MEMORANDUM FOR Distribution

From: Cynthia Clark

Associate Director for Methodology and Standards

Subject: Pre-appointment Administrative Management System/

Automated Decennial Administrative Management System

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

Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal
Evaluation Memorandum G5
Pre-appointment Administrative Management System/ Automated Decennial Administrative Management System
September 1999
Pamela H. White

Executive Summary

The main objective of this evaluation is to determine if the Pre-Appointment Management System/Automated Decennial Administrative Management System (PAMS/ADAMS), an automated integrated system used in the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal, is an effective tool in managing the application, hiring and payroll processes for Census 2000.

This evaluation does not address the technical computer software and systems aspects of PAMS/ADAMS.

Summary of Evaluation Results

The evaluation showed that PAMS/ADAMS met most of the objectives. Examination of hiring procedures and practices revealed that managers successfully hired in a timely manner the large numbers of employees needed from a sufficient applicant pool, and brought on qualified personnel competent to perform the various clerical and enumeration tasks required. However, reinforcing procedures and enhancing training are ongoing objectives that will support the internal controls and regulatory requirements of any appointment and payroll system.

Payroll operations occurred according to processing schedules with some exceptions. For the periods evaluated, regions successfully delivered payroll data to the U.S. Treasury Department for check issuance by the scheduled due date in nearly every case. Most employees received accurate pay for the time sheets that were submitted to the office by the cut-off date. Any reports of untimely receipt of paychecks can be attributed to delays in the submission of time and attendance sheets to the Local Census Office, or delays in processing appointment personnel actions. Employees, however, did not receive supplemental payments as scheduled. These delays were due to program application errors and lack of data input as required on time sheets submitted by employees. Subsequently, the supplemental payment program was abandoned and payments were made using manual computations.

The scanning method used to capture job application and time sheet data was also abandoned after having experienced numerous problems. One of the objectives of this evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the scanning process, to determine if scanning actually increased the speed of the data capture process thereby reducing the need for clerical staff. Scanning programs for payroll and job applications were labor-intensive, requiring users to amend unrecognizable characters as well as characters that appeared recognizable. Adjustment of the character recognition tolerance level did not help. Scanning required additional staff just to stay on top of the volume of work. It increased production time two-fold. As recommended by the evaluation conclusions, the scanning method was formally abandoned in July 1998.

Note: The scanning processes developed for the PAMS/ADAMS are in no way related to scanning processes for questionnaires in Census 2000. The results obtained by the PAMS/ADAMS application are in no way a reflection on applications used for census questionnaires.

Lessons Learned from the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal

As the Census Bureau proceeded through the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal operations, some unforeseeable problems and mishaps were encountered in the regions that could have only been identified through actual use of the PAMS/ADAMS program. The problems were acknowledged and immediate resolutions were provided in most cases. Having a dress rehearsal of the PAMS/ADAMS provided an opportunity to discover application weaknesses and make much needed improvements. Following are descriptions of some of the problems encountered during the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal and the actions taken to resolve them.

- Processing Payroll Routines In Order of Precedence There were errors made by regional users which required resolution by the PAMS/ADAMS developers. Users were running processes or routines out of order. Valuable time was spent trying to decipher where the error occurred, and how to resolve it. To avoid future problems, a requirement was added to include an edit feature that would prevent the regional user from advancing to the next routine without first having completed the previous routine. This edit will remain in place during Census 2000.
- Meeting The Payroll Close Out Schedule In order for employees to receive paychecks on the scheduled payday, regional users must complete pay processing and transmit applicable data to the U.S. Treasury on the Friday prior to the scheduled employee pay date. If the pay processing is not completed in a timely manner, paychecks may arrive late to employees. On several occasions the pay process was not completed on time and the arrival of payroll checks was delayed. The capability to process a supplemental, or second, payroll processing cycle was needed. A second cycle would allow regions to process payrolls for three of four Local Census Offices, and not delay the receipt of checks for employees in those three offices because a fourth office is not timely with their data capture processes. Because of the number of late occurrences experienced, this requirement was given top priority and made available in early February 1999, and will remain during Census 2000.

