

Exhibit 1

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-20-368R](#).

A Report to Congressional Requesters

February 2020

2020 Census

Initial Enumeration Underway but Readiness for Upcoming Operations Is Mixed

In the coming months, the 2020 Decennial Census will begin its operations to count the population of the United States. The success of these operations relies on the Bureau's preparations, including recruiting and hiring a sufficient work force, developing and testing IT systems, and maintaining public trust to ensure participation by developing community partnerships, combating disinformation, and protecting the privacy of respondent data. The Bureau is actively managing these preparations, but faces significant risks that could adversely impact the cost, quality, schedule, and security of the count.

Over the past decade, GAO has made 112 recommendations specific to the 2020 Census to help address issues such as cost estimation, key innovations, and acquisition and development of IT systems. The Department of Commerce has generally agreed with the recommendations. As of February 2020, 28 of the recommendations had not been fully implemented.

GAO was asked to provide regular updates on the 2020 Census. This report examines the cost and progress of key 2020 census operations critical to a cost-effective enumeration, and early warnings, if any, that may require Census Bureau or congressional attention.

The Bureau provided technical comments that were incorporated as appropriate.

This correspondence is the second in a series of updates meant to provide timely reporting on the Census Bureau's (Bureau) 2020 Census activities and operations. This update includes information from GAO's ongoing work on preparing for operations including recruiting and hiring, information technology (IT) systems development and testing, and cybersecurity.

In recent years, GAO has identified challenges that raise serious concerns about the Bureau's ability to conduct a cost-effective count of the nation, including new innovations, acquisition and development of IT systems, and other challenges. In 2017, these challenges led us to place the 2020 Census on GAO's High Risk list.

The Bureau Has Generally Executed Early Operations on Schedule, but Faces Challenges Going Forward

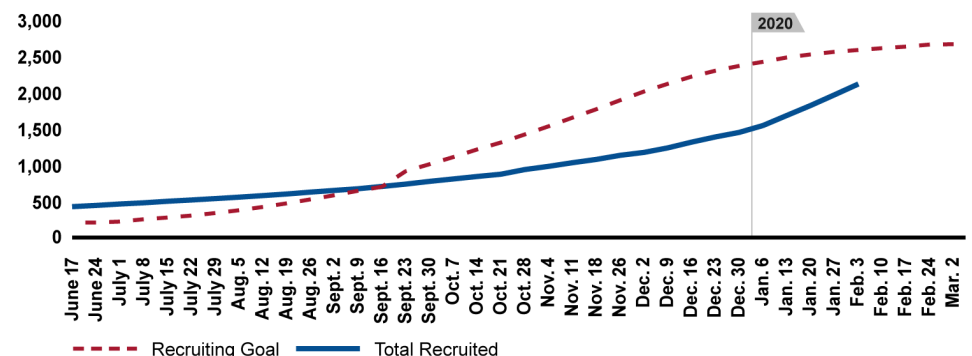
Preparation for Data Collection Operations

The Bureau continues to prepare for upcoming operations for the 2020 Census. These activities included launching media materials and opening area census offices and call centers. The Bureau's first self-response mailing is expected to arrive at households beginning March 12, 2020. Further, the Bureau has begun or is preparing to begin four operations that reach populations that do not receive mail at their residence, including (1) remote areas; (2) areas in which many housing units do not have mail delivered to their homes; (3) individuals living in transitory locations, such as hotels and campgrounds; and (4) individuals in group quarters, such as college resident halls and correctional facilities, as well as those experiencing homelessness. The Bureau has also begun work on its Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation, which will provide staff to help people complete the questionnaire in locations with low self-response.

Recruiting

The Bureau is behind in its recruiting of applicants for upcoming operations. If the Bureau does not recruit sufficient individuals, it may have difficulty hiring enough staff to complete its upcoming operations within scheduled time frames. As shown by the graphic, despite efforts to increase recruiting through advertisements and increased recruiting staff, the Bureau continues to miss its interim recruiting goals as of February 3, 2020.

Census Bureau Progress on Recruiting as of February 2020



View [GAO-20-368R](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or by email at mihmj@gao.gov and Nick Marinos at (202) 512-9342 or by email at marinosn@gao.gov.

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau Unified Tracking System Data. | GAO-20-368R

Partnerships

The Bureau continues to form both national and community partners, which are crucial in educating the public and maximizing survey response rates, particularly among hard-to-count populations. As of early February 2020, the Bureau had almost 240,000 community partners, such as businesses and nonprofits, in place. However, the Bureau has missed interim goals building towards its overall goal of 300,000 community partners by March 2020.

IT Systems Implementation

The Bureau has made progress in executing work against its development and testing schedule for the 52 IT systems expected to be used during the 2020 Census, but continues to face risks in implementing the systems in time for key operations. For example, as of January 2020, the Bureau was at risk of not meeting key near-term IT system testing schedule milestones for five upcoming 2020 Census operational deliveries, such as self-response and non-response follow-up (i.e., when the Bureau follows up with households that do not initially respond to the Census).

The Bureau also needs to quickly address concerns related to the readiness of its internet response system. In January 2020, the Bureau identified a scalability issue that was preventing it from meeting its goal of enabling up to 600,000 users to access the primary internet response system at the same time without experiencing performance problems. As a result, in February 2020, the Bureau decided to use its backup system to manage internet responses for the 2020 Census. Late design changes, such as the shift from one system to another, can introduce new risks, in part, because the backup system was not used extensively in earlier operational testing. The internet response system is scheduled to be available in March 2020 and will enable the public to respond to the 2020 Census online. Therefore, it is critical that the Bureau quickly ensures the readiness of the system it has decided to use, including fully testing the system before it is deployed.

Cybersecurity

The Bureau also continues to face significant cybersecurity challenges, including those related to addressing cybersecurity weaknesses in a timely manner, resolving cybersecurity recommendations from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and addressing numerous other cybersecurity concerns (such as protecting the privacy of respondent data). For example, in April 2019, GAO recommended that the Bureau (1) take steps to ensure that identified corrective actions for cybersecurity weaknesses were implemented within prescribed time frames, and (2) implement a process for tracking and executing appropriate corrective actions to remediate cybersecurity findings identified by DHS for the 2020 Census.

The Bureau has made progress toward addressing these recommendations, but more work remains. For example, the Bureau has not always addressed cybersecurity weaknesses in accordance with established deadlines. Because the 2020 Census involves collecting personal information from more than 300 hundred million people across the country, it will be important that the Bureau continue to address these challenges. GAO has ongoing work monitoring the Bureau's progress in addressing these and other cybersecurity challenges.



U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

February 12, 2020

Congressional Requestors

2020 Census: Initial Enumeration Underway but Readiness for Upcoming Operations Is Mixed

In the coming months, the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) will begin the major operations to count the population of the United States. Census Day for the 2020 Census, the reference date for where and if a person should be counted, is April 1. The success of these operations, in part, relies on the Bureau's preparations, including recruiting and hiring a sufficient workforce; the development and testing of information technology (IT) systems; and maintaining public trust to ensure participation by developing community partnerships, combating disinformation, and protecting the privacy of respondent data. The Bureau is actively managing these preparations, but continues to face significant risks that could adversely impact the cost, quality, schedule, and security of the count.

You asked us to provide regular updates on the implementation of the 2020 Census. For these updates, we will review the cost and progress of key 2020 Census operations critical to a cost-effective enumeration and early warnings, if any, that may require Census Bureau or congressional attention. For this correspondence—the second in a series of products meant to provide timely reporting on activities and operations while they are being implemented—we focused on recruiting, preparations for upcoming operations, IT systems development and testing, and cybersecurity.¹

To describe the status of the Bureau's execution of key operations for the 2020 Census, we reviewed Bureau-provided data on cost and progress of key operations and compared those data with Bureau-determined target dates and metrics. We determined those data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our reporting objectives by interviewing Bureau staff about the IT systems used. We interviewed Bureau officials to gather additional information on the status and progress of these key operations.

To describe major trends and early warning signs, we compared Bureau-provided data against goals outlined in Bureau plans. We assessed Bureau-provided performance data on individual operations and efforts to make determinations of Bureau performance and progress. We also included information from our ongoing work on the readiness of the Bureau's IT systems for the 2020 Census. We collected and reviewed documentation on the status of systems development and testing and for addressing cybersecurity risks, such as executive-level system status reports and dashboards. We also interviewed relevant agency officials.

We conducted this performance audit from November 2019 to February 2020 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence

¹For the first report in this series, see GAO, *2020 Census: Status Update on Early Operations*, [GAO-20-111R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 31, 2019).

obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

In 2017, we designated the 2020 Census as a high-risk area and added it to our High-Risk list. The 2020 Census remains high risk, as new innovations, and acquisition and development of IT systems for the 2020 Census, along with other challenges we have identified in recent years, such as the reliability of the cost estimate, raise serious concerns about the Bureau's ability to conduct a cost-effective enumeration. Over the past decade, we have made 112 recommendations specific to the 2020 Census to help address these risks and other concerns. The Department of Commerce has generally agreed with these recommendations and has taken action and made progress to address them. To date, the Bureau has implemented 83 and GAO has closed 1 recommendation as not implemented. However, as of February 2020, 28 of the recommendations have not been fully implemented, of which six are designated priority recommendations.²

