The 2020 Census and the Undercount of Young Children

Briefing for the Population Association of America

October 30, 2017
The 2020 Census

**Challenges**

*Each decade, planning for the decennial census requires balancing funding constraints and data accuracy against an official schedule fixed by statute.*

**Goal:** Conduct a 2020 Census at a lower cost per housing unit (adjusted for inflation) than the 2010 Census, while maintaining high quality results and a fixed schedule of a Census Day of April 1, 2020.

**Challenge:** The 2020 Census is being conducted in a rapidly changing environment, requiring a flexible design that takes advantage of new technologies and data sources while minimizing risk to ensure a high quality population count.
The 2020 Census
Goal and Key Innovation Areas

To count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

Focus on Four Key Innovation Areas

Reengineering Address Canvassing

Optimizing Self-Response

Utilizing Administrative Records and Third-Party Data

Reengineering Field Operations
The 2020 Census
A New Design for the 21st Century

Motivate People to Respond
Conduct a nationwide communications and partnership campaign
Maximize outreach using traditional and new media
Target ads to specific audiences
Work with trusted sources to inspire participation.

Establish Where to Count
Identify all addresses where people could live

Count the Population
Collect data from all households, including group and unique living arrangements
Make it easy for people to respond anytime, anywhere
Encourage people to use the new online response option
Use the most cost-effective strategy to contact and count nonrespondents
Knock on doors only when necessary
Streamline in-field census-taking

Release Census Results
Process and provide census data
Deliver apportionment counts to the President by December 31, 2020
Release counts for redistricting by April 1, 2021
Make it easier for the public to get data

Count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.
The 2020 Census
Operations

SUPPORT
- Program Management
  - Program Management
- Census/Survey Engineering
  - Systems Engineering & Integration
  - Security, Privacy, and Confidentiality
  - Content and Forms Design
  - Language Services
- Infrastructure
  - Decennial Service Center
  - Field Infrastructure
  - Decennial Logistics Management
  - IT Infrastructure

FRAME
- Geographic Programs
- Local Update of Census Addresses
- Address Canvassing

RESPONSE DATA
- Forms Printing and Distribution
- Non-ID Processing
- Update Enumerate
- Group Quarters
- Enumeration at Transitory Locations
- Census Questionnaire Assistance
- Nonresponse Followup
- Response Processing
- Federally Affiliated Count Overseas
- Update Leave

PUBLISH DATA
- Data Products and Dissemination
- Redistricting Data Program
- Count Review
- Count Question Resolution
- Archiving

OTHER CENSUSES
- Island Areas Censuses

TEST AND EVALUATION
- Coverage Measurement Design & Estimation
- Coverage Measurement Matching
- Coverage Measurement Field Operations
- Evaluations and Experiments
The 2020 Census
Where are We Today?

Key Activities:

- **Making Key Decisions**: Continuously make timely decisions based on research and evidence
- **Awarding Key Contracts**: Continue to award key contracts for the 2020 Census
- **Planning and Execution of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test**: Focuses on the overall integration of systems and operational procedures for 24 of the 35 operations of the 2020 Census

- **Delivered Topics to Congress**: Title 13 requires the Census Bureau deliver to Congress subjects for the decennial census program by March 31, 2017 (delivered March 28, 2017), and questions by March 31, 2018
- **Operational Readiness**
  - 2020 Census Operational Plan 2.0 (released October 28, 2016)
  - Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) (began January 2017)
  - Field Infrastructure: Space, Decennial Logistics Management, Training, Recruiting, and Onboarding (planning underway)
2018 End-to-End Census Test
Overview

Address Canvassing
• Exercise final listing/mapping capabilities in the field
• Conduct in-field listing quality control

Peak Operations
• Validate that the operations in scope for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test are ready to go into production for the 2020 Census
• Test and validate major operational threads, procedures, systems, and infrastructure (IT and non-IT) together to ensure proper integration and conformance with functional and non-functional requirements
• Produce a prototype of geographic and data products
2018 End-to-End Census Test

Operational Scope

FRAME
- Geographic Programs
- Local Update of Census Addresses
- Address Canvassing
- Forms Printing and Distribution
- Paper Data Capture
- Integrated Partnership & Communications
- Internet Self-Response
- Non-ID Processing

RESPONSE DATA
- Update Enumerate
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PUBLISH DATA
- Data Products and Dissemination
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OPERATIONS NOT PREVIOUSLY TESTED
- Operations not previously tested

FRAME AND RESPONSE DATA
- Focus of the Test
- Required to Support the Test
- NOT Included in the Test

OTHER CENSUSES
- Island Areas Censuses

UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov
# 2018 End-to-End Census Test

