

GAO

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2010 CENSUS

Diversity in Human Capital,
Outreach Efforts Can
Benefit the 2010 Census

Statement of Mathew J. Scirè, Director,
Strategic Issues





Highlights of [GAO-07-1132T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

For the 2010 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) faces the daunting challenge of cost-effectively counting a population that is growing steadily larger, more diverse, increasingly difficult to find, and more reluctant to participate in the decennial census. Managing its human capital, maintaining community partnerships, and developing advertising strategies to increase response rates for the decennial census are several ways that the Bureau can complete the 2010 Census accurately and within budget. This testimony, based primarily on past GAO work, provides information on (1) diversity in the Bureau's workforce, (2) plans for partnering with others in an effort to build public awareness of the census; and (3) certain requirements for ensuring contracting opportunities for small businesses.

What GAO Recommends

At this time, GAO is not making new recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1132T.

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.

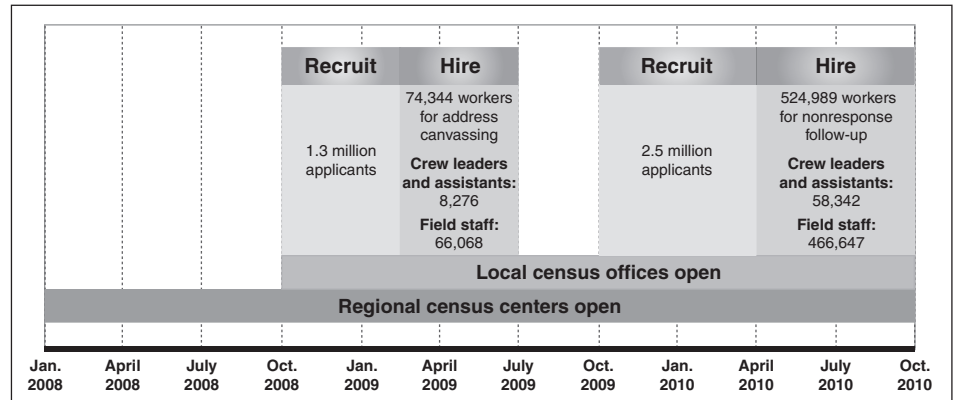
2010 CENSUS

Diversity in Human Capital, Outreach Efforts Can Benefit the 2010 Census

What GAO Found

Diversity in senior leadership is important for effective government operations. GAO found that the racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of the Bureau's senior management and staff in grades most likely to rise to senior management is generally in line with that of the federal government as a whole. The success of the 2010 Census depends, in part, upon the Bureau's ability to recruit, hire, and train a temporary workforce reaching almost 600,000. In 2000, the Bureau used an aggressive recruitment strategy, including advertising in various languages to attract different ethnic groups and races, as well as senior citizens, retirees, and others seeking part-time employment. The Bureau intends to use a similar recruitment strategy for the 2010 Census.

Bureau's Recruiting and Hiring Timeline for Temporary Field Staff during the 2010 Census



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

For 2010, the Bureau also intends to involve community and other groups to encourage participation in the census, particularly among certain populations, such as persons with limited English proficiency and minorities. Further, the Bureau plans to hire a contractor to develop an advertising campaign to reach undercounted populations. In its contract solicitation, the Bureau has included a requirement that the contractor establish goals for subcontracting with, amongst other groups, women-owned and small disadvantaged businesses, and a requirement that the contractor have experience in marketing to historically undercounted populations such as African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. This contract is expected to be awarded in September 2007.

For the Bureau to leverage the benefit of its diversity and outreach efforts, it will be important for it to follow through on its intentions to recruit a diverse workforce, and utilize the experience of a diverse pool of partners, including community groups, state and local governments, and the private sector.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Turner, Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss how the Census Bureau (Bureau) approaches diversity in the Bureau's human capital, community partnerships, and outreach efforts. For the 2010 Census, the Bureau faces the daunting challenge of cost-effectively counting a population that is growing steadily larger, more diverse, increasingly difficult to find, and more reluctant to participate in the decennial census. Managing its human capital, maintaining community partnerships, and developing advertising strategies to increase response rates for the decennial census are several ways that the Bureau can complete an accurate and cost-effective census.