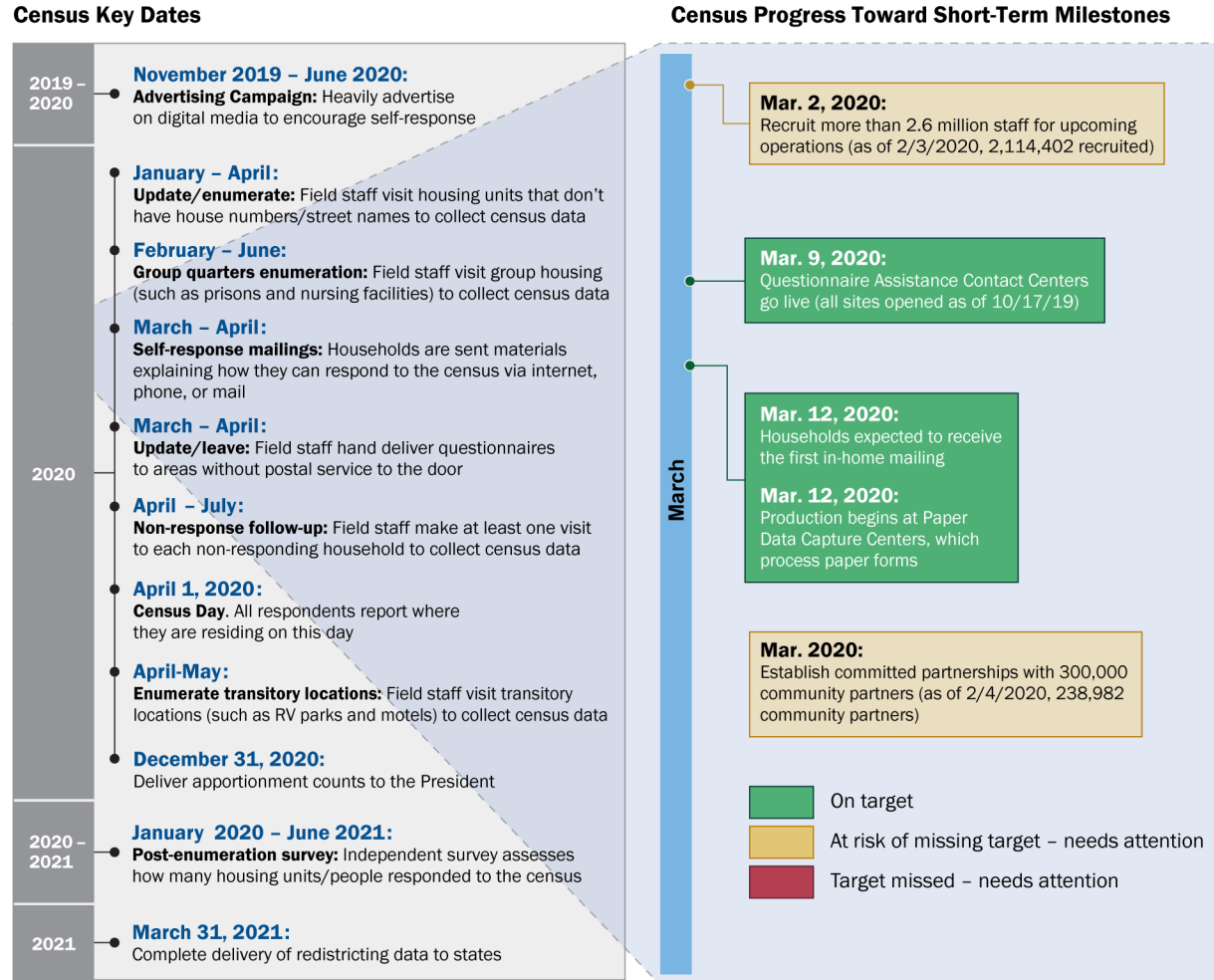
The Bureau has Generally Executed Early Operations on Schedule, but Faces Challenges Going Forward

The Bureau Is Preparing for Its Data Collection Operations

In October 2019 the Bureau completed its In-Field Address Canvassing Operation, where temporary field staff known as listers verify and update selected addresses across the country in its address list. The Bureau also met its target dates for opening its Questionnaire Assistance Contact Centers, where respondents can call to ask questions or provide their census data by phone and it has launched its advertising campaign, that is designed to use print, social media, and television to, among other initiatives, spread the word about the 2020 Census. Further, despite initial delays, it has opened all 248 Area Census Offices that will be used to manage the decennial at the local level.

In January 2020, enumeration activities began in certain areas of Alaska. The Bureau's first self-response mailing is expected to arrive in mailboxes beginning on March 12, 2020. (see figure 1) This is the first of five self-response mailings, which will cover 95 percent of households. These mailings will consist of a letter inviting recipients to complete the census online, or via several other response options. Households in areas with low internet connectivity will also receive a paper questionnaire they can mail back.

²Priority recommendations are those that GAO believes warrant priority attention from heads of key departments or agencies. They are highlighted because, upon implementation, they may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making progress toward addressing a high-risk or fragmentation, overlap, or duplication issue.

Figure 1: Key Dates for 2020 Census Operations

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau timelines and management reports. | GAO-20-368R

Further, the Bureau has four upcoming operations that enumerate populations unlikely to be reached with mailed self-response enumeration.

- The Update Enumerate (UE) operation counts populations in remote areas that have challenges associated with accessibility including remote Alaska, parts of northern Maine and certain tribal areas. (January – April 2020)
- The Update Leave (UL) operation hand delivers questionnaires in areas where the majority of housing units do not have mail delivered to the location of the housing unit or do not have verified mail delivery information. (March – April 2020)
- The Enumeration at Transitory Locations (ETL) operation enumerates respondents living in transitory locations such as recreational vehicle (RV) parks, campgrounds, hotels, motels, marinas, racetracks, circuses and carnivals, and who do not have a usual home elsewhere. (April – May 2020)
- The Group Quarters (GQ) operation enumerates individuals living or staying in group quarters, such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, correctional facilities, and workers' dormitories, as well as those

experiencing homelessness or receiving services at service-based locations such as soup kitchens and shelters. This service based enumeration occurs over the course of 3 days. We previously reported that the Bureau experienced issues managing staffing levels during the 2018 Census Test. Facilities were either overstaffed or understaffed during enumeration due to GQ facilities changing their preferred enumeration method from the preferences they identified when Bureau officials initially reached out to facilities, such as changing from a paper submission of census data for residents to an in-person enumeration.³ (February – June 2020)

The Bureau has also begun work on its Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) initiative as directed in the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020 in November 2019.⁴ According to its *December 2019 MQA Operation Project Plan*, the Bureau plans to provide staff at community events to help people complete the questionnaire and answer questions in locations with low self-response. Respondents are to directly access the questionnaire on mobile devices in English, or one of the 12 non-English languages, or call for assistance. Staff will also have language assistance guides available for 59 non-English languages.

MQAs will be in prominent locations to include grocery stores, houses of worship, community festivals, public transit hubs and other locations.⁵ The Bureau plans to convert up to 4,500 Recruiting Assistants to Census Response Representatives after recruiting efforts end. Further, the Bureau plans to hire a small number of new staff starting in March 2020 to continue throughout the nonresponse follow-up period.

According to the Bureau, the MQA plan improves on the model of the 2010 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) that were static locations. We previously found that the QACs experienced problems, including low visibility of the sites, trouble locating sites among the public, and difficulty in monitoring them.⁶ Instead of being tied solely to static locations, MQAs can deploy to low response locations where they are likely to have a greater impact.

The Bureau Is Behind in Meeting Recruiting Goals for Upcoming Operations

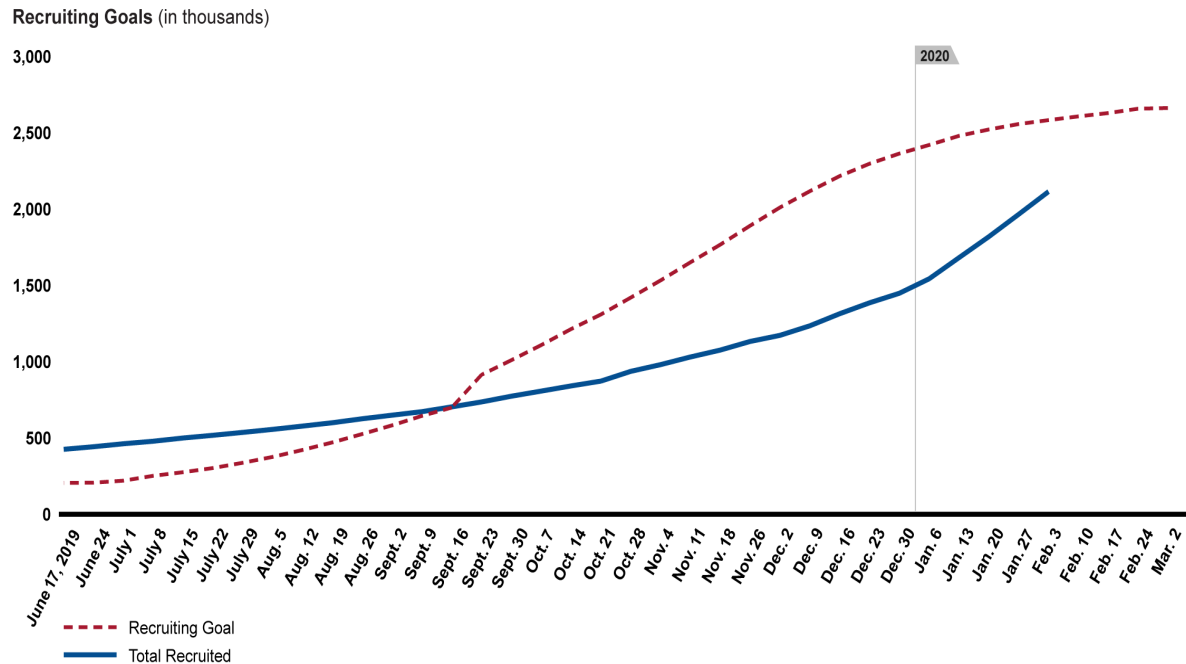
The Bureau is behind in its goal to recruit more than 2.6 million applicants nationwide for upcoming operations and 202 of 248 Area Census Offices fell short of their individual recruiting targets as of early February 2020. As depicted in figure 2, the Bureau fell behind its recruiting targets in late September 2019 and while it experienced an uptick in January and February 2020, has not yet been able to close the gap. As of February 3, 2020, the Bureau has recruited more than 2.1 million applicants. This falls short of its interim target to reach more than 2.5 million applicants by the same date.

³GAO, *2020 Census: Additional Steps Needed to Finalize Readiness for Peak Operations*, [GAO-19-140](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 10, 2018). The Bureau faced similar challenges in managing staffing levels while enumerating service-based locations during the 2010 Census. See *2010 Census: Key Efforts to Include Hard-to-Count Populations Went Generally as Planned; Improvements Could Make the Efforts More Effective for Next Census*, [GAO-11-45](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 14, 2010). We recommended that the Bureau determine the factors that led to the staffing issues we observed during service-based enumeration and take corrective actions to ensure more efficient staffing levels in 2020. As of December 2019, the Bureau had not taken action on this recommendation.

⁴Pub. L. No. 116-69, div. A, § 101, 133 Stat. 1134 (Nov. 21, 2019).

⁵In November 2019, the Bureau estimated that this effort will reach over 23 million housing units if they target the 20% of tracts with the lowest projected self-response.

⁶[GAO-11-45](#).

