



Report In Brief

U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General

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Why We Did This Review

The vast majority of U.S. residents live in residential housing units such as single-family houses, apartments, and mobile homes. However, the 2000 decennial census enumerated more than 7 million people living in group situations such as college dormitories, nursing homes, prisons, and group homes, collectively known as “group quarters.”

We sought to determine (1) whether the recommendations made by internal and external evaluations following the 2000 Census and 2004 test for the 2010 decennial were addressed, (2) whether there were new or continuing problems in the operation, and (3) whether all existing group quarters in the test area had been identified and enumerated.

Background

Census is conducting a program of early planning, development, and testing in preparation for the actual 2010 census. The 2006 Census Test was held in a portion of Travis County, Texas, which includes parts of the city of Austin and its suburbs, and the Cheyenne River Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land in South Dakota. We conducted our review at the Travis County site.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.oig.doc.gov/oig/reports/2006/Census-IPE-18046-09-06.pdf>.

U.S. Census Bureau

Enumerating Group Quarters Continues to Pose Challenges (IPE-18046)

What We Found

We concluded that although the bureau is clearly testing new methods to better enumerate the group quarters population, it continues to face a number of challenges, such as:

Group Quarters Validation Documentation Issues. In our review of the group quarters validation questionnaires, we discovered that some residents or managers of non-traditional student housing, specifically private dorms and student cooperative housing, identified themselves as a group quarters facility even though they did not fit into any of Census’s group quarters definitions. As a result, the number of facilities and population counts for that type of group quarters may be inaccurate.

The Final Enumeration List Missed Some Group Quarters and Contained Duplicates. By conducting a limited Internet search and speaking with group home administrators, we found an additional 15 group quarters that had been missed.

New Methods for Improving Student Enumeration Need Consideration. University students proved a particularly challenging population for enumerators, especially students living in fraternities and sororities. Because few questionnaires were returned, administrative records were used to enumerate dorms, which generally lacked Hispanic origin and race information. Additional measures, such as using the internet, are needed to more accurately count students living in college/university group quarters.

What We Recommended

We made a dozen recommendations, including that the Census Bureau should

1. Review and revise the methods used to evaluate the accuracy of the group quarters lists.
2. Do more research to more effectively find small group homes. Research could include (a) targeting knowledgeable state officials to obtain group home licensing lists, (b) conducting more Internet research, and (c) during the validation operation, asking small group home administrators about the existence of other facilities.
3. Reduce address list duplication by (a) strengthening training and guidance on duplicates, (b) ensuring that the master address file software matching program correctly identifies group quarters addresses as opposed to housing units, and (c) reviewing how group quarters addresses are identified and extracted from Census databases.
4. Use campus resources, such as student Greek life offices, in order to obtain administrative records for fraternity/sorority students. Census also should explore using the Internet as a possible response option for the enumeration of college/university students living in group quarters.