As you know, the decennial census is a critical national effort mandated by the Constitution. Census data are used to apportion seats in the Congress, redraw congressional districts, allocate billions of dollars in federal assistance to state and local governments, and for numerous other public and private sector purposes. In addition, the census is a complicated undertaking and a substantial investment, requiring careful planning, risk management, and oversight to ensure its ultimate success. The census is the nation's largest peacetime mobilization, and the Bureau estimates the 2010 Census will cost \$11.5 billion over its life cycle, making it the most expensive census in our country's history, even after adjusting for inflation. Since the 2000 Census, we have been examining how the Bureau is preparing for the 2010 Census.

Today's hearing is topical and timely because in less than 2 years, the Bureau will begin to hire thousands of workers for its address canvassing operation in preparation for the 2010 Census, where temporary field workers verify the addresses of all housing units. As requested, we are providing information about three important aspects of the Bureau's preparations for the 2010 Census: (1) diversity in the Bureau's leadership and management ranks and its plans for recruiting and hiring temporary field workers; (2) plans for partnering with others in an effort to build public awareness of the census; and (3) certain requirements for ensuring contracting opportunities for small businesses.

My remarks today are based primarily on reports that we issued from 2000 through July 2007 on the planning and development of the 2010 Census, as well as our work on diversity management, collaboration among federal agencies, and contracting with small businesses. We conducted that work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, promoting a diverse workforce can benefit the Bureau, especially as it prepares for the 2010 Census. As we previously reported in 2005, high-performance organizations are inclusive, drawing on the strengths of employees at all levels and of all backgrounds.¹ The Bureau understands that its staff must reflect the increasing diversity of the American population if it is to do its job well. We found that the Bureau's leadership ranks currently are about as diverse as the leadership ranks of the federal government as a whole, with higher minority representation and lower representation of women. Importantly, Bureau officials emphasize the need to recruit temporary field workers locally, because such staff represent the demographic characteristics of areas being enumerated and are best able to relate to local residents and help overcome any reluctance to participate in the census. The Bureau's recruiting efforts will be accompanied by a public partnership program with local governments, Indian tribal leadership, and others that will leverage their insights and familiarity with local and diverse populations to help recruit field staff and encourage participation in the 2010 Census. Likewise, the Bureau expects that its proposed communications campaign will encourage the participation of hard-to-enumerate populations in the decennial. It will be important for the Bureau to follow through on its plans for leveraging the experiences of its workforce, partners, and contractors to help ensure the success of the 2010 Census.

Background

The decennial census is conducted against a backdrop of immutable deadlines. The census's elaborate chain of interrelated pre- and post-Census Day activities is predicated upon those dates. To meet these mandated reporting requirements, census activities must occur at specific times and in the proper sequence. The Secretary of Commerce is legally required to (1) conduct the census on April 1 of the decennial year, (2) report the state population counts to the President for purposes of congressional apportionment by December 31 of the decennial year, and (3) send population tabulations to the states for purposes of redistricting no later than 1 year after the April 1 census date.