Figure 2: Census Bureau Progress on Recruiting as of February 2020

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau Unified Tracking System Data. | GAO-20-368R

Notes: In September 2019, the Census Bureau increased its total recruiting goal from approximately 2.2 million to more than 2.6 million and increased its interim goals accordingly. The Census Bureau began tracking recruiting progress in June 2019.

To increase recruiting, in early October 2019 Bureau officials told us that they were increasing advertising for census jobs, hiring more staff that focus on recruiting, and holding a National Recruiting Event later in the month. Bureau officials also told us they can focus recruiting advertising in geographic locations where they are falling behind. Additionally, in late December 2019 Bureau officials told us they had completed a review of pay rates for upcoming operations and planned to increase hourly rates in 73 percent of counties nationwide by an average of \$1.50 per hour for enumerators to address recruiting shortfalls.⁷ In December 2019, Bureau officials told us that the recruiting numbers had plateaued but that they expected the number of applicants to increase in response to recruitment activities in January 2020. If the Bureau does not recruit sufficient applicants, it may have difficulty hiring enough staff to complete its upcoming operations within its scheduled time frames, which could delay subsequent operations, add to costs, and adversely impact data quality. We will continue to monitor the Bureau's recruiting efforts.

The Bureau has met its hiring goals for some area census office positions, but not all. The Bureau has exceeded its goal for hiring recruiting assistants and office operations supervisors, but has not yet met its goals for hiring clerks as shown in Table 1. Hiring sufficient clerks is

⁷Enumerators are Census Bureau employees who travel from door-to-door throughout the country to try to obtain census data from individuals who do not respond through other means, including the internet, on paper, or by phone.

particularly important since clerks assist with on-boarding the 320,000 to 500,000 enumerators needed for upcoming data collection operations.⁸

The Bureau's total goal for hiring clerks is 9,874 by March 1, 2020. According to Bureau officials, it has hired 6,537 clerks and the interim hiring goal for early February was approximately 7,500 clerks. In November 2019, the Census received approval from the Department of Commerce and notified the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that to more efficiently onboard staff, it would conduct a more limited background investigation for Area Census Office clerks, recruiting assistants, and office operation supervisors. According to Bureau officials this has sped up the hiring process for office staff.

Table 1: Hiring Goals for Select Area Census Office Positions

Position	Goal	Hired (as of Feb. 4, 2020)
Recruiting Assistant	4,741	4,758
Office Operations Supervisor	2,601	2,641
Clerk	9,874 ^a	6,537

Source: Census Bureau hiring data | GAO-20-368R

Note: "Hired" refers to the number of individuals who are sworn-in to the position and could charge time.

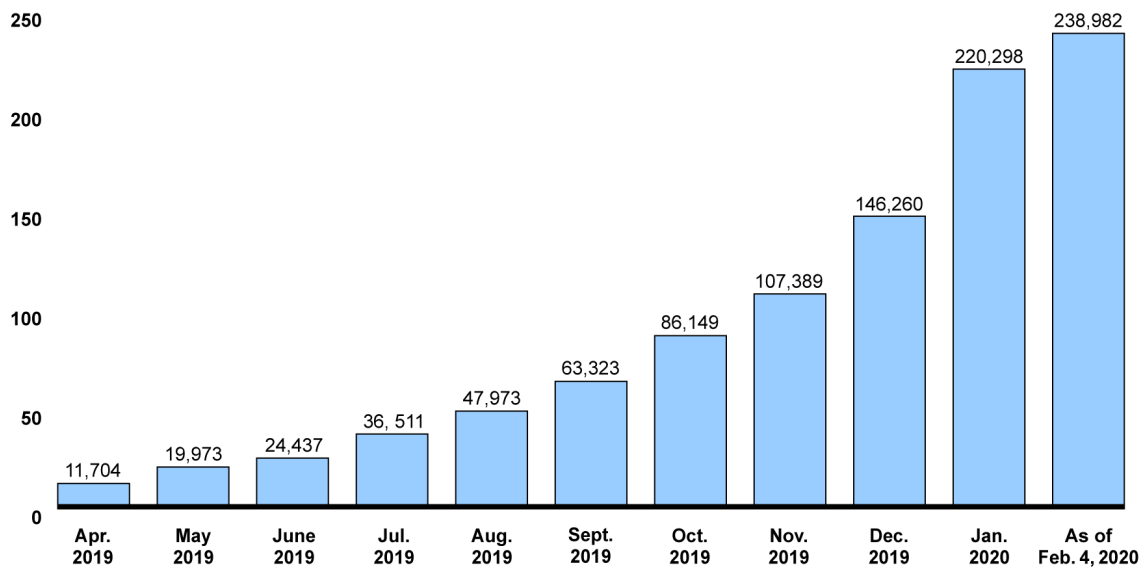
^aThe Census Bureau plans to hire by March 1, 2020

The Bureau Has Missed Interim Milestones for Establishing Community Partners

The Bureau is forming partnerships through its Community and National Partnerships to reach hard-to-count populations. According to the 2020 Census Partnership Plan, partnerships are crucial in educating the public and maximizing survey response rates, particularly for hard-to-count populations, such as persons with disabilities and persons experiencing homelessness.

Bureau management reports provide the number of community partners and participating organizations by sector and audiences served, as well as the number of events the partners have sponsored. The Bureau's goal for 2020 is to have 300,000 community partners by March 2020. As of February 4, 2020, the Bureau had established relationships with 642 national participating organizations and 238,982 community partners such as media outlets, nonprofits, and healthcare organizations (see figure 3). Bureau officials told us that their interim goal was to have approximately 200,000 community partnerships in place by January 1, 2020 and 250,000 in place by February 1, 2020.

⁸To conduct data operations on schedule, the Bureau's conservative estimate for the optimal number of enumerators is 500,000. The Bureau's estimate for the most likely number of enumerators needed is 320,000.

Figure 3: Number of Active Community Partners

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau management reports. | GAO-20-368R

By the end of the 2010 cycle, the Bureau had worked with nearly 256,000 partners. We have previously reported that hiring for Partnership Specialists, who often help establish Community Partner relationships, was delayed in 2019 due to delays in processing background checks and greater than expected attrition.⁹ Bureau officials told us that these delays had not affected the number of participating organizations and community partners and that they were pleased with the quality of those relationships. The Bureau's website has webinars and materials available to partners on common barriers to census response and mapping tools that show locations of specific hard-to-count populations.

The Bureau Is at Risk of Missing Near-Term Schedule Milestones for IT Systems Testing and Needs to Quickly Address Concerns Related to the Readiness of Its Internet Response System

The Bureau is significantly changing how it intends to conduct the census during this decennial, in part by re-engineering key census-taking methods and infrastructure, and making use of new IT applications and systems.¹⁰ Most notably, the Bureau plans to offer an option for households to respond to the survey via the internet and enable field-based enumerators to use applications on mobile devices to collect survey data from households.

To conduct the 2020 Census, the Bureau plans to utilize 52 new and legacy IT systems and the infrastructure supporting them. In October 2018, to help improve its implementation of IT, the Bureau revised its systems development and testing schedule. Specifically, the Bureau organized the development and testing schedule for its 52 systems into 16 operational

⁹GAO, *2020 Census: Status Update on Early Operations*, [GAO-20-111R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 31, 2019).

¹⁰GAO, *2020 Census: Bureau Needs to Take Additional Actions to Address Risks to a Successful Enumeration*, [GAO-19-685T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jul. 24, 2019).

deliveries.¹¹ Each of the 16 operational deliveries was assigned milestone dates for, among other things, development, performance and scalability testing,¹² and system deployment.

As of January 2020, the Bureau had made progress in executing work against its revised schedule by deploying the systems for five of the 16 operational deliveries. For example, the Bureau deployed the systems for the integrated partnership and communications¹³ operational delivery in January 2020. Further, the Bureau was continuing system development, performance and scalability testing, and/or integration testing for the remaining 11 operational deliveries, including self-response and non-response follow-up. For example, the Bureau was working to complete integration testing and performance and scalability testing for the systems needed to support self-response (including the internet response option), in preparation for deploying the final systems in March 2020.

However, as of January 2020, five of the remaining 11 operational deliveries were at risk of not meeting key near-term milestones planned for completing performance and scalability testing and/or integration testing by April 2020. These five operational deliveries are the post enumeration survey,¹⁴ self-response, group quarters enumeration, update enumerate/update leave, and non-response follow-up. For example:

- **Self-response:** The Bureau recently identified a scalability issue that was preventing it from meeting a critical testing goal for its primary internet response system (known as the Enterprise Censuses and Surveys Enabling Platform–Internet Self-Response, or ECASE–ISR).¹⁵ Specifically, in early January 2020, the Bureau stated that an issue with the design of its recently revised Trusted Internet Connection¹⁶ was preventing it from meeting its goal of enabling up to 600,000 users to access the internet response system at the same time without experiencing performance issues.¹⁷ According to the Bureau, ECASE–ISR was able to reach up to 400,000 concurrent users during testing before encountering performance issues.

¹¹The Bureau plans to deploy the 52 systems being used in the 2020 Census multiple times in a series of operational deliveries, which includes operations such as address canvassing or self-response (e.g., the ability to respond to the 2020 Census through the internet). That is, the Bureau may deploy a system for one operation in the 2020 Census (such as address canvassing), and again for a subsequent operation (such as self-response). As such, additional development and testing may occur each time a system is deployed.

¹²According to the Bureau's 2020 Census Operational Plan, the purpose of performance and scalability testing is to ensure that systems will scale to meet the workloads, or volumes, of the 2020 Census.

¹³The purpose of the Bureau's integrated partnership and communications operation is to communicate the importance of 2020 Census participation to the entire population of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

¹⁴The post enumeration survey is intended to provide estimates of 2020 Census net coverage and components of coverage for housing units and people in the United States and Puerto Rico, excluding remote Alaska.

¹⁵ECASE–ISR is a modified commercial-off-the-shelf product developed by a third-party contractor.

¹⁶External network traffic (traffic that is routed through agency's external connections) must be routed through a Trusted Internet Connection. External connections include those connections between an agency's information system or network and the globally-addressable internet or a remote information system or network and networks located on foreign territory.

¹⁷The Bureau stated that it was at testing at 5 times the expected internet self-response user load of 120,000 concurrent users, for a total of 600,000 concurrent users, to minimize risk.

