



UPDATE ON THE 2020 CENSUS

Discussant Presentation

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Photos of Toksook Bay, Alaska, home of the Nunakauyarmiut Tribe, the location of the first enumeration in the 2020 Census.



The Census Bureau faces substantial challenges in securing a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census

➤ **Budget cuts, delays, pauses, and cancellations**

- Planned budget cuts to streamline 2020 Census operations to save money are raising warning signs that accuracy may be sacrificed
- Cancellation of the Colville, Standing Rock and Puerto Rico field tests raise significant concerns about enumeration of rural households, those lacking a traditional mailing address, and HTC populations
- Reduction of the number of local Census offices (called Area Census Offices, or ACOs) and the delays opening them
- Limitations and serious operational flaws in the 2018 End-to-End Test have been identified by the Commerce Department's OIG



The Census Bureau faces substantial challenges in securing a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census

- **Addition of the untested citizenship question to the 2020 Census**
 - Successful challenges to the question in California, Maryland and New York federal cases
 - U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on April 23, 2019, with decision expected in June 2019
 - Concerns about the impact of the question on 2020 Census operations and communications plans, regardless of the Court's decision
- **Absence of updates to race and ethnicity categories after no action taken to modernize 1997 OMB standards**
 - Only minor cosmetic modifications made to questionnaire



The Census Bureau faces substantial challenges in securing a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census

- **Wide variances in self-response modes by race and Hispanic origin in 2018 End-to-End Test (tracking similar trends in NCT)**
 - Four racial or ethnic groups had self-response rates less than the average of 56 percent (compared to single-race Whites at 68% and non-Hispanics at 67%)
 - Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (37%)
 - Black (39%)
 - Hispanic (43%)
 - American Indian and Alaskan Native (44%)



The Census Bureau faces substantial challenges in securing a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census

- **Wide variances in self-response modes by race and Hispanic origin in 2018 End-to-End Test (tracking similar trends in NCT)**
 - Three racial or ethnic groups had Internet self-response rates lagging far behind the overall average of 65 percent (with single-race Whites at 66% and non-Hispanics at 68%)
 - American Indian and Alaskan Native (44%)
 - Black (54%)
 - Hispanic (59%)
 - Usage of paper self-responses will be even higher in rural areas which, unlike Providence County, Rhode Island, have limited or no broadband and phone access



The Census Bureau faces substantial challenges in securing a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census

- **Self-response rates based on Tenure of housing in 2018 End-to-End Test and impact on reaching Hard-to-Count populations**
 - Owned (75%) compared to Rented (48%)
 - Self-response rates based on Tenure illustrate:
 - High mobility of certain racial or ethnic groups
 - High occupancy / multiple families or generations living in a single unit
 - Other forms of urban and rural housing instability
 - Distrust of federal government, lack of accurate reporting of all occupants makes it more challenging to get a complete count from rented units
 - Illustrates critical importance of trusted messengers from those HTC communities to do address canvassing, outreach, and NRFU

Commerce Department OIG: Reduction and Delays in Opening Area Census Offices (4/18)

➤ Reduction in number of local offices

- **2010 Census**: 12 regional Census centers, 1 area office in Puerto Rico, 494 local Census offices (at least one in each congressional district)
- **2020 Census**: 6 Regional Census Centers (RCCs) and 248 Area Census Offices (ACOs)

➤ Are there enough ACOs?

- After the Bureau made its initial decision on the number of ACOs, it revised estimates of Non-Response Follow Up (NRFU) by about 8.9 million addresses, resulting in 41 percent increase in the number of enumerators per ACO
- Number of first wave ACOs increased from 30 to 39 because of the Bureau's revised estimates for higher NRFU
- Unclear on whether NRFU will be even higher



Commerce Department OIG: Reduction and Delays in Opening Area Census Offices (4/18)

- **Schedule for ACOs was delayed for several months**
 - Less time to acquire space
 - Less time to open ACOs and get them running prior to field operations

- **OIG's stated concern about these potential impacts on 2020 Census operations:**

“... if the field infrastructure is not sufficient to support the work for the 2020 Census, then there is significant risk of not effectively managing the associated field workload, which could impact cost and data quality ...”