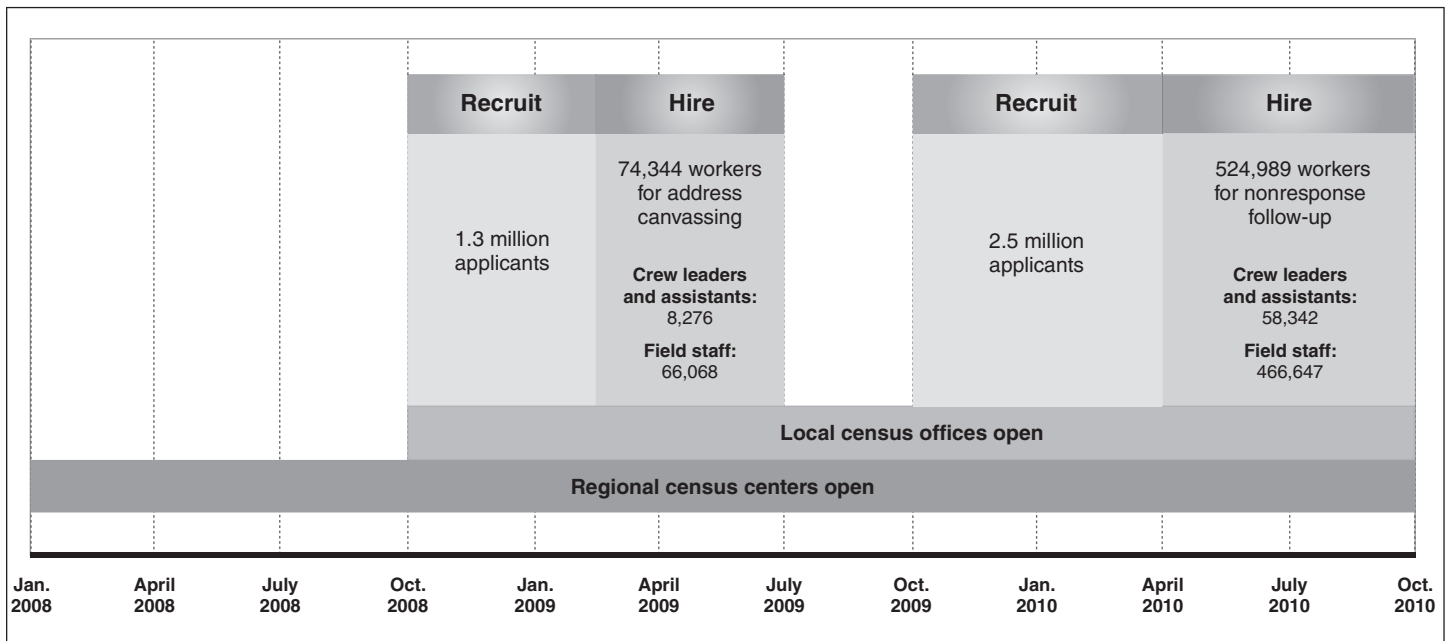
For the decennial census, the vast majority of housing units will receive paper, mailback census questionnaires delivered by mail or by census field workers before April 1, 2010. This requires a complete and accurate

¹ GAO, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples*, GAO-05-90 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 14, 2005).

address list. The inventory of housing units is obtained from several sources including files from the U.S. Postal Service, partnerships established with local entities, and the Bureau's address canvassing—where temporary field workers verify and identify the addresses of an estimated 130 million housing units over the course of about 6 weeks in 2009. When housing units do not respond to questionnaires by a certain deadline, temporary field workers will follow up and collect census data through personal interviews during the nonresponse follow-up operation, which accounts for the largest single component of the field data collection workload and budget. The Bureau estimates that nonresponse follow-up will include an estimated 39 million housing units over the course of 12 weeks in 2010. The Bureau also relies on special procedures to handle areas or living quarters that are not suitable for mailing or delivering census questionnaires, such as very remote areas in Alaska and prisons.

To gather census data, the Bureau opens temporary offices across the country for approximately 2 years, and all field staff employed in these offices are considered temporary, with jobs lasting as long as the entire 2-year period or as short as a few weeks, depending on the specific operation for which they are employed. For example, one could work on address canvassing, an early operation, and then be rehired again to work on the nonresponse follow-up operation later on in the decennial. To conduct its decennial activities, the Bureau recruits, hires, and trains temporary field workers based out of local census offices nationwide. During Census 2000, the Bureau hired about half a million temporary workers at peak, which temporarily made it one of the nation's largest employers, surpassed by only a handful of big organizations, such as Wal-Mart and the U.S. Postal Service. For the 2010 Census, the Bureau expects to hire almost 75,000 temporary field workers—at a cost of over \$350 million—during address canvassing in 2009 and almost 525,000 temporary field workers—at a cost of over \$2 billion—for nonresponse follow-up in 2010. (See fig. 1.)