In mid-January 2020, due to concerns with resolving this scalability issue in a timely manner, the Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs and other Bureau leadership officials stated that the Bureau was reviewing its options for using another system called Primus to provide the internet response capability for the 2020 Census. According to Bureau documentation, Primus is a Bureau-developed backup system that was intended to provide internet data collection capabilities in the event that normal operations of ECaSE-ISR are disrupted. The officials stated that recent testing of Primus indicated that it could meet the scalability goal of 600,000 concurrent users; however, additional integration and performance and scalability testing remained to be completed.

On February 7, 2020, the Bureau made a decision to use Primus as the primary internet response system for the 2020 Census. The Bureau added that it is planning to use ECaSE-ISR to support its Questionnaire Assistance Contact Centers, as well as provide a backup for Primus.

Given that the Bureau expects the internet response system will be available to the public in March 2020, it is important that the Bureau quickly ensures the readiness of the system it has decided to use. Late design changes, such as the shift from one system to another, can introduce new risks, in part, because the backup system was not used extensively in earlier operational testing. Notably, Primus was not used as the internet response system during the Bureau's 2018 End-to-End Test.¹⁸ As a result, this increases the risk that operational problems may go undiscovered before the system is deployed, in part because the 2018 End-to-End Test was the last opportunity to test the system under Census-like conditions.

- **Non-response follow-up:** The Bureau has identified several issues during the testing of two systems expected to be used to conduct non-response follow-up—the enumeration application¹⁹ and the Sampling, Matching, Reviewing, and Coding system.²⁰ Specifically, as of January 2020, the Bureau reported that it needed to identify the root causes of, and implement resolutions for, issues identified when using the enumeration application (e.g., in certain cases, needing to restart or reinstall the application for it to work correctly).

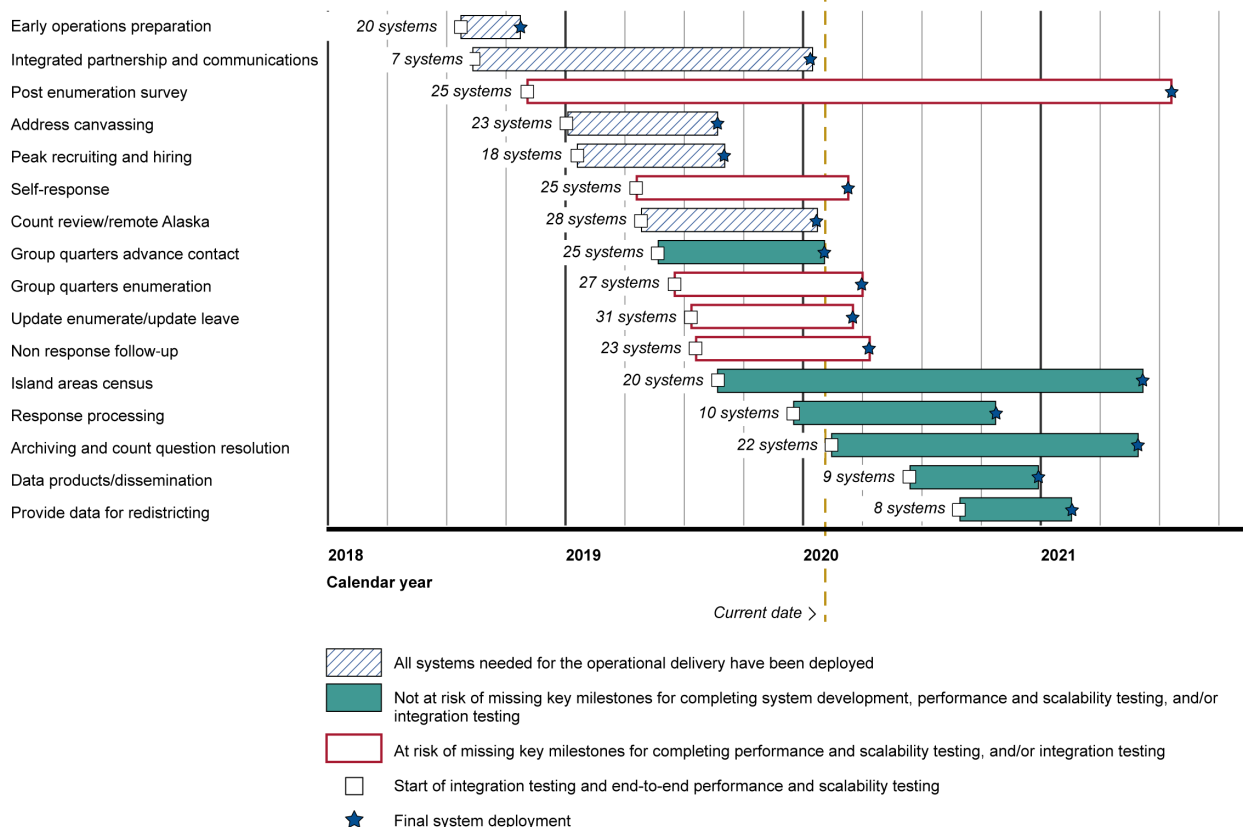
Further, regarding the Sampling, Matching, Reviewing, and Coding system, the Bureau reported that it needed to, among other things, resolve outstanding system defects and implement new requirements to improve system performance and scalability. Given that these two systems are expected to be deployed into production in April 2020, it is important that the Bureau quickly resolve these issues.

Figure 4 presents an overview of the status for all 16 operational deliveries, as of January 2020.

¹⁸According to the Bureau, the 2018 End-to-End Test was conducted to confirm key technologies, data collection methods, outreach and promotional strategies, and management and response processes that are intended to be deployed in support of the 2020 Census.

¹⁹The enumeration application, also known as the Enterprise Censuses and Surveys Enabling Platform—Enumeration, is intended to support Bureau employees who travel from door-to-door throughout the country to try to obtain census data from individuals who do not respond through other means, including the internet, on paper, or by phone. The application is also expected to be used by these employees to, among other things, provide their availability for performing work and for reporting expenses.

²⁰The Sampling, Matching, Reviewing, and Coding system is expected to, among other things, apply quality control algorithms to determine whether enumerators are using validated procedures and collecting accurate data.

Figure 4: Status of 16 Operational Deliveries for the 2020 Census, as of January 2020**2020 Census operational deliveries**

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau data. | GAO-20-367T

Note: The 52 systems being used in the 2020 Census are to be deployed multiple times in a series of operational deliveries (which include operations such as address canvassing or self-response). That is, a system may be deployed for one operation in the 2020 Census (such as address canvassing), and be deployed again for a subsequent operation such as self-response). As such, additional development and testing may occur each time a system is deployed.

These five at-risk operational deliveries add uncertainty to a highly compressed time frame over the next 2 months. Going forward, the Bureau must effectively manage the at-risk operational deliveries to better ensure that it meets near-term milestones for completing IT systems testing, and is ready for the major operations of the 2020 Census. Further, it will be critical that the Bureau expeditiously completes remaining integration and performance and scalability testing for its internet response system to better ensure that the system functions as intended.

The Bureau Faces Significant Cybersecurity Challenges in Securing Its Systems and Data

Our prior and ongoing work has identified significant challenges that the Bureau faces in securing systems and data for the 2020 Census.²¹ Specifically, the Bureau continues to face challenges related to addressing cybersecurity weaknesses, tracking and resolving cybersecurity recommendations from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and

²¹See, for example, GAO, [GAO-19-431T](#) and [GAO-18-655](#).

addressing numerous other cybersecurity concerns (such as protecting the privacy of respondent data). For example:

- **Addressing cybersecurity weaknesses within prescribed time frames.** The Bureau's risk management framework requires it to conduct a full security assessment for nearly all the systems expected to be used for the 2020 Census. If deficiencies are identified, the Bureau is to determine the corrective actions—known as plans of actions and milestones (POA&Ms)—needed to remediate those deficiencies.

The Bureau had made progress in addressing open POA&Ms as of the end of December 2019, but more work remains. Specifically, the Bureau reduced the number of open “high” and “very high-risk” POA&Ms from 264 in January 2019 to 191 as of the end of December 2019.

However, we reported in April 2019 that the Bureau did not always address POA&Ms in accordance with its established deadlines.²² Thus, we recommended that the Bureau take steps to ensure that identified corrective actions for cybersecurity weaknesses are implemented within prescribed time frames. As of December 2019, this recommendation remained open. Specifically, as of December 2019, 81 of the 191 (about 42 percent) total open “high” and “very high-risk” POA&Ms were delayed past their scheduled completion dates. Additionally, 50 of the 191 (about 26 percent) total open “high” and “very high-risk” POA&Ms were delayed 60 or more days.

In February 2020, the Bureau told us that it is taking steps to more actively manage overdue POA&Ms. According to the Bureau's Chief Information Security Officer, the delay in addressing these POA&Ms was due to technical challenges such as interdependencies among multiple system components.

We have ongoing work that will continue to evaluate the Bureau's progress in ensuring that corrective actions are implemented within prescribed time frames. Fully implementing our recommendation will help to ensure that the Bureau is in a better position to manage and mitigate cybersecurity risks in a timely manner.

- **Tracking and resolving cybersecurity recommendations from DHS.** DHS is working with the Bureau to support its 2020 Census cybersecurity efforts. For example, since 2017, DHS has provided various assessments to support the Department of Commerce and the Bureau's risk management of the 2020 Census and help to enhance the cybersecurity posture. In addition, DHS has developed plans with the Department of Commerce and the Bureau on the type of assistance that DHS expects to provide during 2020 Census operations.

DHS has provided numerous recommendations to assist the Bureau in strengthening its cybersecurity efforts in the last 2 years. Among other things, the recommendations pertained to strengthening cyber incident management capabilities, penetration testing²³

²²GAO, *2020 Census: Further Actions Needed to Reduce Key Risks to a Successful Enumeration*, [GAO-19-431T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2019).

²³The National Institute of Standards and Technology defined penetration testing as security testing in which the evaluators mimic real-world attacks in an attempt to identify ways to circumvent the security features of an application, system, or network. Penetration testing often involves issuing real attacks on real systems and data, using the same tools and techniques used by actual attackers.

and web application assessments of select systems, and phishing assessments²⁴ to gain access to sensitive personally identifiable information (PII).²⁵ In April 2019, we recommended that the Bureau implement a process for documenting, tracking, and executing appropriate corrective actions to remediate the cybersecurity findings identified by DHS.²⁶ Such a plan would help ensure that DHS's efforts result in improvements to the Bureau's cybersecurity posture.

