. ... In every test including multiple response options that the Census Bureau has conducted to date, the use of Be Counted forms and other multiple response options has been minimal.”⁶⁹

Site Selection: Be Counted site selection was inconsistent during the dress rehearsals. For 2000, the Bureau plans to select distribution sites for Be Counted forms in conjunction with local partners and partnership specialists.

Analysis from the Commerce Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and firsthand reports to the Board, indicate that communication and coordination with local partners was inconsistent during the dress rehearsals. The OIG reports:

There are a number of reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Be Counted campaign [in South Carolina]. Some sites were targeted too early....Others were unaware of their commitment because the person agreeing to participate had since left the organization....In addition, after the Be Counted campaign began, the regional partnership coordinator

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Experience Suggests Changes to Improve Results of the 2000 Decennial Census*, pp. 20-21. Audit Report No. ESD-10783-8-0001/September 1998.

⁶⁸ September 30, 1998 Memorandum for George E. Ross, Assistant Inspector General for Auditing from James F. Homes, Acting Director, Bureau of the Census. p. 3.

⁶⁹ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal Report Card – Evaluation of the Standards for Success* (Washington, DC, February 1999), 9.

recognized that locations contacted in the fall of 1998 should have been contacted again before the start of the Be Counted campaign [in April 1998] to ensure their commitment.⁷⁰

During the Board's meeting in Columbia, South Carolina, local census partners testified to their frustration with the Bureau's internal and external communications, particularly in selecting Be Counted sites. Anita Floyd, Director of the Columbia Women's Shelter, testified:

The Be Counted sites were not identified early enough; [the Bureau] didn't follow up on the ones that we suggested, and then the ones that they selected were inappropriate....We just had a very strong impression that we were doing a lot of work that was not going to be effective because it was going nowhere once it actually got to the census staff.⁷¹

In Menominee, site selection went smoothly. The locations were well selected, accessible and well stocked – partially due to an inadvertent delivery of more than three times the necessary forms. However, Bureau staff displayed excellent adaptability, expanding the number of sites from eight to twelve: two post offices, two senior citizen centers, two churches, four stores, a health clinic and a community center.⁷² The staff who worked near the Be Counted displays knew that the forms were for public use for people who believed that they had not filled out the mailed questionnaire.

The Bureau is right in advocating Be Counted sites to reach traditionally undercounted populations. Although the OIG has questioned the efficacy of QACs and Be Counted sites, the Board

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Activities at Menominee Indian Reservation and Chicago Regional Census Center Show That Improvements are Needed for Census 2000*, p. 22. Inspection Report No. IPE-10753/September 1998.

⁷¹ U.S. Census Monitoring Board, *Public Hearing*, August 5, 1998, 23.

⁷² U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Columbia Dress Rehearsal Activities at Menominee Indian Reservation and Chicago Regional Census Center Show That Improvements are Needed for Census 2000*, p. 36. Inspection Report No. IPE-10753/September 1998.

concur with the Bureau that these are important components to an outreach effort targeted to decrease the differential undercount of HTE areas and people with limited English proficiency.

However, the dress rehearsals clearly demonstrate that the Bureau must improve its follow through on the promise to work closely with local partners to target HTE areas for Be Counted sites. **As in the case of enumerator recruiting and assignment, the Board recommends a dedicated focus on early identification of HTE areas, using the Planning Database and local partner input. In particular, the Bureau should work with Complete Count Committees to identify areas that need forms in languages other than English, and to ensure appropriate targeting for specific languages.**

QUESTIONNAIRES & LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

The census questionnaire is the primary means of collecting data in the decennial census. The questionnaire's content – mandated by the Constitution and by statutes – has evolved over two hundred years of census taking to comprise a range of demographic and household questions.

The census “short form” is the census questionnaire that the majority of households will receive, while the “long form” is a lengthy, complex form that will be sent to one-in-six households in 2000. Presently, the census long form asks 53 questions.⁷³ The questions range from the name, address, date-of-birth, ancestry and education level to physical-mental limitations, military service, occupation, income, plumbing, heating, and other housing characteristics.