Figure 1: Bureau's Recruiting and Hiring Timeline for Temporary Field Staff during the 2010 Census



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Implementing Diversity Management Practices Can Help Benefit the Bureau's Current Workforce and Recruitment for the Decennial Census

High-performance organizations are inclusive, drawing on the strengths of employees at all levels and of all backgrounds. For the decennial census, having a diverse workforce is particularly important. For example, in its strategic plan, the Bureau notes that as the nation becomes more diverse, the Bureau's staff must reflect the increasing diversity of the American population if they are to do their job well.² In a related point, Bureau officials emphasize the need to recruit temporary field workers locally, because such staff are best able to relate to local residents and overcome any reluctance to participate in the census. In fact, the census, in many respects, is a local endeavor because the key ingredients of a successful population count, such as a complete and accurate address list and timely and accurate field data collection, are carried out by the locally recruited temporary field staff—working in and around their respective neighborhoods—collecting data through various operations.

²U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Census Bureau Strategic Plan, FY 2007 – 2010* (Washington, D.C.: June 2007).

A high-performance organization relies on a dynamic workforce with the requisite talents, multidisciplinary knowledge, and up-to-date skills to ensure it can accomplish its goals and missions. As we have previously reported, such an organization fosters a work environment in which people are enabled and motivated to contribute to continuous learning and improvement as well as to accomplishing missions and goals.³ Such organizations promote accountability and fairness. Importantly, they take advantage of a workforce that is inclusive and utilizes the strengths and talents of employees at all levels and backgrounds. This work environment is consistent with the principles of “diversity management”—a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where individual similarities and differences are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to the organization. As shown in table 1, in our previous work on diversity management, we identified 9 diversity management practices.

Table 1: Leading Diversity Management Practices

• Top leadership commitment —a vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management.
• Diversity as part of an organization’s strategic plan —a diversity strategy and plan that are developed and aligned with the organization’s strategic plan.
• Diversity linked to performance —the understanding that a more diverse and inclusive work environment can yield greater productivity and help improve individual and organizational performance.
• Measurement —a set of quantitative and qualitative measures of the impact of various aspects of an overall diversity plan.
• Accountability —the means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives.
• Succession planning —an ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization’s potential future leaders.
• Recruitment —the process for attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment.
• Employee involvement —the contribution of employees in driving diversity throughout an organization.
• Diversity training —organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity.

Source: GAO

Note: Practices are from GAO, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples*, GAO-05-90 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 2005).

Perhaps the most important practice for diversity management is top leadership commitment, because leaders and managers must commit the time and necessary resources for the success of an organization’s diversity

³GAO-05-90

initiatives. Although all of these practices are important, today we discuss two of them as they relate to the Bureau: (1) succession planning—an ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organizations’ potential future leaders—and (2) recruitment for the Bureau’s temporary field work—the process of attracting qualified, diverse applicants for employment which is important for maintaining high performance.

Succession Planning for Senior Managers

As we have testified earlier, the federal government is facing new and more complex challenges in the 21st century because of long-term fiscal constraints, changing demographics, and other factors.⁴ The federal Senior Executive Service (SES), which generally represents the most experienced and senior segment of the federal workforce, is critical to providing the strategic leadership needed to effectively meet these challenges. Governmentwide, SES retirement eligibility is much higher than the workforce in general, and a significant number of SES retirements could result in a loss of leadership continuity, institutional knowledge, and expertise among the SES corps.

We have previously reported that the Bureau needs to strategically manage its human capital to meet future requirements.⁵ For example, three senior census executives left the Bureau after the 2000 Census; in the years ahead, other key employees will become eligible for retirement. According to the Bureau’s strategic plan, about 45 percent of the Bureau’s current permanent employees will be eligible for regular or early retirement by 2010. Thus, human capital is a key planning area for ensuring that the Bureau has the skill mix necessary to meet its future staffing requirements.

Racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the federal government’s senior ranks can be a key organizational component for executing agency missions, ensuring accountability to the American people in the administration and operation of federal programs, and achieving results. Based on previous work identifying diversity in the federal SES corps, we compared diversity at the Bureau’s senior levels with that of the Department of Commerce and the executive branch governmentwide.