In the fall of 2019, the Bureau had developed a process for tracking IT-related recommendations from agencies such as DHS, the Commerce Inspector General, and GAO. More recently, the Bureau had begun implementing that process, and provided us with a spreadsheet that it is using to track the status of these recommendations. This spreadsheet included key information, such as corrective actions that the Bureau plans to take to address the recommendations, a point of contact responsible for actions taken to address each recommendation, and a time frame for implementation or for key activities to be completed. We have ongoing work intended to monitor the Bureau's continued progress in implementing this process of tracking the status of the recommendations.

- **Disinformation from social media.** We previously reported that one of the Bureau's key innovations for the 2020 Census is the large-scale implementation of an internet self-response option. The public perception of the Bureau's ability to adequately safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the 2020 Census internet self-responses could be influenced by disinformation spread through social media.

According to the Bureau, if a substantial segment of the public is not convinced that the Bureau can safeguard public response data against data breaches and unauthorized use, then self-response rates may be lower than projected, leading to an increase in cases for follow-up and in subsequent costs. For example, Bureau officials stated that, during the address canvassing operation, rumors were shared across social media platforms about the address canvassing operation or the staff performing it. The Bureau determined that the rumors created safety concerns for staff who were legitimately working to confirm addresses. To contain the rumors, officials explained that the Bureau worked with local partners, fact-checkers, and law enforcement to share correct information. The Bureau also posted information on its website²⁷ explaining the rumors and also explaining how to determine whether someone is a Bureau employee and how to contact the Bureau.

To help address this challenge, Bureau officials stated that they plan to inform the public of the risks associated with disinformation from social media through the Bureau's education and communication campaigns. In addition, these officials stated that they plan to use specialized tools to monitor traditional media (e.g., newspapers) and social media, and then track, categorize, and respond to disinformation that may be shared. Additionally, Bureau officials stated that they are coordinating with several technology

²⁴Phishing is a digital form of social engineering that uses authentic-looking, but fake emails to request information from users or direct them to a fake website that requests information.

²⁵Due to the sensitive nature of the recommendations, we are not identifying the specific recommendations or specific findings associated with them in this product.

²⁶[GAO-19-431T](#).

²⁷<https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/rumors.html>

companies and social media platforms that have agreed to support the Bureau's efforts in various ways, which may include sharing information and modifying relevant Terms of Service to include support for the 2020 Census. Bureau officials have also stated that DHS is providing direct support primarily through information sharing.

- **Ensuring contingency and incident response plans are in place to encompass all of the IT systems to be used to support the 2020 Census.** Because of the brief time frame for collecting data during the 2020 Census, it is especially important that systems are available for respondents, in order to better ensure a high response rate. Contingency planning²⁸ and incident response help ensure that, if normal operations are interrupted, network managers will be able to detect, mitigate, and recover from a service disruption while preserving access to vital information.

In June 2019, Commerce's Inspector General identified several weaknesses in the Bureau's 2020 Census contingency planning efforts.²⁹ For example, the Inspector General identified, among other things, incomplete disaster recovery planning efforts during the Bureau's 2018 End-to-End Test that could have resulted in the Bureau being unable to execute mission critical 2020 Census operations in the event of a major disruption or outage. The Inspector General made eight recommendations to the Bureau including to, among other things, improve the documentation and implementation of disaster recovery planning activities. Bureau officials agreed with all eight of the Inspector General's recommendations and identified actions taken and planned to address them.

Further, the Bureau needs to finalize its contingency planning efforts for its internet response capability. For example, although the Bureau developed a contingency plan for its internet response system in August 2019, this plan is not finalized. In addition, as noted earlier, the Bureau recently made a decision to change the system that it intends to use as the primary system to provide the internet response capability. Given that internet response for the 2020 Census starts in March 2020—approximately 1 month away—it is important that the Bureau expeditiously finalize and test the contingency plan for its internet response capability and ensure that the plan reflects the approach the Bureau has recently decided to implement.

Regarding incident response, as mentioned previously, DHS provided the Bureau with findings and recommendations related to improving the Bureau's capabilities in this area in November 2017.³⁰ As of January 2020, the Bureau was still working to complete activities for several of these incident response recommendations. As part of our ongoing work, we are evaluating the Bureau's progress in tracking and implementing these and other recommendations provided by DHS.

²⁸According to NIST, contingency planning is part of overall information system continuity of operations planning, which fits into a much broader security and emergency management effort that includes, among other things, organizational and business process continuity and disaster recovery planning.

²⁹U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *The Census Bureau Must Correct Fundamental Cloud Security Deficiencies in Order to Better Safeguard the 2020 Decennial Census*, [OIG-19-015-A](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 19, 2019).

³⁰Because of the sensitive nature of the findings and recommendations in the DHS report, we are not identifying them publicly.

- Protecting the privacy of respondent data.** According to the Bureau's Chief Scientist, a challenge of the 2020 Census is to collect the data needed to meet mission needs while protecting the privacy of individual respondent data. This is important because the Bureau plans to enable a public-facing website and mobile devices to collect PII (e.g., name, address, and date of birth) from the nation's entire population—estimated to be over 300 million. Accordingly, it will be important for the Bureau to ensure that only responsible Bureau officials are able to gain access to respondent data, and that enumerators and other employees only have access to the data needed to perform their jobs.

We have reported on challenges to the federal government and the private sector in ensuring the privacy of personal information posed by advances in technology. For example, in 2015, we expanded one of our high-risk areas—ensuring the security of federal information systems and cyber critical infrastructure—to include protecting the privacy of PII.³¹ In addition, we noted that the number of reported security incidents involving PII at federal agencies had increased dramatically. To help mitigate this high-risk area, we reported that federal agencies need to, among other things, consistently develop and implement privacy policies and procedures.

To assist in protecting the privacy of respondent information as required by statute,³² the Bureau plans to apply a disclosure avoidance technique, known as differential privacy, to its publicly-released statistical products to protect the confidentiality of its respondents and their data.³³ As of November 2019, Bureau officials reported that they had tested this technique by creating sample data products using data collected during the 2010 Census and 2018 End-to-End Test. According to these officials, the sample data products included redistricting data and demographic and housing data. However, these officials noted that, for the 2020 Census, they may not be able to publish all of the data products that were published in prior decennials, in order to protect respondent privacy.

As of November 2019, the Bureau was collecting feedback from data users on the sample data products, and had not yet finalized the list of data products that would be produced after the 2020 Census. We have ongoing work monitoring the Bureau's progress as it works to implement differential privacy for the 2020 Census.

Agency Comments

We provided a copy of this draft report to the Department of Commerce. The Census Bureau provided technical comments that were incorporated as appropriate.

³¹GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*. [GAO-15-290](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 11, 2015). We designated the security of our federal cyber assets as a high-risk area in 1997. In 2003, we expanded this high-risk area to include the protection of critical cyber infrastructure, and in 2015 we expanded it again, to include risks to PII.

³²13 U.S.C. § 9.

³³Differential privacy is a disclosure avoidance technique aimed at limiting statistical disclosure and controlling privacy risk. According to the Bureau, differential privacy provides a way for the Bureau to quantify the level of acceptable privacy risk and mitigate the risk that individuals can be reidentified using the Bureau's data. Reidentification can occur when public data is linked to other external data sources. According to the Bureau, using differential privacy means that publicly available data will include some statistical noise, or data inaccuracies, in order to protect the privacy of individuals. Differential privacy provides algorithms that allow policy makers to decide the trade-off between data accuracy and privacy.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, the Under Secretary of Economic Affairs, the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, and interested congressional committees. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact J. Christopher Mihm at 202-512-6806 or by email at mihmj@gao.gov or Nick Marinos at (202) 512-9342 or by email at marinosn@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in enclosure I.



J. Christopher Mihm
Managing Director, Strategic Issues



Nick Marinos
Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

List of Requesters

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman

The Honorable Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Chairman
The Honorable Chip Roy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Committee on Oversight and Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman
The Honorable Mark Meadows
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations
Committee on Oversight and Reform
House of Representatives

Enclosure I: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts: J. Christopher Mihm, (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov
Nick Marinos, (202) 512-9342 or marinosn@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments: In addition to the contacts named above, Lisa Pearson, Jon Ticehurst, Kate Sharkey, (Assistant Directors), Andrea Starosciak, Alexandra Edwards (Analysts-in-Charge), Kerstin Meyer, David Matcham, Stephen Duraiswamy, Sejal Sheth, Keith Kim, Alan Daigle, Rebecca Eyler, Christopher Businsky, Peter Verchinski, Franklin Jackson, Michael Bechetti, Amalia Konstas, Jarenda Williams-Jones, Cynthia Saunders and Andrew Stavisky made significant contributions to this report.

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through our website. Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its [website](#) newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. You can also [subscribe](#) to GAO's email updates to receive notification of newly posted products.

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's website, <https://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

Connect with GAO

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).
Subscribe to our [RSS Feeds](#) or [Email Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#).
Visit GAO on the web at <https://www.gao.gov>.

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact FraudNet:

Website: <https://www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm>

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7700

Congressional Relations

Orice Williams Brown, Managing Director, WilliamsO@gao.gov, (202) 512-4400,
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125,
Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149
Washington, DC 20548

Strategic Planning and External Liaison

James-Christian Blockwood, Managing Director, spel@gao.gov, (202) 512-4707
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7814,
Washington, DC 20548



Exhibit 2



Report to Congressional Requesters

June 2018

2020 CENSUS

Actions Needed to Improve In-Field Address Canvassing Operation

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-414](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The success of the decennial census depends in large part on the Bureau's ability to locate every household in the United States. To accomplish this monumental task, the Bureau must maintain accurate address and map information for every location where a person could reside. For the 2018 End-to-End Test, census workers known as listers went door-to-door to verify and update address lists and associated maps in selected areas of three test sites—Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill, West Virginia; Pierce County, Washington; and Providence County, Rhode Island.

GAO was asked to review in-field address canvassing during the End-to-End Test. This report determines whether key address listing activities functioned as planned during the End-to-End Test and identifies any lessons learned that could inform pending decisions for the 2020 Census. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed key documents including test plans and training manuals, as well as workload, productivity and hiring data. At the three test sites, GAO observed listers conducting address canvassing.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making seven recommendations to the Department of Commerce and Bureau including to: (1) finalize procedures for reassigning work, (2) continue to evaluate workload and productivity data, (3) fix software problem, or determine and address why procedures were not followed, and (4) finalize report requirements to ensure data are accurate. The Department of Commerce agreed with GAO's recommendations, and the Bureau provided technical comments that were incorporated, as appropriate.

