



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 Integrated Coverage Measurement/
 Post Enumeration Survey Person Followup
 Questionnaire

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

**Evaluation of the
Integrated Coverage Measurement/
Post Enumeration Survey
Person Followup Questionnaire**

July

1999

Catherine Keeley
Statistical Research Division

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents findings from a systematic review of a sample of tape recorded Person Followup interviews conducted during the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal in Sacramento, California. The interview was designed to gather information to resolve matching and residence status discrepancies resulting from matching census data to a post-census day sample of census day residents. This research uses behavior coding to identify potential problems with question wording and ordering and other questionnaire design issues in the Person Followup interview.

Behavior coding, a common tool for questionnaire evaluation is the systematic coding of the interactions between an interviewer and a respondent. Behavior coding is commonly used to assess whether interviewers have problems administering questions and whether respondents have difficulty comprehending questions, vocabulary, terms, and concepts. For this study, we applied a standardized behavior coding technique to 49 tape recorded interviews from Sacramento, California.

The behavior coding data revealed some potential problems with the wording and format of the dress rehearsal questionnaire. In this paper, we provide 24 specific recommendations for changes to the Person Followup Questionnaire. These 24 recommendations are almost equally divided among wording changes, format changes, and skip instruction clarification.

The Census Bureau has accepted nearly all of the recommendations in the development of the final person followup questionnaire for Census 2000. The changes that were incorporated will enhance the potential of the questionnaire to provide high quality data for use in resolving match discrepancies between Census 2000 and the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation Survey.