⁴GAO, *Human Capital: Diversity in the Federal SES and the Senior Levels of the U.S. Postal Service*, [GAO-07-838T](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 10, 2007).

⁵GAO, *2000 Census: Lessons Learned for Planning a More Cost-Effective 2010 Census*, [GAO-03-40](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 31, 2002).

Also, because the vast majority of SES personnel is drawn from an agency's pool of GS-14s and GS-15s, we also compared the diversity of the Bureau's SES developmental pool with that of the Department of Commerce and other executive branch agencies governmentwide. (See table 2.)

Table 2: Percentage (and Number) of Women and Minorities in SES and the Developmental Pool at the Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Governmentwide for Fiscal Year 2002 and 2006

	Census Bureau		Department of Commerce		Governmentwide	
	2002	2006	2002	2006	2002	2006
SES						
Women	29.4 (10)	22.2 (8)	27.6 (89)	27.8 (87)	25.5 (1,585)	28.4 (1,806)
Minorities	26.5 (9)	25.0 (9)	16.4 (53)	12.8 (40)	14.9 (922)	15.9 (1,007)
Developmental pool						
Women (GS-15)	30.1 (58)	37.7 (72)	23.4 (572)	26.6 (727)	26.4 (14,549)	29.8 (18,622)
Minorities (GS-15)	17.6 (34)	20.4 (39)	14.9 (365)	18.5 (507)	16.6 (9,133)	19.0 (11,861)
Women (GS-14)	39.3 (190)	40.2 (206)	29.2 (1,519)	31.6 (1,987)	31.5 (28,794)	34.8 (34,124)
Minorities (GS-14)	20.5 (99)	24.6 (126)	22.9 (1,192)	28.8 (1,810)	19.0 (17,413)	22.2 (21,830)

Source: GAO analysis of data from the Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File.

Notes: Governmentwide includes civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2006).

We included GS-15, GS-14, and equivalent employees. GS-equivalent employees are those in equivalent grades under other pay plans that follow the GS grade structure and job evaluation methodology or are equivalent by statute.

These data provide a demographic snapshot of career SES and the GS-14 and GS-15 grade levels that serve as developmental pools for SES positions from the end of fiscal year 2002 and fiscal year 2006.

The numbers in this table reflect permanent appointments for those on board as of September 30, 2002 and 2006.

Overall, we found that the Bureau's leadership ranks are about as diverse as the leadership ranks for the federal government as a whole, with higher minority representation and lower representation of women. Diversity in the federal government's senior leadership and developmental pools are important to developing and maintaining a high-quality and inclusive workforce. Succession planning also is tied to the federal government's opportunity to change the diversity of the SES corps through new appointments.

Recruiting for Temporary Decennial Workforce

The success of the 2010 Census depends, in part, upon the Bureau's ability to recruit, hire, and train a very large temporary workforce that works for a very short period. Over the next several years the Bureau plans to recruit 3.8 million applicants and hire nearly 600,000 temporary field staff from that applicant pool for two key operations: address canvassing and nonresponse follow-up. For the 2010 Census the Bureau plans to use a recruiting and hiring approach like the one it used in 2000.

For the 2000 Census, the Bureau used an aggressive recruitment strategy in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, community groups, and other organizations to help recruit employees and obtained exemptions from the majority of state governments so that individuals receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Medicaid, and selected other types of public assistance would not have their benefits reduced when earning census income, thus making census jobs more attractive.⁶ Further, the Bureau used a recruitment advertising campaign, totaling over \$2.3 million, which variously emphasized the ability to earn good pay, work flexible hours, learn new skills, and do something important for one's community. Moreover, the advertisements were in a variety of languages to attract different ethnic groups, and were also targeted to different races, senior citizens, retirees, and people seeking part-time employment.⁷ The Bureau also advertised using traditional outlets such as newspaper classified sections, as well as more novel media including Internet banners and messages on utility and credit card bills.

