



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: Effectiveness of Paid Advertising

I am pleased to present the executive summary for the evaluation study 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 for nonrespondents to mail census, 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@census.gov.

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.

Evaluation of the Nonresponse Followup Operation (A1b)

Evaluation of the Mail Return Questionnaire (A2)

Evaluation of Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (A4)

Service Based Enumeration Coverage Yield Evaluation (D1)

Effectiveness of Paid Advertising (E1a)

Promotion Evaluation: Exposure to Paid Advertising and Likelihood of Returning a Census Form (E1b)

Field Infrastructure: EEO Process (G7)

Evaluation of the Housing Unit Coverage on the Master Address File (B1)

Effectiveness of Paid Advertising

April 1999

Roper Starch Worldwide

For questions regarding this summary or to request a copy of the full report, contact the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Division, Bureau of the Census (301) 457-3525.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - SACRAMENTO SURVEY FINDINGS

The analyses presented in this report concentrate on identifying differences (or lack of differences) between the pre-campaign and post-campaign respondents in their awareness, attitudes, and knowledge about the Census, and on assessing the success of the paid-advertising campaign in reaching the population in Sacramento. It also focuses on identifying change among groups known to be difficult to reach — particularly racial/ethnic minorities — and on the success of the campaign in reaching those groups.

The analyses in this report do not measure the success of the paid advertising campaign in actually increasing Census participation. That will be covered in a separate report when actual records of respondents' behavior in returning Census questionnaires will be used as a measure of this success.

Overview

The following are highlights of survey findings. Detailed tables and findings follow this overview.

The number of Sacramento residents who had recently heard or seen anything about the Census rose dramatically from 28 percent before the campaign to 80 percent after it. This increase was seen across all of the educational, income, and minority subgroups analyzed.

The number of people who had heard of the Census increased much more modestly, in large part because the numbers reporting they had heard of the Census before the campaign were, for the population of Sacramento as a whole, already large (86 percent vs. 94 percent after the campaign). The increase in awareness was greatest for groups that had lower levels of awareness before the campaign — those with lower levels of education and income, Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders, and people born outside the U.S.

Familiarity with the Census Bureau was also only modestly increased, again because of the relatively large numbers reporting having heard of the Bureau before the campaign (89 percent vs. 93 percent of post-campaign respondents). Those who showed the greatest increase in awareness of the Census Bureau were groups who had the least awareness of the Bureau before the campaign (those with the lowest levels of education and income and Hispanics).

There was little or no change in responses to most of the survey questions about attitudes and knowledge of the Census. On questions dealing with feelings and beliefs about confidentiality, very modest improvements were seen. Even after the campaign, only half of Sacramento residents who had heard of the Census agreed that the Census Bureau would never let another government agency see my answers to the Census; only 68 percent knew that police

and FBI do not use it to keep track of people who break the law, and 71 percent knew it is not used to check on whether people are paying their taxes.

On attitudes towards the importance, there was also only modest improvement. The number agreeing that it is important for everyone to be counted rose slightly from an already high 91 percent before the campaign to 94 percent after it.

Perceptions about the direct value of the Census to respondents themselves and to their community were improved somewhat after the campaign. The proportion agreeing that answering the Census is an opportunity to do something that can make things better for their families and future generations rose from 78 percent to 85 percent. The number of respondents believing that the Census is used to decide where things like schools and health care facilities are needed and to decide how much money communities will get from government also rose moderately.

The greatest increase in knowledge about the Census concerned the mandatory status of Census participation, although the majority of residents still did not realize, after the campaign, that they are required by law to complete and return their Census forms. The number, among those who had heard of the Census, who correctly answered this question rose from only 18 percent before the campaign to 40 percent after it. It should be noted, however, that a statement that participation is required by law was printed on envelopes in which Census forms were mailed to respondents and it is likely that this, rather than paid advertising, was responsible for this change.