View [GAO-18-414](#). For more information, contact Robert Goldenkoff at (202) 512-2757 or goldenkoffr@gao.gov.

June 2018

2020 CENSUS

Actions Needed to Improve In-Field Address Canvassing Operation

What GAO Found

The Census Bureau (Bureau) recently completed in-field address canvassing for the 2018 End-to-End Test. GAO found that field staff known as listers generally followed procedures when identifying and updating the address file; however, some address blocks were worked twice by different listers because the Bureau did not have procedures for reassigning work from one lister to another while listers work offline. Bureau officials told GAO that they plan to develop procedures to avoid duplication but these procedures have not been finalized. Duplicating work decreases efficiency and increases costs.

GAO also found differences between actual and projected data for workload, lister productivity, and hiring.

- For the 2020 Census, the Bureau estimates it will have to verify 30 percent of addresses in the field. However, at the test sites, the actual workload ranged from 37 to 76 percent of addresses. Bureau officials told GAO the 30 percent was a nationwide average and not site specific; however, the Bureau could not provide documentation to support the 30 percent workload estimate.
- At all three test sites listers were significantly more productive than expected possibly because a design change provided better quality address and map data in the field, according to the Bureau.
- Hiring, however, lagged behind Bureau goals. For example, at the West Virginia site hiring was only at 60 percent of its goal. Bureau officials attributed the shortfall to a late start and low unemployment rates.

Workload and productivity affect the cost of address canvassing. The Bureau has taken some steps to evaluate factors affecting its estimates, but continuing to do so would help the Bureau refine its assumptions to better manage the operation's cost and hiring.

Listers used laptops to connect to the Internet and download assignments. They worked offline and went door-to-door to update the address file, then reconnected to the Internet to transmit their completed assignments. Bureau officials told GAO that during the test 11 out of 330 laptops did not properly transmit address and map data collected for 25 blocks. Data were deleted on 7 laptops. Because the Bureau had known there was a problem with software used to transmit address data, it created an alert report to notify the Bureau staff if data were not properly transmitted. However, Bureau officials said that either responsible staff did not follow procedures to look at the alert reports or the reports were not triggered. The Bureau is working to fix the software problem and develop new alert reports, but has not yet determined and addressed why these procedures were not followed.

The Bureau's data management reporting system did not always provide accurate information because of a software issue. The system was supposed to pull data from several systems to create a set of real-time cost and progress reports for managers to use. Because the data were not accurate, Bureau staff had to rely on multiple systems to manage address canvassing. The Bureau agreed that not only is inaccurate data problematic, but that creating workarounds is inefficient. The Bureau is developing new requirements to ensure data are accurate but these requirements have not been finalized.

Table 2: Expected and Actual Productivity Rates for the In-Field Address Canvassing Operation in the 2018 End-to-End Test

Test site	Expected productivity rates (addresses per hour)	Actual productivity rates (addresses per hour)
Rhode Island	11.36	13.84
West Virginia	6.9	10.21
Washington	10.07	13.94

Source: GAO analysis of Census Bureau data. | GAO-18-414

To ensure address canvassing for the test was consistent with the 2020 Census, Bureau officials told us they included the blocks resolved during the now discontinued second phase of in-office review, into the in-field workload for the test. The Bureau attributed the greater productivity to this discontinued second phase. Bureau officials told us that they believe that listers spent less time updating those blocks because they had already been resolved, and any necessary changes were already incorporated. Moreover, while benefitting from the second phase of in-office address canvassing may be one explanation for why listers were more productive. Bureau officials told us that they are unable to evaluate the differences in expected versus actual productivity for blocks added to the workload as a result of the discontinued second phase because of limitations with the data. However, there could be other reasons as well such as travel time and geography. Standards for Internal Control require that organizations use quality information to achieve their objectives. Therefore, continuing to evaluate other factors from the 2018 End-to-End Test that may have increased or could potentially decrease productivity will be important for informing lister productivity rates for 2020, as productivity affects the number of listers needed to carry out the operation, the number of staff hours charged to the operation, and the number of laptops to be procured.

Hiring

For the 2018 End-to-End Test address canvassing operation, the Bureau hired fewer listers than it assumed it needed at two sites and hired more at the other site. In West Virginia, 60 percent of the required field staff was hired and in Washington, 74.5 percent of the required field staff was hired. Nevertheless, the operation finished on schedule at both these

sites. In contrast in Rhode Island the Bureau hired 112 percent of the required field staff and finished early.⁷

According to Bureau officials, both the West Virginia and Washington state test sites started hiring field staff later than expected because of uncertainty surrounding whether the Bureau would have sufficient funding to open all three test sites for the 2018 End-to-End Test. When a decision was made to open all three sites for the address canvassing operation only, that decision came late, and Bureau officials told us that once they were behind in hiring and were never able to catch up because of low unemployment rates and the short duration of the operation.⁸ According to Bureau officials, their approach to hiring for the 2018 End-to-End Test was similar to that used for the 2010 and 2000 Censuses. In both censuses the Bureau's goal was to recruit and hire more workers than it needed because of immutable deadlines and attrition.

After the 2010 Census we reported that the Bureau had over recruited; conversely, for the 2000 Census the Bureau had recruited in the midst of one of the tightest labor markets in three decades.⁹ Thus we recommended, and the Bureau agreed to evaluate current economic factors that are associated with and predictive of employee interest in census work, such as national and regional unemployment levels, and use these available data to determine the potential temporary workforce pool and adjust its recruiting approach. The Bureau implemented this recommendation, and used unemployment and 2010 Census data to determine a base recruiting goal at both the Los Angeles, California and Houston, Texas 2016 census test sites. Specifically, the recruiting goal for Los Angeles was reduced by 30 percent.

Bureau officials told us that it continues to gather staffing data from the 2018 End-to-End Test that will be important to consider looking forward to 2020. Although address canvassing generally finished on schedule even while short staffed, Bureau officials told us they are carefully monitoring

⁷In Rhode Island, the Bureau had to redo some address listing after the data were lost as discussed later in the report, but was still within the planned time frame.

⁸Remaining operations for the 2018 End-to-End Test, including non-response follow-up, will be conducted at the Providence County, Rhode Island test site only.

⁹GAO, *2010 Census: Data Collection Operations Were Generally Completed as Planned, but Long-standing Challenges Suggest Need for Fundamental Reforms*, [GAO-11-193](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 14, 2010).

Exhibit 3

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation

Project Plan

Version 2.0

DATE OF ISSUANCE, 2020



2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

Document Purpose

This document is intended for use by U.S. Census Bureau managers, staff, contractors, and other internal and external stakeholders working the 2020 Census. It describes the basic planning and operational control elements of the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) Operation.

1 Operational Overview**Purpose and Scope of the MQA Operation**

The Census Bureau proposed a Mobile Response Initiative in response to the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6). The Mobile Response Initiative proposes to incorporate the use of technology to provide readily accessible ways for people to respond to the Census. The highly mobile locations gave way to naming the operation “Mobile Questionnaire Assistance” or MQA.

The MQA Operation is not one of the 35 operations required to execute the 2020 Census, but instead is a sub-operation of the Internet Self Response (ISR) operation. While MQA branches across multiple operations, it most closely aligns with ISR; this decision is outlined in the Memorandum for The Record dated November 26, 2019, with a subject of Decision to add Mobile Questionnaire Assistance as a suboperation of Internet Self Response Operation. Given that the MQA operation was proposed and planned late in the cycle, management believes a project plan with operational details will help ensure the success of this operation.

The Census Bureau will work with partners across the United States, to identify key locations with prominent visibility in areas with low self-response rates. Possible locations include grocery stores and markets, houses of worship before and after services, community festivals, public transit hubs, libraries, community centers, and other locations where people naturally congregate. Initially, the MQA locations will be determined based on 2020 projected self-response rates. As households submit responses, real-time response rates will drive the MQA locations. Because this effort is not tied to specific physical locations, MQA staff can dynamically deploy to locations where they are most needed. MQA staff will help respondents answer questions and directly access the Census questionnaire on Census Bureau issued mobile devices in English, or in one of twelve non-English languages, or call for assistance. In addition, MQA staff will also have language assistance guides for 59 non-English languages.

The Census Bureau anticipates certain local and national partners will want to open their own Questionnaire Assistance Centers (“Partner QACs”) to promote the 2020 Census in their areas. This project plan only covers the Census Bureau’s MQA operation, not the Partner QACs, as the

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

Census Bureau does not oversee Partner centers. Partner QACs will not be staffed by Census Bureau personnel or utilize Census Bureau equipment. Partnership Specialists will provide guidance to Partners who want to establish QACs.

2 Background

The Mobile Response Initiative builds on and improves the model of the 2010 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs), incorporating the use of technology to provide relevant and realistic ways for people to respond to the 2020 Census. Instead of being tied solely to static locations as in 2010, MQAs can deploy based on actual 2020 response rates to low response locations across the country. At MQAs, respondents can receive assistance from trained staff and access the Internet Self-Response instrument to respond to the 2020 Census on demand.

In 2010 the Census Bureau opened 29,157 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs), augmented by 9,670 Be Counted sites. The QACs differed from the Be Counted sites in that QACs employed a temporary Census worker at the site for about 15 hours per week, while the Be Counted sites did not provide Census Bureau staff to assist the public. The operation in 2010 resulted in the inclusion of 760,748 people in the Census, an average of about 20 people per QAC/Be Counted site.

Originally, the Census Bureau proposed not to operate QACs in the 2020 Census, given the low number of individuals included in the Census per site, and the availability of an Internet Self-Response instrument with non-ID capability, to all respondents (meaning individuals who believed they were not counted and did not need to go to a QAC to obtain a form). However, Partners and Congress made clear that they valued the QAC operation. The Census Bureau has proposed the MQA model, believing it augments the 2010 QAC operation while taking advantage of new technologies.

3 Workflow and Systems

3.1 MQA Basic Workflow/Determining the MQA Locations

Beginning in January 2020, the Census Bureau will start analyzing projected response rate data to identify areas with low self response rates. Partnership Specialists (PSs) in the six Regional Census Centers (RCCs) will use the information to determine where MQA events should be located for the first several weeks of this operation. They will do so using their knowledge of the area and the established relationships with the local and community organizations. They will examine existing partnership events and reach out to partners who have agreed to host MQA events, if needed. As households submit a response, real-time response rates will

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

determine where MQA events will be located. Census Response Representatives (CRRs) will be present at MQA sites to assist the public in responding to the 2020 Census online using the self-response instrument.

