



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

From: Cynthia Clark
 Associate Director for Methodology and Standards

Subject: Outmover Tracing and Interviewing

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

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

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

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

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

Outmover Tracing and Interviewing

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David A. Raglin and
Susanne L. Bean
Planning, Research, and
Evaluation Division

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal, Census Day was April 18, 1998, and Integrated Coverage Measurement data were collected via the computer-assisted personal interview Person Interview from May to September, 1998 in Sacramento, South Carolina, and Menominee. People may have moved between Census Day and the Integrated Coverage Measurement interview data. The people who have moved out of the housing unit after Census Day are called “outmovers”. Under the estimation methodology used in the Dress Rehearsal, outmovers are used to estimate the proportion of movers that match to the initial phase, while in-movers (people who have moved into the housing unit since Census Day) are used to estimate the number of movers. If everyone in the housing unit moved out between Census Day and the date of the Integrated Coverage Measurement interview, the housing unit is called a “whole household outmover”.

We could collect information about the whole household outmover people from the in-movers or other knowledgeable proxies, but they might not list all of the outmovers or know details about them, or we could trace the outmovers to their new address, but that can be difficult and costly.

The goal of this evaluation is to determine if tracing is worth doing in Census 2000 by comparing the proxy data (which was used in the official Dress Rehearsal estimates) and traced data (collected especially for this evaluation). This evaluation found that the proxies seem to be giving us good enough data for matching purposes, which is what the outmovers are used for in the dual system estimates for the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal. We therefore recommend that outmover tracing not be conducted as part of the Census 2000 Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation. That recommendation was developed by examining the following issues:

- **Quantitative results of outmover tracing**

The indication from these results is that about five percent of households in Sacramento and South Carolina were considered to be whole household outmovers. That number is slightly inflated by the fact that a few households were erroneously identified as whole household outmovers because of Person Interview instrument problems that have been fixed for the Census 2000 Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation.

In Sacramento, we traced the household and obtained data 33.8 percent of the time. Another 7.6 percent of the time, we got no traced person data for what we consider a legitimate reason--we traced the household, but found that everyone in it had died or moved permanently out of the United States, or the housing unit did not exist or was vacant on Census Day. (The majority were reported as vacant on Census Day.)

In South Carolina, we obtained traced data 41.0 percent of the time; we traced and got no person data legitimately another 11.1 percent of the time.

- **Proxy and traced data comparison in traced households**

In Sacramento and South Carolina, if the person was mentioned in the proxy interview, they were almost always found in the traced one too (93.3 percent in Sacramento and 92.0 percent in South Carolina). If we assume that the traced interview is better than the proxy interview, since it was supposed to be with a resident, a large percentage of the people that

proxies name are really residents.

The traced interview found many additional people that the proxy interview had missed. In Sacramento, we obtained 462 people from the proxy interview and 664 from the traced--43.7 percent more in the traced. Similarly, there were 45.3 percent more traced people in South Carolina. Since the traced interview was supposed to have been done with a resident of the outmover household, this is not a surprise.

- **The demographic characteristics of people found in the proxy and traced interviews**

In Sacramento, there was nominally a larger percentage of children, non-Hispanic Asians, and non-Hispanic Asian children who were found in the traced interview only than were found in both the proxy and traced interviews. No large differences in age or race/ethnicity were found in South Carolina.

- **The initial phase person match rate for the proxy data compared to the traced data**

For households we could trace, the nonmatch rates are almost the same for the proxy people as for the traced people. In the traced interview, we find many more people, but their match rate is similar to the match rate for the people we already had.

- **The dual system estimates for the proxy data compared to the traced data**

There were not significant differences in the dual system estimates calculated using proxy and traced outmover people in either site for any of the poststrata marginal variables. In fact, the p-values are not close to being significant most of the time.

We did not find significant differences in the dual system estimates since outmovers are used primarily to produce an estimate of the match rate between the initial phase and the Integrated Coverage Measurement, and a large percentage of the people that proxies name were also found in the traced interview. The people found in the proxy interview only had a slightly higher nonmatch rate to the initial phase than people found in both the proxy and traced interview.

These issues provide information that will help us determine if outmover tracing needs to be done as part of the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation for Census 2000. For Sacramento and South Carolina, the outmover tracing operation does not significantly improve the dual system estimates.