Changes From 1990: The testing process to revise the 2000 questionnaire has been extensive. The new forms are more respondent-friendly than in 1990 and will include changes such as a larger, easier-to-read font, navigational aids to guide the respondent through the questionnaire and respondent instructions directly on the form instead of in a separate guide.⁷⁴

Long-form mailback rates are lower than short-form rates, and the data acquired through follow-up are less accurate than those found through a mailback response. The long form tends to increase follow-up workload, which increases costs and impairs data quality.⁷⁵

Questionnaire Subjects: The Bureau and the Office of Management and Budget reviewed in great detail the subjects to include in the

⁷³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census “Census Questionnaire: D-2.” [the long form].

⁷⁴ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-Taking Methods* (Washington, DC, January 1999).

⁷⁵ American Demographics, May 1997: Disappearing Census Questions by Brad Edmondson.

2000 census form. In an effort to shorten the form, only questions that were Congressionally mandated or required for federal agency funding were included. "Mandatory" subjects are cited in federal legislation. Without this information, the government would not be able to carry out legal duties such as distributing federal block grants. Mandatory subjects include:

Age, sex, relationship, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, place of birth, citizenship, year of entry, education, language spoken at home, veteran status, journey to work, place of work, income, grandparents as caregivers (new), support expenditures/health coverage (new).

"Required" subjects data are needed to enforce laws or meet Federal court rules. Required subjects include:

Ancestry, disability, migration, labor force status, industry, occupation, class of worker, work status last year, units in structure, value of home, monthly rent, bedrooms, plumbing facilities, kitchen facilities, telephone, house heating fuel, year moved into unit and shelter costs.

"Programmatic" topics are not mandatory, and are used to set policy or used as legal evidence. There were five programmatic questions dropped for 2000. They dealt with fertility, the labor force, and housing.

Two tests were used to evaluate the proposed content for 2000: the 1996 National Content Survey was designed to test revised question wording, formatting and sequencing and the 1996 Race and Ethnic Targeted Test examined a variety of potential changes to the questions related to race and ethnicity. On March 31, 1997, as required by law, the Bureau submitted a list of subjects planned for inclusion in Census 2000 to the Secretary of Commerce and the Congress.

The proposed 2000 Short Form includes seven subjects, where the 1990 short form included 12 subjects. The proposed 2000 long form includes 34 subjects, where the 1990 long form included 38.

SUBJECTS PLANNED FOR INCLUSION IN CENSUS 2000	
100-PERCENT SUBJECTS (Appear on all forms)	
POPULATION	HOUSING
Name Sex Age Relationship Hispanic origin Race	Tenure (whether home is owned or rented)
SAMPLE SUBJECTS (Appear on long forms only)	
POPULATION	HOUSING
<p>Social characteristics: Marital status Place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry Education-school enrollment and educational attainment Ancestry Residence 5 years ago (migration) Language spoken at home Veteran status Disability Grandparents as caregivers*</p> <p>Economic characteristics: Labor force status (current) Place of work and journey to work Work status last year Industry, occupation, and class of worker Income (previous year)</p> <p>*New subject for Census 2000.</p>	<p>Physical characteristics: Units in structure Number of rooms Number of bedrooms Plumbing and kitchen facilities Year structure built Year moved into unit House heating fuel Telephone Vehicles available Farm residence</p> <p>Financial characteristics: Value of home Monthly rent (including congregate housing) Shelter costs (selected monthly owner costs)</p>
1990 CENSUS SUBJECTS DROPPED FOR CENSUS 2000	
POPULATION	HOUSING
Children ever born (fertility) Year last worked (<i>An abbreviated screener will be included with questions about industry, occupation, and class of worker; this will allow us to reduce respondent burden and properly define the "experienced civilian labor force."</i>)	Source of water Sewage disposal Condominium status

Source: Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census "Census Questionnaire: D-2." [the long form].

The Bureau submitted the actual questions on March 30, 1998 to the Secretary of Commerce and the Congress.⁷⁶ Also, in 2000, the Bureau will use an integrated mailing package for the first time. The entire mail package design (questionnaires, envelopes, and motivational slogans) will be compatible and linked to the entire marketing plan.