## Key Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct In-Office Address Canvassing</td>
<td>October 27, 2016 – February 2, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Regional Census Centers</td>
<td>January 3, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Address Canvassing Field Staff Recruitment</td>
<td>March 10, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Area Census Offices</td>
<td>April – July 2017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct In-Field Address Canvassing</td>
<td>August 28 – September 29, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Group Quarters Advance Contact</td>
<td>January 5 – March 9, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Self-Response, Including Non-ID Processing</td>
<td>March 19 – August 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Group Quarters Enumeration</td>
<td>March 28 – June 12, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Day</td>
<td>April 1, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Update Leave</td>
<td>April 9 – May 4, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Nonresponse Followup</td>
<td>May 9 – July 24, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Nonresponse Followup Reinterview</td>
<td>May 10 – July 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Prototype P.L. 94-171 Data and Geographic Products</td>
<td>April 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Delayed the opening of the Area Census Offices.
The 2020 Census

Key Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin 2020 Census Program</td>
<td>November 18, 2011</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver 2020 Census Operational Plan</td>
<td>September 30, 2015</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Register Notice of Proposed Residence Criteria and Residence</td>
<td>June 30, 2016</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situations for the 2020 Census</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct the Second Round of Tribal Consultations</td>
<td>September – November 2016</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program (including Appeals</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver 2020 Census Topics to Congress</td>
<td>March 28, 2017</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct the Block Boundary Suggestion Program</td>
<td>December 2015 – May 2017</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct 2018 End-to-End Census Test</td>
<td>August 28, 2017 – August 20, 2018</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver 2020 Census Questions to Congress</td>
<td>by March 31, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 Census Day</td>
<td>April 1, 2020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver Apportionment Counts to the President</td>
<td>by December 31, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Delivery of Redistricting Counts to the States</td>
<td>by March 31, 2021</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete 2020 Census Program</td>
<td>September 29, 2023</td>
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*Duration represents the time frame for data collection.
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Introduction

- Persistent undercount of young children, ages 0 to 4, in the decennial census
- Recent work on the issue at the Census Bureau
  - In 2013 a Census Bureau task force reviewed available information on the undercount of young children and produced a report with research recommendations
  - Research team conducted several research projects to try to answer key questions about why the census misses young children
- Coverage Improvement Integrated Project Team’s Undercount of Young Children Subteam
  - Subteam of the Coverage Improvement IPT formed in April 2017
  - Established to develop, coordinate, and manage activities aimed at improving the coverage of young children in the decennial census and ongoing surveys
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Background

• 2010 Census coverage results from Demographic Analysis
  • Demographic Analysis estimated a net overcount of 0.1 percent for the total population in 2010
  • While adults were over counted, children under 18 had a 1.7 percent net undercount
  • Children under the age of 5 were especially likely to be missed in the 2010 Census, with a net undercount of 4.6 percent
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Background

Importance of this issue
- Commitment to a complete and accurate census
- Goal: Once, only once, and in the right place

Implications of the undercount
- Political representation
- Federal funding for programs including:
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
  - Special education grants
  - Head Start
  - National School Lunch Program
- School planning
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Research Team Projects

Research team conducted several investigations to address the undercount of young children to ensure a complete and accurate census

- Characteristics of young children vs. older children
  - 2010 Census
  - American Community Survey (ACS)
- Estimating census omissions
- Census Coverage Measurement (CCM)
- Coverage Followup (CFU)
  - Young children added to the 2010 Census
  - Households responding positively to undercoverage probes
- Coverage of young mothers
- Complex household typology
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Initial Conclusions

• Young children are more likely to be omitted from the census than persons in other age groups
• Multiple sources of error - Frame, whole household, within household
• Complex living situations of young children is a contributing factor
  • Unrelated children, grandchildren and other related children more at risk of omission
• Young children may be missed along with their young mothers
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census
Opportunities for Improvement in the 2020 Census

- Work with communications contractor to focus advertising on key audiences, such as young mothers and grandparents
- Updated wording to undercount probe and help text for 2017 Census Test specifically addresses young children and grandchildren
- Automation allows collection of additional people from the undercount probe in real time
- Updating enumerator training materials and job aids

![Image of census form](image.png)
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

Future Work

Future work will need to provide answers to why we observe these results. Possibilities could include

- Experiments in current surveys
- Ethnographic research
- Vignette studies for residence rules
- Administrative records research
The Undercount of Young Children in the Decennial Census

For More Information

- Research reports on these and other topics are being published in the 2020 Census Memo series, accessible at census.gov
  

- Census Task Force Report on the Undercount of Young Children
  
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More information on the 2020 Census Memorandum Series:

More information on the 2020 Census:
http://www.census.gov/2020Census

More information on the American Community Survey:
http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/

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