Through its local census offices, the Bureau plans to recruit, hire, and deploy a diverse workforce that looks like and can relate to the people being counted. Local census offices will open for the 2010 Census in October 2008. The Bureau has developed a Planning Database that local and regional offices use to prepare recruiting plans. The Bureau expects those offices to use the database to identify areas where field staff are

⁶At the start of nonresponse follow-up in 2000, 44 states and the Virgin Islands had granted an exemption for one or more of these programs.

⁷In 2000, officials of 59 of the 60 local census offices we visited provided useable responses to our question about whether their offices had the type of staff they needed to conduct nonresponse follow-up, including staff with particular language skills to enumerate in targeted areas. Officials at 54 of the 59 offices said they had the type of staff they needed to conduct nonresponse follow-up. For example, officials in the Boston North office said they hired enumerators who spoke Japanese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Russian, and Chinese, while Pittsburgh office officials said they had enumerators that knew sign language to communicate with deaf residents.

more difficult to recruit and other areas where certain skills—such as foreign language abilities—are needed. The Bureau will update the Planning Database for every census tract in the United States for the 2010 Census, using many variables from Census 2000. These variables include: Census 2000 mail return rates; household size; median household income; percentage of persons living in poverty; number of single person households; highest level of education achieved; percentage of linguistically isolated households (i.e., where no person 14 or over speaks English at least “very well”); and percentage of persons on public assistance.

One of the Bureau’s approaches to recruiting and hiring is ensuring that it recruits and hires a sufficient number of field staff. For the 2000 Census the Bureau recruited 5 times the number of persons that it hired, and hired twice the number of persons that it expects to need. We recommended that the Bureau consider a more targeted approach. For example, the Bureau could analyze the factors, such as education and work status, for employees more likely to be successful at census work and less likely to leave during an operation.⁸ The Bureau questioned the need for taking action, noting that its priority is to reach out as broadly as possible to the diverse communities in the country, because in order to have hundreds of thousands of temporary workers, it must attract several million applicants. We agree that the Bureau’s recruiting approach should be designed to ensure it selects a sufficient number of persons to complete the census; however, we do not believe the Bureau has identified the factors most likely to predict applicants’ success and that are incorporated in selection tools and procedures. Our recommendation calls for a fact-based approach to developing selection tools so that the Bureau could target recruitment to applicants who are not only more likely to perform well but also to continue throughout an operation. Recruiting such applicants could help reduce operational costs as well as recruiting and hiring expenditures by decreasing the need to recruit and hire additional workers. Likewise, such an approach can be undertaken while continuing to attract a diverse workforce.

⁸GAO, *2010 Census: Census Bureau Should Refine Recruiting and Hiring Efforts and Enhance Training of Temporary Field Staff*, [GAO-07-361](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 27, 2007).

Collaborative Partnership Efforts with Diverse Communities Can Benefit the Decennial Census

Collaboration can be broadly defined as any joint activity that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the organization acts alone. We have previously reported on several best practices that can enhance and sustain collaborative efforts. These include (1) establishing mutually reinforcing or joint strategies and (2) identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources. For example, critical decennial tasks, such as building public awareness of the census, motivating people to respond, and locating pockets of hard-to-count population groups, are accomplished in large part by partnerships between the Bureau and local governments and community groups.⁹ To leverage visibility, the Bureau also used partnerships with national organizations such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Congress of American Indians, and the American Association of Retired Persons.

In a recent field hearing, held by this subcommittee in San Antonio, Texas on July 9, 2007, leaders of several national organizations called on the Bureau to continue its efforts to ameliorate factors such as apathy, fear, and distrust of government through continued partnerships for the 2010 Census. Leaders noted that within historically hard-to-enumerate communities these issues are best addressed by trusted individuals, institutions, and organizations. Consequently, these organizations' leaders believe that the significance and positive impact of partner and stakeholder networks to a community mobilization effort is critical to a region's success and to the overall success of the census. The Bureau also has met periodically with advisory committees representing minority populations to help ensure a complete and accurate census.

