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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-07-736](#), a report to congressional addressees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Commerce's (Commerce) U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) seeks updated information on the addresses and maps of housing units and group quarters from state, local, and tribal governments through the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program. Prepared under the Comptroller General's authority, this report assesses (1) the status of the LUCA Program, (2) the Bureau's response to prior recommendations by GAO and others and new challenges related to the program, and (3) the Bureau's plans for conducting the program in areas affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

GAO reviewed LUCA program documents, met with and surveyed participants in the LUCA Dress Rehearsal, and interviewed Bureau officials and local officials in the Gulf Coast region.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Commerce direct the Bureau to take several actions to improve the LUCA Program, including further testing the MAF/TIGER Partnership Software (MTPS) and the computer-based training (CBT) software to assess ease of use and establishing a schedule for plans for conducting address canvassing and related operations in hurricane-affected areas. In commenting on a draft of this report, Commerce generally agreed with GAO's recommendations and offered technical comments.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-736.

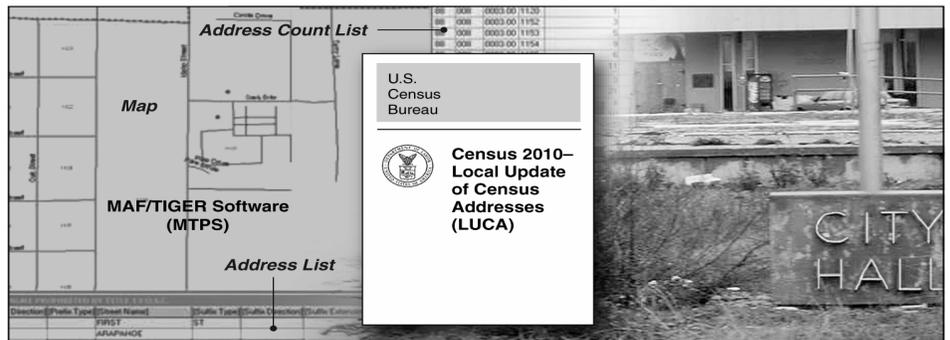
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Mathew J. Scire at (202) 512-6806 or sciremj@gao.gov.

2010 CENSUS

Census Bureau Has Improved the Local Update of Census Addresses Program, but Challenges Remain

What GAO Found

The Bureau has conducted its planned LUCA operations in accordance with its published timeline. The Bureau has also taken steps to reduce workloads and burdens and improve training for localities that participate in LUCA—all areas GAO and others had identified as needing improvement. For instance, to reduce participant workload and burden, the Bureau provided a longer period for reviewing and updating LUCA materials; provided options for submitting materials for the LUCA Program; combined the collection of LUCA addresses from two separate operations into one integrated program; and created MTPS, which is designed to assist LUCA Program participants in reviewing and updating address and map data. Also, the Bureau has planned improvements to the 2010 LUCA Program training (i.e., specialized workshops for informational and then technical training) and plans to supplement the workshops with CBT.



Source: GAO presentation of U.S. Census Bureau information, photo (GAO 2006).

Improvements made to LUCA program (such as MTPS), but challenges remain (such as uncertainty about the ability of localities in the Gulf Coast region to participate in LUCA).

However, the Bureau faces new challenges. For instance, the Bureau tested MTPS with only one local government. Other local officials we spoke with had problems converting Bureau-provided address files. In addition, the Bureau did not test its CBT software in the LUCA Dress Rehearsal. Additional challenges stem from the damage to the Gulf Coast region caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Officials in localities in hurricane-affected areas questioned their ability to participate in the LUCA Program. The continuous changes in housing stock may hinder local governments' ability to accurately update their address lists and maps. The condition of the housing stock is likely to present additional challenges for the Bureau's address canvassing operation (in which the Bureau verifies addresses) in the form of decreased productivity for Bureau staff, workforce shortages, and issues associated with identifying vacant and uninhabitable structures. The Bureau created a task force to assess the implications of storm-related issues that proposed a number of mitigating actions. However, the Bureau has no plans for modifying the address canvassing operation or subsequent operations in the Gulf Coast region.