The Census Bureau will have two different MQA capacities described below.

Event-Based - The CRRs may attend partnership events identified in the partnership Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Locations can include festivals, community events, and the like.

Highly Mobile- As we begin to receive self-response data, the MQA locations will become more mobile and will be mainly determined based on response data. - These locations are highly varied and may include festivals, houses of worship, and places where people naturally congregate.

By March 16, 2020, managers in the Area Census Offices (ACO), in consultation with Partnership staff, will use information about projected low response areas to develop a schedule for Census Response Representatives, which will serve as a “soft launch” and several of the first weeks of the operation. These planned MQA locations will be entered into the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

In early April 2020, after the Census Bureau receives sufficient response data to identify areas with low self-response rates, a weekly report will be delivered to the identified Partnership and Recruiting MQA staff, which will identify low response areas and what, if any, partnership activities are in those areas. Drawing on the information in the report, the Partnership Specialists will quickly work to establish MQA locations. This information will be communicated to Recruiting Managers, who will assign CRRs to locations accordingly. CRRs will attend scheduled events with an iPad device in hand to facilitate the completion of the 2020 Census via the Internet Self-Response (ISR) instrument. The CRRs’ iPads will have a URL that will redirect users to the ISR instrument; the URL redirect will allow for responses to be tracked to determine that the response came in through the MQA effort. During MQA events, CRRs will place their iPads in Guided Access Mode, which locks respondents out of other applications on the electronic tablets. The Guided Access Mode feature also acts as a necessary data security measure in the event of a lost or stolen tablet. In addition, CRRs can provide a direct URL to respondents that they can type on their own devices and will redirect them to the ISR instrument. The MQA workflow (Section 9) outlines the activities associated with identifying, staffing, and working MQA events.

3.2 Identify MQA CRRs

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

On the day of a MQA event, the CRRs will bring their Census Bureau issued tablets to MQA events and will use them to help people complete their census online (whether or not the respondents have their census ID number). In addition, the CRRs will provide respondents with the option to use their own devices to respond online by typing in a URL that will be printed on the Census materials at the events. The CRRs will have language guides for assistance and access to language support via the 2020 Census website. If necessary, the CRRs can direct people to the Census Questionnaire Assistance telephone lines. In addition to English, each of the 12 select languages are supported by a direct line for assistance in that language.

CRRs will be identifiable by an ID badge that includes: their name, their photograph, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. They will be wearing a teal polo shirt with the 2020 Census logo and will have an official bag and a Census Bureau issued tablet containing the Census Bureau logo. Locations will be identifiable with 2020 Census banners.

3.3 Training

FLD HQ has primary responsibility for developing a schedule for training, along with training materials. Training will cover communication expectations, day-to-day activities, data entry and reporting requirements, and safety precautions.

Partnership Specialist and ACO Office Staff MQA specific training will begin in February. This training is scheduled to be a day and a half; it will cover how to read the weekly report identifying the low response areas, general guidance on what type of events are good candidates for hosting MQA events, how to handle situations where there are no events scheduled in low response areas, and how to schedule a CRR to an MQA event. CRRs are trained on their respective roles and responsibilities for the operation in March. CRR training for those who have currently been performing as RAs is expected to take approximately 5 hours. The training will cover how to put the iPad in guided access mode, an overview of the ISR, information about how to assist respondents, and inform them of how they will be scheduled for events and provide feedback on the events worked. In some instances, new CRRs will need to be hired due to attrition or in ACOs with a significant number of low response areas. New CRRs will require approximately 12 hours of training.

3.4 Project IT and System Needs

Several existing systems will be impacted by the MQA operation:

Customer Experience Management (CEM)

The CEM system will be adapted and used for the following activities:

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

- Create and disseminate a weekly report highlighting low response areas based on actual 2020 Census response rates and partnership activities currently planned in the low response areas.
- Create new fields for the aforementioned weekly report.
- Create a dashboard that overlays actual and projected response rates with partnership activity. Dashboard allows for on demand reporting.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The CRM system will be adapted and used for the following activities:

- Partnership Specialist and ACO Clerks will utilize CRM to initiate MQA activities and assign the activities to CRRs.
- Create new fields in CRM to allow ACO and RCC staff to track, measure, and monitor CRR work, and the effectiveness of the operation.
- Create custom reports to allow monitoring during the operation.
- Create a CRR survey that will allow the CRR to provide feedback about the MQA events attended.

URL Redirect to ISR

Two URLs will be established to redirect respondents to the ISR instrument. The URLs utilize Source Tracking in order to provide ISR paradata that will indicate the source of the response. This type of functionality was tested as part of the kiosk solution in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. One of the URLs will be on the CRR's tablet and the other will be printed on the MQA banner that CRRs will bring to events. The MQA banners will allow respondents to use their own devices to respond.

For hardware, the team will contract Decennial Devise as a Service (dDaaS) to modify the existing contract that services the devices through the end of the initiative. The MQA operation will utilize existing devices by reformatting them to fit the needs of MQA.

4 Project Logistics

Logistics will begin with a needs assessment to identify all artifacts required for the initiative. Artifacts include language assistance guides and materials, census questionnaire assistance materials, training materials, partnership items, partnership materials, and standing banners.

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

Language assistance guides and materials and census questionnaire assistance materials already exist or are being developed to support the 2020 Census efforts. These materials will be leveraged and used by MQA operations staff. Additional quantities of these items will be printed under existing contracts.

Training materials will be provided to the MQA staff in print and electronic form to use as a reference throughout the initiative.

Any promotional materials produced under the Integrated Communications Contract for the MQA Initiative will follow the current procedure of printing in mass through the Government Printing Office (GPO).

Additional orders of promotional materials and items will be placed to support the initiative further. Also, additional partnership standing banner orders will be placed for CRRs to utilize at their activities.

The GPO Fulfillment Center in Laurel, MD, receives the promotional items, promotional materials, and standing banners. GPO packages and ships everything to every ACO around the country. The census questionnaire assistance materials and training materials will be sent directly to the ACOs. ACOs then work to create training and operational supply kits and distributes them to the CRRs.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

The detailed project plan establishes roles and responsibilities, including expectations regarding the frequency and content of communications between these roles. Several new staff will need to be hired and existing staff will need to be extended to support the MQA initiative. The following outlines the staff that need to be hired and the staff that will need to be extended:

- Office Operations Supervisor – Hire 248 (1 per ACO) for the period of 1/2020 – 8/14/2020
- ACO Clerks – Hire 496 (2 per ACO) for the period of 1/2020 – 8/14/2020
- Census Response Representatives – Extend Recruiting Assistants from 3/2020 – 8/2020 and hire additional CRRs in ACOs with a significant number of low response areas
- Recruiting Managers – Hire 248 (1 per ACO) for the period of 1/2020 – 3/2020
- Recruiters – Extend 496 recruiters (2 per RCC) from 8/31/2020 – 9/30/2020

2020 Census: Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation**Project Plan**

- MQA Coordinators – Hire 6 Recruiting Coordinators (1 per RCC) from 1/2020 – 8/31/2020

5.1 Area Census Office Staff

ACO Office Operations Supervisors

An Office Operations Supervisor (OOS) will be hired in each ACO to organize and support the planning and implementation of the MQA field operation. They will work from January 2020 to mid-August 2020. OOSs will supervise clerks and schedule CRRs for work at MQA locations. Where possible, OOSs who worked on the recruiting program will transition over to work on the MQA operation.

ACO Clerks

Two clerks will be hired in each ACO to work from January 2020 to mid-August 2020. Clerks will organize supplies and materials, update schedules and reports, and conduct other related clerical duties to support the MQA operation.

Census Response Representatives (CRRs)

In early 2020 individuals serving in ACOs as Recruiting Assistants will transition to working as Census Response Representatives. Recruiting staff are uniquely positioned and qualified for the MQA operation, as they have the skills necessary to interact with members of the public and explain the importance of the Decennial Census. In some cases, Recruiting Assistants will be bilingual, or multilingual, and will be able to assist members of the public who might speak a language other than English.

Area Census Office Recruiting Managers (ACO RMs)

ACO RMs will also continue in employment for the March to August period, but will continue to be called ACO RMs. They will have established relationships with the CRR staff and be familiar with necessary office procedures and timekeeping. RMs will receive minimal necessary training for this operation. The RM job in the March to August time period will be to supervise the CRRs, including selecting which CRR should attend which MQA opportunity.

Area Census Office Managers (ACOMs)

The ACOMs will continue to manage overall ACO activities, including activities that the ACO RMs will manage as part of the MQA operation.

5.2 Regional Census Center Staff

Exhibit 4

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2019

The Honorable Steven Dillingham
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Dillingham:

We are again writing to express our continued concerns regarding your agency's lack of preparation for the upcoming 2020 Decennial Census. This is true in many areas, including cyber security, and the specific subject of this letter, staffing levels and the structure of a Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Center (M-QAC) program. We urge you to move swiftly to ramp up your preparations across the board.

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Further Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-69), Congress directed the Census Bureau to spend at a rate not less than \$90 million to plan and implement a M-QAC program. For the Decennial Census, the Census Bureau outlined a preliminary plan for M-QACs that assumed a staffing level of about 4,700.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed staffing level is neither adequate nor consistent with the proposed need for this vital program. Knowing that there are more than 3,100 counties or county-equivalents in the U.S., this level will likely fall far short of providing residents in hard-to-count communities with convenient questionnaire assistance. This is unacceptable.

With the new Internet self-response option, an atmosphere of heightened public distrust, and the potential for rapid dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, it will be critical for the Census Bureau to have an accessible physical presence in hard-to-count communities. The funding level provided by Congress should enable the Bureau to locate M-QAC staff at specified locations such as schools, libraries, and community centers over a period of weeks during the peak self-response period – particularly in areas where greater numbers of respondents lack Internet access – as well as at temporary locations such as community events and festivals.

Therefore, we urge the Census Bureau to use the funds Congress designated for the M-QAC program to implement both mobile and fixed locations, with a larger staff than previously indicated, to establish a noticeable, consistent presence in harder-to-count communities, and to make available sworn, trained staff to help people complete the questionnaire, if necessary, during the peak self-response period.

Furthermore, we urge you to consider hiring and training some enumerator applicants earlier than currently planned for the door-to-door follow-up operation, as a cost-effective way to expand staffing. Prospective enumerators, in particular, already are slated to receive similar training with respect to helping respondents answer Census questions and would bring useful skills to this extended employment opportunity.


