



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 the Paid Advertising Campaign: Reported
 Exposure to Advertising and Likelihood of Returning a
 Census form

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 the Paid Advertising Campaign: Reported Exposure to Advertising and Likelihood of Returning a Census form

April 1999

Nancy Bates and Sara K. Buckley
Planning, Research, and
Evaluation Division

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

In this report, we use data from a random-digit dial survey and from Census Bureau records to assess the relationship between reported exposure to Dress Rehearsal paid advertising and the likelihood of returning a census form.

We found evidence that the paid advertising successfully penetrated some targeted subgroups. Hispanics in Sacramento and nonwhites in South Carolina reported significantly higher levels of Census exposure through paid advertising media compared to whites. Hispanics in Sacramento reported seeing or hearing about the Census through an average of 2.44 different media sources while whites reported, on average, 2.28 sources. Nonwhites in South Carolina reported an average exposure of 2.94 different sources while whites reported 2.64.

We found a positive relationship between reported ad exposure and level of Census 'knowledge'. However, in Sacramento, blacks, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and other races had significantly lower levels of Census knowledge compared to whites. Similarly, in South Carolina, nonwhites had a lower level of Census knowledge compared to whites.

Level of civic participation was found to be strongly associated with likelihood of returning a census form. We found that, the higher the degree of civic participation, the higher the predicted odds of mailing back a form, even when controlling for demographic characteristics such as race and education.

We also found that those who were expecting the Census form before it arrived were significantly more likely to return it than those who were not. This was true even when other things like education, race, civic participation and income were held constant.

We did not uncover a direct relationship between reported advertising exposure and likelihood of returning a census form. However, we suspect that advertising had an indirect effect on likelihood of returning a form. That is, exposure to the advertising makes people expect the census form in the mail which, in turn, makes households much more likely to return the form. Expectation of a form was a strong predictor of mailback behavior and we found that advertising's indirect effect on behavior (via expecting a form) was over four times larger than its direct effect in Sacramento and over three times larger than its direct effect in South Carolina.

Based on the above finding, we recommend that some of the paid advertising resources should go toward emphasizing the decennial Census methodology i.e., that a census form will soon be arriving in the mail.