(4/18)



Commerce Department OIG: “Issues observed during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test’s address canvassing operation indicate risk to address list quality.” (2/19)

➤ Differences in address canvassing:

- **2010 Census**: “nearly every block in the country was traversed by temporary employees – known as *Listers* – who compared what they saw ‘on the ground’ to address lists generated by the Bureau’s Master Address File (MAF).
- **2020 Census**: “As a cost-saving innovation for the 2020 Census, the Bureau redesigned the address canvassing operation used during the 2010 Census and divided the operation into two components: in-office address canvassing and in-field address canvassing.”



“Interactive Review” in 2020 Census canvassing

- **Bureau reviewer uses aerial imagery from different years to identify blocks as “active,” “passive,” or “on hold.”**
 - “Active”: if block has growth/decline, MAF overcoverage or undercoverage, or potential to add living quarters
 - “Passive”: if none of these features is present
 - “On hold”: if no determination can be made
- **Blocks that are not “placed in the in-field workload when a visit is required to add or update existing housing units” may result “in those housing units not receiving Census forms.”**



Commerce Department OIG's Findings:

- **“In-office address canvassing did not correctly identify blocks for in-field address canvassing at the Providence Test site.”**
- “OIG analysis of the 433 passive blocks included in the 2018 E2E Test found that in-office address canvassing results differed from in-field results in 61 percent of the blocks tested.”
- “Although the Bureau aims to reduce the number of housing units that require in-field verification, address data quality will be sacrificed if in-office address canvassing is not yielding accurate results.”
- “Although the in-office address canvassing began in September 2015, the Bureau has neither determined the cause of addresses being incorrectly designated nor developed a process for correcting these errors.”



Commerce Department OIG's Findings:

➤ Other findings from the 2018 E2E Test.

- Some alerts “for situations that required management attention,” including those indicating the potential for low quality, were not addressed in a timely manner or were not addressed at all.
- Passive blocks were only included in one test cite, Providence, and not Beckley, what had been “selected for canvassing ‘very rural address.’”
- Mobile devices to be used by Listers during in-field address canvassing for the 2020 Census “were not available to assess device performance.”
- The Bureau did not have training assessment documentation for 11 percent of Listers, creating the possibility that unqualified employees were performing the address canvassing.



Discussant questions:

- **Where are the 38 First Wave ACOs located, and why were they selected to be in the First Wave? What is the one First Wave ACO not opened yet?**
- **Are all of the remaining 209 ACOs on target to be opened prior to the start of the in-field address canvassing operations in August?**
 - If not, where are the ACOs located that are behind schedule?
 - Will the Bureau be successful in addressing the OIG's concerns that the ACOs be opened sufficiently far in advance of field operations commencing?
 - Will the ACOs have sufficient resources and facilities/space for the increased number of enumerators assigned to them?
- **What steps is the Bureau taking to address problems in the 2018 E2E Test?**
 - Addresses being improperly designated?
 - Failure to timely address or address at all alerts that can impact address quality?
 - Confirmation of qualifications and training of Listers?
 - Testing mobile devices to be used in field operations?



Discussant questions:

- **How is the Bureau preparing for reaching HTC rural areas with non-traditional addresses for which little, if any, testing has been done?**
- **In what ways, if any, has the Bureau tailored its operational plan to match the modes of enumeration with those most likely to be used by different HTC racial and ethnic population?**
 - For example, knowing that the AIAN population is more likely to respond by paper than most other groups, how is the operational plan being adjusted for them?
- **In reference to determining who gets a dual language questionnaire:**
 - How is the Bureau determining which Census Tracts have at least 20% of housing units with at least one Spanish-speaking adult who is LEP?
 - Is the Bureau using community partners to help make this determination? How?
 - Is the Bureau doing this for any other languages? Which one?



Discussant questions:

- **What efforts are being undertaken to ensure there is sufficient diversity in those recruited to be partnership specialists? Enumerators?**
 - Are they representative of their communities?
 - What is considered to be disqualifying criminal history? What is the racial and ethnic breakdown of those disqualified?
 - Of the 708 partnership specialists:
 - Where are they located?
 - How many are bilingual? In what languages?
 - How many are prioritized for HTC populations? Identify the number, by HTC population group
 - What is their training status?
- Where is the Bureau in the process of hiring the remaining 793 partnership specialists?

LET'S MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS COUNTED IN 2020!



HELP US GET THOSE NUMBERS BACK UP!
[CENSUS.NARF.ORG](https://census.narf.org) ; [2020CENSUS.GOV/JOBS](https://2020census.gov/jobs)





DISCUSSION

THANK YOU.