Eight-out-of-ten in-scope respondents (those known to reside in the targeted Sacramento area) reported having seen or heard something about the program in their community to encourage Census participation.

While this reported awareness of the program was higher among non-Hispanic whites and those with higher levels of education and income, large proportions of targeted minority groups were also found to have heard of the program (81 percent of Hispanics, 74 percent of non-Hispanic blacks, 69 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders, 63 percent of households in which English was not the primary language, 60 percent of those born outside the U.S., 54 percent of those who did not finish high school, and 70 percent of those with household incomes less than \$20,000).

Three-quarters of all in-scope respondents reported having heard about the program through one of the media used by the paid-advertising campaign. While the targeted minorities and other subgroups were less likely to have heard about it, even among these groups, the paid-advertising campaign appears to have reached significant numbers of households. Seventy-six percent of Hispanics, 70 percent of non-Hispanic Blacks, 64 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders, 60 percent of those in whose households a language other than English was spoken,

61 percent of immigrants, 66 percent of those with household incomes less than \$20,000, and 50 percent of those who did not finish high school reported having heard about the program through the media employed by the paid-advertising campaign.

Television was the most effective of these media, reaching 62 percent of those in the targeted Sacramento area and larger proportions of each of the targeted subgroups than any of the other media.

Newspaper advertising reached four-out-of-ten in-scope Sacramento residents, but was less successful in reaching many of the targeted subgroups. Education was the biggest barrier to the success of newspapers in reaching the population, with only 14 percent of those with less than a high school degree saying they had heard about the program through the newspaper. While about half of non-Hispanic whites reported having heard about the program through newspapers, this was true of only 37 percent of Hispanics, 28 percent of non-Hispanic blacks, and 34 percent of Asians/Pacific Islanders. About one-third of immigrants and 28 percent of those in whose households English was not the primary language reported having heard about the program through newspapers.

The success of radio advertising, through which one-third of all residents heard about the program, was not significantly different among the racial/ethnic subgroups studied, between those born in the United States and those born somewhere else, or between English-speaking households and non-English speaking households.

Of the traditional media used in the advertising campaign, magazines were the least effective, reaching only 13 percent of the population. The targeted racial/ethnic groups, immigrants, and non-English speaking households were not significantly different from others in their likelihood of being exposed to magazine advertising, but both education and income were barriers to success, with the least educated and lowest income groups rarely reporting having heard about the program through this medium (3 percent and 7 percent, respectively.)

The non-traditional media used in the paid-advertising campaign, billboards and posters, signs, or handbills, were successful in reaching about one-third and one-quarter, respectively, of all respondents. These media were not found to be less successful in reaching the target racial/ethnic groups and non-English speaking households than others. Billboards were somewhat less effective with immigrants than with U.S. born respondents (24 percent vs. 33 percent), but posters, signs, and handbills were seen by equal numbers of these two groups (26 percent of each).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SOUTH CAROLINA SURVEY FINDINGS

The analyses presented in this report concentrate on identifying differences (or lack of differences) between the pre-campaign and post-campaign respondents in their awareness, attitudes, and knowledge about the Census, and on assessing the success of the paid-advertising campaign in reaching the population in Columbia and the surrounding eleven-county South Carolina test site. It also focuses on identifying change among groups known to be difficult to reach – particularly those with low levels of education, low household incomes, and African Americans – and on the success of the campaign in reaching those groups.

The analyses in this report do not measure the success of the paid advertising campaign in actually increasing Census participation. That will be covered in a separate report when actual records of respondents' behavior in returning Census questionnaires will be used as a measure of this success.

Overview

The following are highlights of survey findings. Detailed tables and findings follow this overview.