To take a more complete and accurate count of the nation's population in Census 2000, the Bureau partnered with other federal agencies, as well as with state, local and tribal governments; religious, community, and social service organizations; and private businesses. In previous work we found that to coordinate local partners' efforts, the Bureau encouraged government entities to form Complete Count Committees, which were to be made up of representatives from various local groups.¹⁰ According to

⁹GAO, *2000 Census: Answers to Hearing Questions on the Status of Key Operations*, GGD-00-109R, (Washington, D.C.: May 31, 2000).

¹⁰GAO, *2000 Census: Review of Partnership Program Highlights Best Practices for Future Operations*, GAO-01-579 (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 20, 2001).

the Bureau, about 140,000 organizations participated in its partnership program, assisting in such critical activities as reviewing and updating the Bureau's address list; encouraging people—especially hard-to-count populations—to participate in the census; and recruiting temporary census workers. The program stemmed from the Bureau's recognition that a successful head count required the local knowledge, experience, and expertise that these organizations provide. While we concluded that it is quite likely that the key census-taking activities, such as recruiting temporary census workers and encouraging people to complete their questionnaires would have been less successful had it not been for the Bureau's aggressive partnership efforts, we also recommended that the Bureau take steps to make the partnership program more accountable and performance-oriented. The Bureau expects the program will play a key role in the 2010 Census. However, the Bureau's fiscal year 2008 budget request does not include funds for the regional partnership program. In contrast the Bureau received \$5.7 million for the regional partnership program in 1998.

One of the means by which the Bureau plans for increasing response rates is an advertising and outreach campaign to promote the census. In Census 2000, the Bureau first used a paid advertising campaign to create and produce an advertising campaign to inform and motivate the public to complete and return the census form by using a variety of media to stress the message that participating in the census benefits one's community. For Census 2000, the Bureau spent about \$167 million on the paid advertising campaign and a substantial portion of the advertising was directed at minority groups. For the 2010 Census, the Bureau is currently in the process of considering proposals for a similar effort. In its Request for Proposals, the Bureau required that the contractor establish goals for subcontracting with firms that are, for example, small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned, veteran-owned, or are Historically Underutilized Business Zone companies. The Bureau also included in the solicitation a requirement that the contractor have expertise and experience in marketing to historically undercounted populations, such as African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The Bureau expects to award this communication campaign contract in September 2007.

For the 2010 Census, the Bureau will continue a program first implemented for Census 2000 in which it partners with local, state, and tribal governments. The program, the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) allows participants to contribute to complete enumeration of their jurisdictions by reviewing, commenting on, and providing updated

information on the list of addresses and maps that the Bureau will use to deliver questionnaires within those communities. The Bureau has taken steps to improve LUCA for 2010. For example, to reduce participant workload and burden, the Bureau will provide a longer period for reviewing and updating LUCA materials—from 90 to 120 days. However, we recently testified before this subcommittee that the Bureau could do more to mitigate possible difficulties that participants may have with the new LUCA software and training and to help participants convert Bureau-provided address files into their own software format.¹¹

Efforts to Contract with Small Business

For the 2010 Census, the Bureau is making the most extensive use of contractors in its history, turning to the private sector to supply a number of different mission-critical functions and technologies. In awarding and administering its contracts related to the 2010 Census, the Bureau will need to be mindful of its obligations to promote contracting opportunities for various categories of contractors, such as small businesses, women-owned businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, and others. In this regard, the Small Business Act contains an annual governmentwide goal for small business participation of not less than 23 percent of the total value of all prime contract awards. To achieve this governmentwide goal, the Small Business Administration negotiates annual small business contracting goals with each federal executive agency. For the Department of Commerce, the contracting goals are summarized in table 3.

¹¹GAO, *2010 Census: Census Bureau Is Making Progress on the Local Update of Census Addresses Program, but Improvements Are Needed* [GAO-07-1063T](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2007).

Table 3: Small-Business Prime Contracting Goals for the Department of Commerce (Fiscal Year 2007)

Small business category	Goal percentage
Small Business	48
Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)	12
8(a) (Socially and Economically Disadvantaged companies)	4.86
Women-Owned Business (WOSB)	8.50
Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)	3
Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)	3
Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) companies	3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce.