With the launch of the Decennial Census fast approaching, the Census Bureau must move quickly to finalize the structure of a 2020 Census M-QAC program and to work directly with local government and community-based partners to determine where M-QACs will be located, so that trusted organizations can promote the availability of these assistance centers in a timely manner. Congress has made significant resources available for this effort, and the Census Bureau must ensure that the funds are spent wisely and in pursuit of a full and accurate count in all communities.

As such, we request a response to the following questions no later than January 10, 2020.

1. When will the Census Bureau meet with stakeholders to discuss a detailed plan for M-QACs and their role in making the Decennial Census a success?
2. Through what specific mechanism will local governments and community-based partner organizations be able to suggest or request M-QACs at a particular location or event, and how will the Census Bureau inform them of this opportunity?
 - a. Specifically, how will the Census Bureau facilitate the utilization of libraries, schools, and community centers in this effort?
3. What specific criteria will the Bureau use in determining where to locate M-QACs?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress

Exhibit 5



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. Census Bureau
Office of the Director
Washington, DC 20233-0001

August 12, 2019

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the U.S. Census Bureau's report on a Mobile Response Initiative. We appreciate your suggestions and your ongoing commitment to a complete and accurate census.

As you know, in response to the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6), the Census Bureau prepared a report outlining a Mobile Response Initiative. We are actively planning for this operation should funding be available. Because funding is not yet available, the Census Bureau cannot provide detailed answers to the questions in your letter. However, enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet with more information on our current plans.

This initiative would use technology to help people respond to the census. In 2010, staff at Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) could answer questions and provide forms, but they could not accept completed forms. After receiving assistance and a form, respondents still had to mail them. With the Mobile Response Initiative, staff at Mobile QACs would help people complete actual responses. We would work with partners to identify locations and to help communities know when they will be open. Instead of being tied to static locations, we could deploy staff to hard-to-count areas based on real-time self-response rates where assistance would be most needed.

If Congress funds this initiative by October, we anticipate completing a comprehensive plan for the operation by December. We will be pleased to provide more specific details at that time.

If you have further questions, please contact Chris Stanley, Chief, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at 301-763-6100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven D. Dillingham".

Steven D. Dillingham
Director

Enclosure



2020 Census Mobile Response Initiative Fact Sheet

Planning Status

In response to the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6), the U.S. Census Bureau proposed a Mobile Response Initiative. While Congress has not yet passed the FY 2020 appropriations, the Census Bureau has begun planning for the initiative should funding be provided.

Description of the Initiative

The Mobile Response Initiative builds on and improves the model for the 2010 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs), incorporating the use of technology to provide relevant and realistic ways for people to respond to the census. Instead of being tied solely to static locations as in 2010, Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Centers (M-QACs) could be deployed to hard-to-count locations across the country. At M-QACs, respondents could get assistance from trained staff, and they could answer the census on-site. The Census Bureau would work with partners to identify key locations with prominent visibility where self-response rates may be low. Locations could include grocery stores and markets that serve hard-to-count populations, houses of worship before and after services, community festivals, public transit hubs, libraries, and other locations where people naturally congregate. Initially, the M-QAC locations will be where data models, such as the Response Outreach Area Mapper (ROAM), predict low self-response rates. As households submit responses, real-time response rates will drive where M-QACs will be. Because this effort is not tied to specific physical locations, the M-QACs could be deployed dynamically where they are most needed.

This initiative would also support the 2020 Census language program. M-QAC staff could help respondents either call for assistance or directly access the questionnaire on mobile devices in one of the twelve non-English languages. The employees would also have language assistance guides for 59 non-English languages.

Staffing

The Mobile Response Initiative would be staffed with existing Census Bureau staff, eliminating the need to hire and onboard additional personnel. Instead of being released at the conclusion of recruiting activities, the approximately 4,700 Recruiting Assistants hired in 2019 would simply transition to the Mobile Response Initiative. Recruiting Assistants are currently scheduled to conclude activities on March 14, 2020. This plan extends their employment until the first week of August and transitions them to M-QAC staff. By March, these Recruiting Assistants will possess substantial local knowledge and experience from working with hard-to-count communities to promote 2020 Census jobs, giving them the ability to easily transition to helping households actually respond.

The number of staff at individual M-QAC locations will vary based on the expected volume and duration. Very busy locations may require several staff, while others may be managed by one or two people. The M-QAC workers would be supervised by Recruiting Managers working out of Area Census Office (ACOs). Each manager will oversee approximately 20 Mobile QAC staff. Clerical support in the ACO will continue to support the Mobile Response Initiative.

Responsibility for this operation will be under the Regional Census Centers (RCCs) and the ACOs. Preparation, training, staffing and management of the Mobile Response Initiative will fall under the recruiting areas, and the field Partnership Specialists will play a significant role in identifying partners and locations. In the RCCs, Recruiting Coordinators and associated staff will oversee the planning and implementation of the Mobile Response Initiative. The Partnership staff will identify potential locations for the Mobile QACs in areas where low response is expected and observed.

Timing

After concluding their recruiting work in mid-March 2019, the recruiting staff would begin work on this initiative. After completing training on census concepts, response and language options, logistics, and reporting, staff will begin deploying the M-QACs in conjunction with the first wave of Census mailings in mid-March. The primary work of the Mobile Response Initiative will take place in the self response period, but some work will continue through mid-July, with wrap-up actions (return of materials, debriefing, etc.) concluding by the first week of August.

Logistics

The Census Bureau will use equipment already provided to the Recruiting Assistants to support the Mobile Response Initiative. Similarly, tablecloths, signs with the 2020 Census logo, and other items from recruiting efforts can be reused. The Census Bureau may need to procure additional promotional materials for this initiative.

A Key Role for Census Partners

Partnership Specialists will work with Complete Count Committees, state and local officials, and other local partners to identify locations for Mobile QACs and to help publicize when they will be open. Initially, these will be in areas where our models predict low self-response rates in rural, urban, and suburban areas around the country. As households across the country submit responses, the staff will work with those same partners to identify high-priority areas based on real-time self-response rates and to engage the communities to generate high visibility and increased participation.

Key Improvements over QACs from the 2010 Census

During the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau established staffed QACs in hard-to-count areas in locations identified by Census partners. Along with these, there were “Be Counted” locations that were not staffed but had forms available. The QACs staff were trained to answer questions about the purpose of the census and the content of the questionnaire. However, the staffed QACs and the Be Counted sites were not authorized to accept paper responses. A respondents would have to take a form, fill it out, and send it back. In 2010, about 760,000 persons were added to the final population counts from Be Counted forms nationwide – an average of only about 20 persons from each of the approximately 39,000 (30,000 QACs and 9,000 Be Counted) locations.

Unlike the QACs in 2010, M-QAC staff will go to where respondents are, to markets, festivals, events, and other high-traffic venues in hard-to-count areas. Rather than waiting for respondents to come to them, this staff will be highly mobile with the ability to go to multiple areas in a day to generate increased awareness and participation. The strategy moves from primarily motivating a response (the 2010 model) to obtaining an actual, direct response. M-QACs will enable the Census to be more responsive to changing conditions, allowing us to adapt our on-the-ground visibility to address unanticipated challenges.

More Information

If Congress appropriates funding for the initiative by October 2019, the Census Bureau anticipates releasing more complete details about the operation in December 2019.

Issued: August 12, 2019

Exhibit 6

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2019

The Honorable Steven Dillingham
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Dillingham:

We are writing to express continued concerns about your agency's lack of preparation and transparency surrounding the upcoming 2020 Decennial Census. Specifically, we are seeking to obtain more information regarding the Census Bureau's proposal for its Mobile Response Initiative. We are also urging you to utilize Questionnaire Assistance Centers in trusted locations such as libraries, schools, and community centers to assure a successful count in the nation's hard-to-count communities, as Congress intended by directing a Questionnaire Assistance Center program.

We are deeply concerned that the scope of the proposed Mobile Response Initiative will not be sufficient to meet the demands for Internet access in the many communities across the country. A related concern is that Mobile Response Initiative will not offer sufficient trained staff at trusted locations where residents in harder-to-enumerate areas are more likely to be encouraged to engage with federal government personnel.

As such, we request a response to the following questions.

Staffing

1. How many staff hours per week will be dedicated to the Mobile Response Initiative?
2. The self-response period begins March 12, 2020. Will the Mobile Response teams be prepared to assist the public starting on that date?
3. The Mobile Response Initiative plan indicates that 4,740 staff will be utilized nationally. This is significantly fewer staff than were utilized during the 2010 Decennial Census. How will this reduced staffing level affect the Census Bureau's ability to assist respondents?

- a. How many hard-to-count or low self-response census tracts will the Census Bureau be able to reach with the proposed staffing level?
4. Will the staff assigned to the Mobile Response Initiative receive training so they can assist residents with self-response, if requested?

Locations

1. The Mobile Response Initiative is intended to assist respondents in high-traffic areas that are easily accessible. What type of locations would this include, and how will the Census Bureau identify them?
 - a. How will the Census Bureau prioritize locations when requests for a mobile response presence exceed staffing capacity?
2. How will the Census Bureau balance its desire for increased mobility with predictability in order to provide assistance at regularly-scheduled times and places?
 - a. How will the Census Bureau balance a presence at community events with a presence in trusted spaces, such as libraries and after-school programs, in order to assist respondents?


Operations

1. What are the next steps in the Census Bureau's planning process to develop the Mobile Response Initiative in order to be well-prepared to implement the program?
 - a. How will the Census Bureau consult with national, state, and local stakeholders to develop and finalize the plan?
2. The Fiscal Year 2019 Senate Appropriations Committee report stated that, "The Bureau should work with libraries, in coordination with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as part of the overall strategy to maximize survey response." How is the Census implementing this directive?
3. How will the Mobile Response Initiative offer real-time options for Internet self-response on secure wireless networks that are not vulnerable to hacking?
4. How will the Initiative offer Internet self-response in areas that do not have reliable broadband access?
5. How will the Census Bureau publicize the location of Mobile Response teams in a timely and effective way, in order to ensure that residents seeking assistance with Internet self-response know where and when such assistance will be available?


We look forward to your response by July 22nd. Additionally, we urge you to consider two modifications to the current plan: (1) increased staffing levels; and (2) fixed location Questionnaire Assistance Centers at trusted, accessible host locations, staffed by sworn Census Bureau staff, with hours of operation that can be publicized in advance and continuously during the peak self-response period.

Thank you for your attention to, and consideration of, this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress