



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF  
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*Reducing the Undercount in the 2010 Census*

**Before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government  
Information, Federal Services and International Security of the  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Coburn, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you again to discuss our ongoing efforts to address issues related to the undercount in the 2010 Census.

One of the primary goals of the 2010 Decennial Census is to improve the accuracy and coverage of the population, particularly with respect to the differential undercount. In discussing our efforts to meet this goal, we rightly stress our outreach and promotional efforts, including the advertising campaign and the partnership program. But it is important to understand that these efforts complement a series of operations specifically designed to address accuracy and coverage. Many programs from prior censuses are well in place to more effectively reach hard-to-count populations. We will be enhancing these programs in 2010. Without these efforts our partnership program and advertising campaign would not be effective.

## **Decennial Census Operations that Address the Undercount**

The Census Bureau's commitment to improving coverage and addressing the undercount encompasses wide-ranging operations that can be thought of in four broad categories:

*Address List Development*

*Group Quarters*

*Field Activities*

*Languages*

In today's testimony, I wish to briefly describe each of these categories. As you will see, together they provide the foundation for our efforts to include everyone, particularly hard-to-count populations, in the 2010 Census. Our communications and partnership program also is fundamental to this effort, so I will be discussing the components of that program as well. My goal today, though, is to help the Subcommittee understand that this operational framework provides the structure to ensure that our communications program results in the accurate inclusion of the people we reach.

*Address List Development*

To ensure the accuracy of the census, we must ensure that we have each address, and that all of them are in the right place. If we do not know someone's address, it is much harder for us to know whether we have received his or her census questionnaire. Our address list, or what we call the Master Address File (MAF), covers all levels of geography throughout the country and Puerto Rico, including American Indian reservations, states, counties, cities, towns, census tracts, and census blocks. The MAF is integrated with our digital mapping system, the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Reference System—better known as TIGER.

The maintenance of the MAF between censuses is critical to the accuracy of the address list. Throughout the decade we have been updating the MAF with records from the U.S. Postal Service. We also developed and implemented the Community Address Updating System, during which field representatives updated the address list in specific rural areas where we could not make use of information from the U.S. Postal Service. We then partnered with tribal, state and

local governments in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. In the LUCA program we provided government officials all over the country with access to our address lists so they could compare them with their records to verify our accuracy.

We will conduct the address canvassing operation in the Spring of 2009, when census employees will canvass every block in the country to verify or update address information against the address information on the Census Bureau's address lists and maps. This includes verifying the information provided by tribal, state, and local governments as part of LUCA. Our employees also are instructed to add addresses not listed. Address list maintenance operations like address canvassing are especially important in rapidly changing areas like the Gulf Coast that were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In the case of more recent dislocations such as those caused by Hurricane Ike, we are increasing outreach to local governments to understand special circumstances that might affect the upcoming Address Canvassing operation.

After Address Canvassing, we will continue to update the address list in other ways. We will continue to receive updates from the U.S. Postal Service up through the spring of 2010. Also, in the spring of 2010, in areas where we mail out the questionnaires, we will give state, local and tribal governments one final opportunity to provide us information about newly constructed housing units.

### *Group Quarters*

It also is vital to ensure we have an accurate, up-to-date list of group quarters (GQ), including college dormitories, nursing homes, military barracks, jails, prisons, and other facilities. We have been working to improve our methods for identifying, locating, and enumerating these facilities. For the first time, group quarters will be included in the Address Canvassing operation. Our goal is to locate and properly identify or determine whether the address is, in fact, a group quarters location. By including the group quarters in the address lists we sent to governments as part of the LUCA program, we encourage local governments to verify or update the group quarters locations. We also reached out to stakeholders, including members of the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates (FSCPE), to give us GQ updates. All of this will help ensure our list of group quarters is as accurate and complete as possible.

It is the Census Bureau's goal to include any and all housing units, including Group Quarters, in the Master Address File.

### *Field Activities*

It is important to understand that every decennial census field operation is designed to achieve maximum coverage. This begins with a recruiting strategy based on hiring employees from the communities where they live. We will recruit nearly 3 million people to fill 750,000 temporary census jobs, making every effort to find people who have the language skills and cultural understanding of the communities they will be enumerating. Our pay rates will be competitive at the county level in every state, and we will conduct extensive advertising in local media outlets to inform people about census jobs. We also will work closely with our partner organizations conducting outreach in hard-to-count populations, and with local and tribal governments. A household is far more likely to respond to a census enumerator if that enumerator speaks their language and understands their culture.

We also implement a wide range of field operations designed to enhance our strategy for reaching everyone. We mail a form to 80 percent of the population because we have a distinct, city-style mailing address for them. For the remaining 20 percent who do not have a mailable city-style address, generally those who live in more rural areas, we either leave a form at their doorstep while simultaneously updating our address list (an operation we call update/leave). Alternatively, we actively canvass the area and conduct interview with the households we find and identify those we need to return to (an operation we call update/enumerate). These operations are chosen because they give us the best chance for getting a complete and accurate count in those areas.

Our largest field operation is the Nonresponse Follow-up operation (NRFU) in which we interview all households that have not returned their census forms. Our nonresponse follow-up is conducted in all areas of the country by local enumerators who make extensive efforts to obtain information from all households.

In addition, the Be Counted program will make questionnaires available to people who did not receive a questionnaire, or who feel they are not being included in the census count. Be Counted questionnaires will be available in up to 40,000 public places where people congregate (e.g. stores, churches,

government offices, libraries, gas stations, etc.). Our research shows that Be Counted forms are more likely to include members of minority groups and children – two traditionally undercounted populations – when compared to the traditional mail forms. We also will establish 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) where people can pick up Be Counted forms or get help filling out their questionnaires, which is particularly important for people with language difficulties.

We also conduct the Coverage Follow-up Operation, where we re-contact certain households by telephone if we have an indication that someone may have been missed or counted in error. This work is based on research we conducted throughout the decade, and it is linked to two new questions on the form specifically focused in improving coverage within households. Further, even during the Nonresponse Follow-up operation, enumerators are asked to look for newly constructed units that may not be on their address lists.

Specific enumeration strategies will complement these efforts. Officials in each region will develop specific plans for areas designated as being “hard-to-enumerate.” These plans are based on their knowledge of the areas as well as on data from Census 2000. They include but are by no means limited to:

- Team, or “blitz” enumeration, in dangerous areas where it’s unsafe for enumerators to work alone;
- “Urban Update Leave” operations for multi-unit housing in cities where the Post Office may not deliver to each household;
- A program designed specifically for remote Alaska;
- The Service-Based Enumeration Program, which involves visiting selected service locations that serve people without conventional housing such as shelters, soup kitchens and regularly scheduled mobile food vans in which we work closely with local governments and advocacy groups, and do Internet research, to identify and update our roster of these locations;
- Active engagement of partner organizations in areas where few people speak English well; and,

- Targeted outreach and communications efforts in areas with lagging response rates.

The list goes on and on, and it reflects the multi-faceted approach we take in our field operations to ensure that we're reaching everyone.

### *Languages*

The Language Program is another major initiative to enhance our accuracy and coverage by ensuring we reach as many people as possible. We will mail about 13 million bilingual Spanish/English questionnaires targeted to areas with high concentrations of Hispanic populations who don't speak English very well. Questionnaires will be available in five languages in addition to English (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian), and we plan to provide language assistance guides in 59 languages. These in-language questionnaires and materials will be available at approximately 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers located throughout the country, which will be staffed by people fluent in the languages spoken in their communities. A telephone assistance program will be available so respondents can receive assistance in the five major non-English languages. In addition to foreign language assistance, there will also be a TDD program for the hearing impaired, and Braille and large print questionnaire guides will be available upon request.

Together, these operations provide the strongest possible infrastructure for conducting the census. With these operations in place, we ensure that when we reach hard-to-count populations with our partnership, outreach and communications programs, we have mechanisms in place to effectively and accurately include them in the 2010 Census count.

### **The 2010 Census Communications Program**

The 2010 Census Communications Program builds on the success of the Census 2000 partnership and marketing campaign, which helped to reverse a two-decade decline in the national mail response rate. For 2010, the Census Bureau is using an approach that integrates a mix of mass media advertising, targeted media outreach to specific populations, national and local partnerships, grassroots marketing, and special events. By integrating these elements with each other and with the Census Bureau's 2010 Census operations, the campaign will help ensure that everyone, especially those hardest to count, is reached.

In September 2007, the Census Bureau awarded its 2010 Communications Contract to DraftFCB of New York. DraftFCB is a full service marketing communications agency that will team with other companies that specialize in reaching minority audiences.

The current team members include:

- Global Hue (Black audiences)
- Global Hue Latino (Hispanic audiences)
- IW Group (Asian audiences)
- G&G (American Indian and Alaska Native audiences as well as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander audiences)
- Allied Media (Arab, Russian, Central European and other emerging audiences)

DraftFCB has developed a plan that is being finalized this week after input from our Advisory Committees and all of our regional office staff. Comments from these stakeholders were taken seriously and are incorporated into the final plan.

The communications campaign will be integrated with the Census Bureau's decennial census operations, the partnership program, and our own media and public relations activities to ensure that consistent messages are delivered and reinforced at every stage of the process.

The success of each component is vital to achieving a complete and accurate count.

#### *Media and Outreach*

There are two components to the media and outreach effort. DraftFCB will mount a national media campaign in every broadcast medium to advertise our messaging for 2010. We will advertise on network television and radio, sporting events, local and cable television, ethnic programming and the Internet. Negotiations for this advertising will be underway early next year. The national media campaign will kick-off in January 2010 and build through each phase of the census.

The second key component of the media campaign will focus on the specific minority populations I mentioned earlier. Ethnic media advertising will

complement the national campaign, bringing the message to hard-to-count populations. Each of DraftFCB's contractors has proven experience reaching their target communities, and their efforts will be instrumental in addressing the differential undercount.