In addition, the Census Bureau tested moving the pay day operation from Monday to Wednesday to provide the regional offices additional time for capturing time and attendance data, to calculate pay, and to transmit these data to the U.S. Treasury. As a result, fewer partial payments to employees were made, fewer late payrolls were received, and more employees received at least some portion of pay on a timely basis. The pay day will officially remain on Wednesday of each week.

Selective Service Verifications — One of the conditions of employment for male American citizens is that they be registered at the Selective Service Agency if they were born after December 31, 1959. Applicants are also required to be at least 18 years of age to be considered for employment. When applications are accepted from males under 18 years old, they are coded as 'Ineligible' until they reach 18 years of age. At that time they can be placed in the active applications file. One obstacle that our regional users encountered was a lack of knowing if that male applicant had registered at Selective Service after his 18th birthday. To resolve this problem, an edit was added to check the answer provided in the Selective Service question on the job application. If it was negative, then the applicant would once again be 'Ineligible' for hiring. This mechanism ensured that conditions of employment as specified to us by the Office of Personnel Management were met. This edit will remain in place during

Cost and Progress Reporting for The Address Listing Operation— All details of weekly pay data are provided to the Core Financial System of the Commerce Administrative Management System, the Operations Control System 2000 (OCS2000), and the Management Information System 2000 (MIS2000). The OCS2000 and MIS2000 use the data to compile management reports of costs and production at the crew leader district level. The initial data are derived from the time sheet that employees complete. We discovered the time sheets were being processed without the required four digit crew leader district number. The first two digits represent the field operation supervisor (FOS) and the second two numbers represent the crew leader assigned to that FOS. Either employees were not instructed to complete this field or they simply neglected to do so. As a result, the MIS2000 management reports were distorted and incomplete.

To help alleviate this problem, the Census Bureau added an edit in the PAMS/ADAMS that would make the crew leader district (CLD) a mandatory-fill item for all enumerators charging to the Address Listing operation. If enumerators continued to submit time sheets without a CLD number, then the system would prompt the keyer for one. If one was not known, the keyer was instructed to input a default number of 0199. Unfortunately, this default remedy inflated the costs and production numbers for district 01 to the point where reports could not be reconciled by MIS2000 managers; subsequently, the remedy was abandoned. However, we still require the CLD number, but without defaults. In the future, any defaults will be designated as the regional census center organization code. This ensures that there is no duplication of FOS numbers.

- In our research, we discovered the improvement of communication and currency of materials from the field, such as better-detailed instructions that were provided to enumerators and crew leaders during their initial employee payroll training, job aids as a summary of actions for facilitating the coordination of paperwork. Additionally, we defined options for moving payroll and personnel materials from the field to the applicable regional/local census office.
- Marked improvements were implemented concerning employee payment issues, such as establishing a nationwide toll-free number for employees to report payment complaints, and the establishment of a convenience checks program, which will provide immediate replacement of salary checks to employees. We also provided access to the U.S. Treasury's Payment and Claims Enhancement Reconciliation (PACER) system to determine the status of payroll checks. Additionally, we used contractor-provided data to develop competitive local payrates to attract and retain the best qualified applicants.

Various improvements are planned to enhance the PAMS/ADAMS for Census 2000. Training procedures and manuals will be updated to improve the effectiveness of personnel and payroll operations. Data capture screens used to emulate the forms, including 100% verification fields and confirmation of bank routing numbers, will be improved by an enhanced communication and interface with the U.S. Treasury's file for routing Direct Deposit payments. Weekly tele-conferences with regional census office personnel and payroll managers will be conducted in a attempt to provide better communication of changes and updates. Personnel and payroll operations from the 12 regional centers to 130 early local census offices

(ELCO) will be transitioned by September 1999.

Summary of Conclusions/Recommendations

Overall, PAMS/ADAMS is accurately performing the basic functions of tracking job applicants, providing recruiting reports, and managing personnel and payroll activities. As Census 2000 approaches, there are challenges to be faced concerning this system. Developing a contingency data capture system as a backup to the existing key from paper processing is a concern, as well as initiating an inspection program at the regional office level to determine procedural and regulatory compliance of personnel and payroll issues. Regarding procedural compliance, a completion of the PAMS/ADAMS "stress test", a volume test of T-1 telephone lines, servers, and other computer issues needs to be emulated using the worst case scenario of 15 users/LCO and 55 LCOs. The team recommends that PAMS/ADAMS continue its' objective to support Census 2000.