



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

From:                      Cynthia Clark  
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Subject:                    Evaluation of the Be Counted Program

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 Be Counted Program

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## Executive Summary

The Be Counted Program provided a means for people to be included in the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal who may not have received a census questionnaire or believed they were not included on one. The Be Counted questionnaire also allowed people who had no usual residence on Census Day to be counted in the census. Persons also had the opportunity to call a Telephone Questionnaire Assistance operation to provide Census responses.

For the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal, the questionnaires were printed in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Mien, and Russian. They were accessible in many targeted locations that were determined through communications between local government officials, community groups and local census office officials. Posters were posted outside of Be Counted sites and Questionnaire Assistance Centers to advertise their existence. The forms were made available shortly after census day and collected before the start of nonresponse followup. A Telephone Questionnaire Assistance operation in the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal had instruments that were programmed to help interviewers take census responses from persons on the phone who did not have a questionnaire with a Census identification number. These responses were treated as Be Counted Form Equivalents.

Be Counted forms sites included businesses, community organizations, churches, Department of Motor Vehicle, Libraries, Post Offices, and Questionnaire Assistance Centers. There were a total of 218 sites in Sacramento, California, 183 sites in Columbia and surrounding counties of South Carolina, and 16 sites on the Menominee American Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. Approximately 3 percent of the 1,700 English forms available at Be Counted sites were picked up by the public in Menominee; about 18 percent of the 59,272 English and Spanish forms were picked up in South Carolina; and about 39 percent of the 24,249 forms in all languages that were distributed in Sacramento were picked up by the public.

Completed Be Counted forms and Be Counted telephone responses with address information were received for all three sites. When responses were received, addresses were geocoded and verified and persons were searched for among other returns for the address and the block to guard against the possibility of multiple enumerations. A summary of activities for each site follows:

- A total of 21 responses from Menominee were received; ten had geocodable addresses and arrived in time for Census processing and five of these had information for 16 persons that were not otherwise enumerated in the Census.
- The South Carolina site generated 783 responses; 606 had geocodable addresses and arrived in time for Census processing and 337 of these had information for 821 persons that were not otherwise enumerated in the Census.
- Sacramento generated 1,575 responses; 907 had geocodable addresses and arrived in time for Census processing and 343 of these had information for 870 persons that were not otherwise enumerated in the Census.

Three forms from Menominee, 55 forms from South Carolina, and 421 forms from Sacramento had addresses that were geocodable, but they arrived too late for processing.

Demographic distributions for persons enumerated by the Be Counted program varied across sites. Demographic highlights of the Be Counted population are:

- The distribution by sex was relatively even.
- The 16 persons who were enumerated in Menominee all indicated that they were American Indian. The majority were "5 to 14" year olds.
- The majority of South Carolina enumerated persons were Black or African American (46.2 %) and White (51.5 %). Comparisons to other mail returns indicate that Be Counted persons had a significantly higher percentage of Black or African American persons than other mail returns (32.7 %). Most Be Counted persons for South Carolina were in the 25 and over age range. However, comparisons to other mail returns indicated that a significantly higher percentage of persons in the 14 and under age range were enumerated from the Be Counted program.
- The majority of persons enumerated in Sacramento from Be Counted respondents were White (32.6 %) or Asian (30.1 %). Overall, Be Counted had a higher percentage of persons for all minority race categories than those persons enumerated on other mail forms. Be Counted respondents also had a higher percentage of persons enumerated in the 24 and under age range than other mail returns.

Part of the success of the Be Counted operation is determined by the quality of the data received on forms. Data quality was measured in terms of item nonresponse rates and those rates were compared to the rates for other mail returns. All item nonresponse rates were similar to rates for other mail returns for South Carolina except for the Hispanic origin item, where the nonresponse rate was significantly higher for Be Counted persons. Sacramento's item nonresponse rates were all significantly higher than rates on other mail returns.

A number of recommendations came out of this evaluation. They are:

- The accounting for and documentation of the flow of Be Counted responses through all operational processes, including check-in, geocoding, and field verification should be improved for Census 2000.
- An evaluation should be conducted to determine the benefits of including Be Counted responses in a telephone followup operation to improve content.
- More planning should go into the operations of the Be Counted Program including the placement of Be Counted forms in the field and the geocoding of addresses in order to ensure that Be Counted response records have time to make it into the Census process.

- Choose better targeted sites and increase notices and posters in sites to help alleviate complaints from persons about not being able to find Be Counted forms in places where they should have been.
- The Census 2010 Planning Staff should consider conducting additional research to gain insight into the effectiveness of foreign language Be Counted forms for future censuses.