In terms of subcontracting, any business that receives a contract directly from a federal executive agency for more than \$100,000 must agree to give small businesses the “maximum practicable opportunity to participate in the contract consistent with its efficient performance.”¹² Additionally, for contracts that are generally anticipated to have a \$550,000 threshold and have subcontracting possibilities, the prime contractor is required to have an established subcontracting plan, which promotes and supports small business development. For example, the solicitation for the advertising and outreach campaign requires that the contractor establish and adhere to a subcontracting plan that provides maximum practicable opportunity for small business participation in performing the contract. Contractors that do not meet subcontracting goals may face damages if the agency’s contracting officer determines that a contractor did not make a good-faith effort to comply with the subcontracting plan.

Mr. Chairman, as we have recently testified, the Bureau faces challenges to successfully implementing the 2010 Census including those of a demographic and socioeconomic nature due to the nation’s increasing diversity in language, ethnicity, households, and housing types, as well as a reluctance in the population to participate in the census. In fact, the Bureau recognizes that hiring a diverse workforce—especially a temporary field workforce—that is like the people that are being enumerated is one way of eliciting the cooperation of those being counted. The involvement of such a workforce in the key nonresponse follow-up

¹²FAR §19.702.

activity can help to increase productivity and contain enumeration costs. Our review of data pertaining to the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the Bureau's upper-level management as well as the grades of those most likely to rise to that level of management shows that, the Bureau's leadership ranks are generally as diverse as the federal government as a whole. Moreover, the Bureau's strategy of recruiting temporary field staff locally is an important way of promoting a diverse field workforce that is like those being enumerated. In addition, the Bureau's outreach and partnership programs can be an important way of eliciting the participation of communities that are often said to be undercounted or may be reluctant to participate in the decennial census. As in 2000, for 2010 the Bureau intends to use an integrated communications strategy, including advertising, that is carried out by contractors and subcontractors that have the expertise and experiences in marketing to historically undercounted populations. It will be important for the Bureau to build on its efforts to ensure an accurate and cost-effective census by maximizing the potential offered by a diverse workforce and by ensuring that its contractors perform as promised. We stand ready to assist this subcommittee in its oversight efforts.

This concludes my remarks. I will be glad to answer any questions that you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Turner, or other subcommittee Members may have.

Contact and Acknowledgements

For further information regarding this statement, please contact Mathew Scirè, Director, Strategic Issues on (202) 512-6806 or at sciremj@gao.gov. Individuals making key contributions to this statement included Betty Clark, Elizabeth Fan, Carlos Hazera, Belva Martin, Lisa Pearson, Rebecca Shea, Cheri Truett, Kiki Theodoropoulos, and William Woods.

Related GAO Products

2010 Census: Preparations for the 2010 Census Underway, but Continued Oversight and Risk Management Are Critical. [GAO-07-1106T](#) Washington, D.C.: July 17, 2007.

2010 Census: Census Bureau Is Making Progress on the Local Update of Census Addresses Program, but Improvements Are Needed. [GAO-07-1063T](#). Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2007.

2010 Census: Census Bureau Has Improved the Local Update of Census Addresses Program, but Challenges Remain. [GAO-07-736](#). Washington, D.C.: June 14, 2007.

Human Capital: Diversity in the Federal SES and the Senior Levels of the U.S. Postal Service. [GAO-07-838T](#). Washington, D.C.: May 10, 2007.

2010 Census: Census Bureau Should Refine Recruiting and Hiring Efforts and Enhance Training of Temporary Field Staff. [GAO-07-361](#). Washington, D.C.: April 27, 2007.

2010 Census: Design Shows Progress, but Managing Technology Acquisitions, Temporary Field Staff, and Gulf Region Enumeration Require Attention. [GAO-07-779T](#). Washington, D.C.: April 24, 2007.

2010 Census: Redesigned Approach Holds Promise, but Census Bureau Needs to Annually Develop and Provide a Comprehensive Project Plan to Monitor Costs. [GAO-06-1009T](#). Washington, D.C.: July 27, 2006.

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