Multi-language questionnaires: The 2000 census forms will be available in six languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. The Bureau will mail translated forms to households by request. Requests can be made in response to the advance notice letter (pre-census mailing), which will be sent to every mailout address notifying households that they will be receiving the census form soon.

The Bureau does not plan to have Census 2000 questionnaire forms available in Braille.⁷⁷ **Because questionnaire forms will not be available in Braille, the Board recommends that outreach efforts include the disability community; the Bureau develop outreach and instructional material in Braille and large print; and an effort be made to ensure that service agencies serving populations in need of Braille or large print receive the material.**

The language selection method was based on the probabilities of linguistic isolation among traditionally hard to count language groups – rather than just the total number of people speaking the language – along with the analysis of the potential increases in response rates the printing might achieve. Approximately 3% of all U.S. households are considered to be linguistically isolated.⁷⁸ The five foreign languages that the Bureau is using to translate questionnaire forms allows the Bureau to reach more than 75% of all linguistically isolated households (of the 3% that are considered linguistically isolated).⁷⁹ Coupled with the English language form,

⁷⁶ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-Taking Methods* (Washington, DC, January 1999).

⁷⁷ March 22, 1999 Memorandum from the Census Bureau to the Census Monitoring Board.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

the availability of questionnaires in six languages allows the Bureau to reach 99% of all households in the U.S.⁸⁰

**Linguistically Isolated Households
Covered by Five Languages**

Language	Estimated Number of Linguistically Isolated Households in 2000	As a Percentage of all Linguistically Isolated Households
Spanish	1,694,900	58.4%
Chinese	211,100	7.3%
Vietnamese	108,100	3.7%
Tagalog	97,000	3.3%
Korean	86,800	3.0%
Total	2,197,000	75.7%

Source: "Benefit/Cost Analysis of the Use of Language in Census 2000," Census Bureau, and projections on unpublished Census Bureau tabulations of 1990 census data.

Language Assistance Guides: The Bureau plans to make 15 million assistance guides in about 30 languages available.⁸¹ The Bureau's Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees recommended that the Bureau include six additional languages for Language Assistance Guides. The Board agrees with the Bureau that ... "language guides are a useful, but relatively low cost and low risk addition. They can be reproduced, if needed, without concern for the affect on data capture (as would be the case for Be Counted Forms) and can be distributed to partners in advance of Census Day..."⁸²

⁸⁰ March 16, 1999 Memorandum from Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt to Commerce Secretary William Daley.

⁸¹ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Operational Plan Using Traditional Census-Taking Methods* (Washington, DC, January 1999).

⁸² The Census 2000 Language Program: Lowering Barriers to Census Participation, A Business Case Analysis, Bureau of the Census, p. 9. July 1998.

In 1990, the Bureau printed Language Guides in the following languages:

32 Language Guides for the 1990 Census

Arabic	Armenian	Cambodian
Chinese	Creole	Croatian
Czech	Farsi	Fillipino (Tagalog)
French	German	Greek
Hindi	Hungarian	Italian
Japanese	Korean	Laotian
Latvian	Lithuanian	Polish
Portuguese	Romanian	Russian
Samoan	Serbo-Croatian	Slovak
Slovene	Thai	Ukranian
Vietnamese	Yiddish	

For 2000, the Bureau plans to add Bengali, Dutch and Urdu.

Large Households: In 1990, the census questionnaire, in addition to a household roster for 12 persons, allowed respondents to include 100 percent information for seven of the 12 persons.⁸³ In 2000, the Bureau plans to include a roster for 12 persons, and allow 100 percent information for six persons.

The Bureau cited that “69.5 percent of the coverage error came from enumerated housing units...”⁸⁴ This is what is known as within-household undercount or undercoverage.

The within-household undercount indicates that the census roster for many households in 1990 was incomplete. The National Academy, looking forward to 2000, concluded that “improving the quality of coverage within households – households that are increasingly complex and diverse – is crucial.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census “1990 Census Questionnaire.”