### *Partnership Program*

The Partnership Program is another key component of our communications program. Partnership has been a vital part of the census since 1990, and it is the foundation of our outreach efforts. In Census 2000 more than 140,000 organizations partnered with the Census Bureau. These included state, local and tribal governments, community and faith-based organizations, schools, media and businesses.

The program in 2010 will be even more robust. Our partners, who have great credibility in their communities, will vouch for the importance of completing the 2010 census to people in inner cities, Indian reservations and rural America. This will be particularly important in areas isolated by language or geography. Our partnership materials will be available in at least 20 languages, and they will be customizable so that partners can tailor the message to their specific communities.

Unlike Census 2000, when all promotional materials were only available through a Census Bureau partnership specialist, 2010 materials will be easily accessed through the Internet or as printed copy. We also will provide needed resources to committed partner organizations through the Partner Support Program as we did in 2000. These resources will include specially printed promotional materials, customized banners, special event promotional items that encourage participation in the census, and in-language materials that help reach the hardest-to-count populations served by specific local organizations.

Partnership efforts will:

- Utilize community stakeholders who are known and trusted locally;
- Motivate partner organizations (governmental and non-governmental) to implement effective strategies to improve mail response;
- Identify mechanisms for enhancing our training efforts;
- Provide outreach for recruiting efforts into communities that are most difficult to recruit; and,



- Identify organizations that are willing to host Questionnaire Assistance Centers and provide volunteers to staff and publicize these centers.

The program is well underway. As of May 2008, the Regional Census Centers (RCCs) have hired and trained 120 partnership specialists who are now actively developing local partnerships with key stakeholders. In January of 2009 the regions will add 560 more partnership specialists to achieve the full staffing level, which is comparable to Census 2000 partnership staffing levels.

The RCCs also are fine-tuning partnership plans using their local expertise and information from the Decennial Census Planning Database (which was originally based on Census 2000 data and is now updated with information from the American Community Survey to make it more current). The regional offices are charged to focus on hard-to-count populations such as immigrants, those who have difficulty speaking English, single-parent renters, urban core areas, and those living in poverty.

The RCCs are actively engaging local leaders including government officials, community and tribal leaders to form local and statewide Complete Count Committees (CCCs). CCCs incorporate local knowledge, influence, and resources to educate residents and promote the census through a locally based and targeted outreach effort. CCCs provide a vehicle for coordinating and nurturing a cooperative effort between local governments, communities and the Census Bureau. Residents are more likely to participate when locals they know and trust endorse our efforts.

The Census Bureau held two national-level partnership conferences that involved approximately 250 leaders from State Data Centers, Census Information Centers, and Governor's Liaisons to spearhead partnership efforts in each of the fifty states, DC and Puerto Rico. Since 2007, the Census Bureau has met with Federally and State Recognized Tribes, with more meetings planned for 2009. And next spring, we will promote the partnership program during a conference with national governmental and non-governmental partner organizations.

### *Census In Schools*

Another key component of the Integrated Communications Plan is the Census in Schools (CIS) program. DraftFCB has awarded a contract to Scholastic, Inc. to develop the CIS program. The goal of CIS is to target strategies, messages, and

materials to reach parents through their children. Scholastic developed our program for Census 2000, and they will be building on their successes for 2010, educating children on the importance of participating in the census. We have been working throughout the decade to implement a CIS program, and developing a Website with interactive activities and “kid-friendly” fact sheets. The CIS program will identify the most effective way to reach hard-to-count households with school-age children.

### *Integration*

The 2010 Census Communications Campaign integrates all campaign elements to:

- 1) Provide better branding of the 2010 Census among all segments of the American population;
- 2) Improve delivery of promotional materials for regional and national partnership efforts in a concerted time-specific delivery plan; and,
- 3) Provide tighter messaging with the help of communications professionals.

We believe that by integrating all campaign elements (partnerships, Census in Schools, media relations, publicity events, and paid advertising) through a more concerted and coordinated plan, the public campaign among all population groups will be more effective, efficient, and instrumental in reaching the campaign's goals of improved response rate, better quality of data, and heightened public cooperation.

Taken together, each component of the communications program will reinforce the others to maximize outreach and participation in the 2010 Census. By the time the census questionnaires are mailed out in March 2010, people living in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas will have seen and heard (often in native languages) advertisements in national and local media, and heard about the census in their communities and faith based organizations. Children will learn about the census at school, and promotional materials will be posted throughout every community and circulated by partner organizations. The communications effort will continue through each phase of the census, encouraging people to respond to the replacement questionnaire, and then to cooperate with census enumerators walking through every neighborhood in the country.

## **Conclusion**

Members of the Subcommittee be assured that everything we do in the 2010 Census is aimed at improving accuracy and coverage with an eye toward reducing undercounts and counting everyone. All decennial census operations are based on the recognition that we must work harder to count people in areas that are difficult to reach. Whether the challenges are in remote Alaskan rural areas, densely populated urban areas like New York or Chicago, or the Colonias in South Texas – the Census Bureau will marshal the efforts necessary to include them in the 2010 Census. To us it does not matter how hard it is to reach someone – it matters that we reach everyone.

I'm happy to take your questions.