



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

MEMORANDUM FOR            Distribution

From:                            Cynthia Clark  
                                     Associate Director for Methodology and Standards

Subject:                        Evaluation of the Effect of Alternate Data Collection Forms on  
                                     Long Form Data

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

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

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

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

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

# **Evaluation of the Effect of Alternate Data Collection Forms on Long Form Data**

**May 1999**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

One of the goals of Census 2000 is to try to maximize response through the use of respondent friendly forms as well as by making alternate data collection forms more accessible. There are two alternate data collection forms--Be Counted Forms and interviews taken through Telephone Questionnaire Assistance.

Since the selection of these alternate forms is outside the control of the Bureau, the a priori form type assignment for a household may not match what is actually collected for a household or a person within a household. The Be Counted Forms contain only short form data. Telephone Questionnaire Assistance can collect both short and long form data but the assignment of type (i.e., short or long) depends on the caller being able to accurately provide the 22 digit census identification number. If the caller cannot provide that number, the caller is assigned a form type designation according to an independent sampling algorithm within the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance instrument itself.

### Questions Answered by this Evaluation

What effects do alternate data collection forms have on long form sample loss, that is, at what frequency are a priori long form households being enumerated by a short form alternate data collection method?

Are there statistical differences in demographics between those who were enumerated as assigned and those that were enumerated by an alternate data collection form?

### Results

- The long form sample loss due to alternative data collection methods and persons being enumerated by a regular mail short form or an enumerator short form instead of a long form was minimal, about 1.4% in Sacramento, 0.9% in South Carolina, and 1.2% in Menominee.
- Alternative data collection methods had virtually no effect on long form sample loss, about 0.4% in Sacramento and 0.0% in both South Carolina and Menominee.
- The majority of long form sample loss is due to persons being enumerated by a regular mail short form or an enumerator short form. This long form sample loss accounted for 1.0% in Sacramento, 0.9% in South Carolina, and 1.2% in Menominee.
- There do not appear to be statistical differences between those who were enumerated as assigned and those who were not with respect to sex.
- Younger people are more likely not to be enumerated as assigned. We expect this to be the case

because those in younger age groups may be more likely to have mobile living conditions and therefore be enumerated by an alternate data collection methodology.

- Significant statistical differences were found in the race/ethnicity distributions for those who were enumerated as assigned and those who were not. For the most part, the distribution of a priori long form persons enumerated not as assigned was greater for races other than White. A more detailed analysis of those completing Be Counted Forms and Telephone Questionnaire Assistance will be discussed in evaluation D2-Evaluation of the Be Counted Campaign.
- The Telephone Questionnaire Assistance operation for Census 2000 is currently being redesigned to collect only short form data. Although this new design has the potential to further increase long form sample loss due to alternate data collection forms, we do not anticipate this as a major concern since the Dress Rehearsal results indicate 1) that Telephone Questionnaire Assistance accounted for approximately 0.0% (19) long form sample loss in all sites and 2) only 6 a priori long form households were enumerated through a Telephone Questionnaire Assistance long form interview.