⁸⁴ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Report to Congress – The Plan for Census 2000* (Washington, DC, August 1997), 41.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Counting an entire household happens in one of three ways – someone in the household completes the census questionnaire, an enumerator completes the questionnaire, or (when other attempts have been exhausted) the Bureau “fills in” the questionnaire with estimates, or “imputations.”⁸⁶ The process of completing the 100 percent census questions for persons within households, as well as listing the persons within the household is “rostering.”

The concern for the 100 percent questions and rostering arises from concerns over non-response follow-up and imputations. The 1990 questionnaire had room for detailed information on seven people in a household. In 2000, the questionnaire will have room for detailed information on six people. For all people over that limit the Bureau must contact the household to collect full information.

The majority of households in the United States have fewer than six persons. Yet the implications for large households pose a challenge to the Bureau’s efforts to collect full and accurate data on every household. According to 1990 data, the majority of people residing in households with more than six people are in Black and Hispanic households. To avoid increasing the differential undercount by a less-than-complete enumeration of large households, a dedicated effort at follow-up is necessary.

The Bureau is planning as a part of their coverage edit operation to address questionnaire quality concerns. They will “check completed questionnaires for discrepancies between the number of persons reported and the number of persons for whom information is provided, forms returned where the population count is blank and the number of persons reported is six, mailed forms with household counts of seven or more, and certain households that contain complex living arrangements.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ “Imputation” means filling in information about a household based on information from neighboring households. For example, if a household in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood does not answer the questions about race, the Bureau will likely record that household as Hispanic. This use of imputation should not be confused with the Bureau’s original plans to sample for non-response follow-up.

⁸⁷ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Updated Summary: Census 2000 Operational Plan* (Washington, DC, February, 1999), p. 9.

The Board has not been provided details regarding the follow-up and coverage edit operation for the census questionnaire for households with more than six people. However, the Board believes this operation, if executed well, can reduce the differential undercount.

Congressional Members' Position: The Congressional Members believe the Bureau made a mistake in eliminating room for detailed information on a seventh person on the questionnaire. According to the 1990 data, the majority of people who reside in households with more than six people are in Black and Hispanic households. A less complete count of large households may contribute to the differential undercount of minority communities.

Given that one third of the hardest-to-count census tracts in 2000 are anticipated by the Bureau to be in three cities – New York, Chicago and Los Angeles⁸⁸ – concern for differential undercount and the potential of within-household undercount in minority communities merits attention. During the 1990 Census, a seventh person made up 15 percent of the Hispanic population in Los Angeles, compared to only 5 percent of the White population. A seventh person made up 6 percent of both the 1990 Black and Hispanic populations in New York City. In Chicago, without space for the seventh person, detailed information on 7 percent of the Black population and 11 percent of the Hispanic population would have been left off the form.⁸⁹

Presidential Members' Position: Initially, the Census Bureau had planned for the 2000 questionnaire to include a complete set of questions for 5 persons in each household. In addition to the 5 question sets, the original form design included a roster for listing the names of up to 12 people and a question on the total number of people living at the address.

⁸⁸ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, J. Gregory Robinson and Antonio Bruce, *The Planning Database: Description and Examples of its Targeting Capability* (Washington, DC September 18, 1998 (revised October 5, 1998)), 7.

⁸⁹ Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *General Population Characteristics* (Washington, DC, 1990).

The 1990 questionnaire included 7 question sets, and the decision to reduce the count to 5 for 2000 significantly reduced the size of the form to be mailed to each household. The Presidential Members of the Board believe the Bureau made the correct decision in late 1998 when it increased the number of question sets on the form to 6.

The success of this strategy will depend, however, on the effectiveness of the Bureau's procedures to collect complete information from larger households. This is of particular importance given that the majority of large households in the United States are in traditionally undercounted communities.

Should these follow-up efforts be effectively designed and carried out, the Presidential Members believe the size of the 2000 questionnaire strikes an appropriate balance between accommodating large households and reducing the size and complexity of the form.