- The number of residents in the South Carolina site who had recently heard or seen anything about the Census rose dramatically from 29 percent before the campaign to 89 percent after it. This increase was seen across all of the educational and income subgroups analyzed and for blacks as well as whites.
- The number of people who had heard of the Census increased much more modestly, in large part because the numbers reporting they had heard of the Census before the campaign were, for the population of the South Carolina site as a whole, already large (93 percent vs. 98 percent after the campaign). The increase in awareness was greatest for groups that had lower levels of awareness before the campaign – those with lower levels of education and income, and non-Hispanic blacks.
- Familiarity with the Census Bureau was also only modestly increased, again because of the relatively large numbers reporting having heard of the Bureau before the campaign (94 percent vs. 97 percent of post-campaign respondents). Those who showed the greatest increase in awareness of the Census Bureau were groups who had the least awareness of the Bureau before the campaign (those with the lowest levels of education and income and non-Hispanic blacks).
- There was modest change in responses to survey questions about attitudes and knowledge of the Census. On questions dealing with feelings and beliefs about confidentiality, modest improvements were seen. Even after the campaign, though, only 56 percent of those who had heard of the Census agreed that “the Census Bureau would never let another government agency see my answers to the Census;” only 59 percent knew that police and FBI do not use it to keep track of people who break the law, and 64 percent knew it is not used to check on whether people are paying their taxes.

- On attitudes towards the importance of the Census, there was also some improvement. The number agreeing that it is important for everyone to be counted rose from an already high 92 percent before the campaign to 97 percent after it.
- Perceptions about the direct value of the Census to respondents themselves and to their community were improved after the campaign. The proportion agreeing that answering the Census is an opportunity to do something that can make things better for their families and future generations rose from 79 percent to 89 percent. The number of respondents believing that the Census is used to decide where things like schools and health care facilities are needed and to decide how much money communities will get from government also rose significantly.
- The greatest increase in knowledge about the Census concerned the mandatory status of Census participation, although the majority of residents still did not realize, after the campaign, that they are required by law to complete and return their Census forms. The number, among those who had heard of the Census, who correctly answered this question rose from only 20 percent before the campaign to 46 percent after it. It should be noted, however, that a statement that participation is required by law was printed on envelopes in which Census forms were mailed to respondents and it is likely that this, rather than paid advertising, was responsible for this change.
- Eighty-four percent of “in-scope” respondents (those known to reside in the targeted area) reported having seen or heard something about the program in their community to encourage Census participation.
- While this reported awareness of the program was higher among non-Hispanic whites and those with higher levels of education and income, large proportions of targeted low income and education groups, and blacks, were also found to have heard of the program (65 percent of those who did not finish high school, 77 percent of those with household incomes less than \$20,000, and 81 percent of non-Hispanic blacks).
- Eight-out-of-ten in-scope respondents reported having heard about the program through one of the media used by the paid-advertising campaign. While the targeted subgroups were less likely to have heard about it, even among these groups, the paid-advertising campaign appears to have reached significant numbers of households. Seventy-three percent of those with household incomes less than \$20,000, 61 percent of those who did not finish high school, and 79 percent of non-Hispanic blacks reported having heard about the program through the media employed by the paid-advertising campaign.

- Television was the most effective of these media, reaching 68 percent of those in the targeted South Carolina area and larger proportions of each of the targeted subgroups than any of the other media.
- Newspaper advertising reached about half of all in-scope South Carolina residents. While it was less successful in reaching those with lower levels of education and income, and blacks, it was still the second most important media for these groups as well.
- The success of radio advertising, through which 42 percent of all residents heard about the program, was also greater among the better educated and those with higher household incomes. There was no significant difference between whites and blacks in their reporting of radio exposure to the program.
- Of the traditional media used in the advertising campaign, magazines were the least effective, reaching only 16 percent of the population. Blacks and whites were not significantly different from others in their likelihood of being exposed to magazine advertising, but both education and income were related to its success.
- Two non-traditional media used in the paid-advertising campaign – billboards and posters, signs, or handbills – were also relatively successful in reaching 35 percent and 36 percent, respectively, of all respondents. These media were not found to be less successful in reaching blacks than whites, although their success was lower among lower income and education levels.