



## U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

# 2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census

FINAL REPORT NO. OIG-12-023-1

APRIL 5, 2012

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Office of Inspector General  
Office of Audit and Evaluation

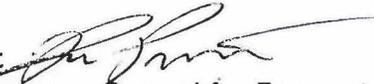
**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**





April 5, 2012

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Robert M. Groves  
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

**FROM:** Ron Prevost   
Assistant Inspector General for Economic  
and Statistical Program Assessment

**SUBJECT:** 2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies  
May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census  
*Final Report No. OIG-12-023-1*

We are providing our final report on the Census Bureau's ("the Bureau's") early 2020 Census planning efforts. Our review (a) evaluated the Bureau's efforts to improve the 2020 Census design, focusing on how the results of the Bureau's evaluation plans will inform the new decennial design, and (b) evaluated and monitored the implementation of the Bureau's management initiatives designed to enhance organizational change.

We found that the assessments and other studies from the previous census cycle are behind schedule, raising concerns that complete results will not emerge in time to inform Census 2020 research—or help the Bureau contain life cycle costs within its \$12.8–18 billion (nominal dollars) estimate. We also highlighted the importance of developing a comprehensive risk management plan, which recognizes that the roles and responsibilities of the Department's and the Bureau's new risk management offices are evolving. Finally, we summarized the various organizational changes that will impact both the planning and the implementation of the next decennial census.

We have received your response to our draft report. Where appropriate, we have modified this final report based on this response. The formal Bureau response is included as appendix D. (We summarized your response, and OIG comments, starting on page 10.) The final report will be posted on the OIG's website pursuant to section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

In accordance with the Department Administrative Order 213-5, please provide us with an action plan responding to all report recommendations within 60 days of the date of this memorandum.

We thank you and your staff for the courtesies extended to us during this review. Please direct any inquiries regarding the report to me at (202) 482-3052 or Carol Rice at (202) 482-6020.

Attachment

cc: Mark Doms, Chief Economist, Economics and Statistics Administration  
Frank Vitrano, Associate Director for the 2020 Census, U.S. Census Bureau  
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# Report In Brief

APRIL 5, 2012

## Background

The Census Bureau is directed by law to carry out the decennial census, which is mandated by the Constitution. Decennial census data are used to apportion seats in Congress; redraw congressional districts; and allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds for state and local governments, as well as other public and private sector purposes.

For the 2020 Census, the Bureau has reorganized to improve its research and testing, as well as develop more cost-effective program processes and methods. Among the changes are a reorganization of its regional office structure, the creation of new directorates, and the launch of a new Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation. Also, the Bureau is working to improve its cost estimation process for the next decennial census; it will update estimates as research and testing progress, so that budget requests align with decennial census requirements.

## Why We Did This Review

As planning for the 2020 Census proceeds, these changes must contribute to the design research and testing needed to develop a cost-effective and high quality decennial census. This decade, the OIG plans to monitor the 2020 Census throughout its life cycle to help the Bureau achieve its goal of containing the costs of the next decennial by recommending changes to promote a more cost-effective design.

For this review, we sought to (1) evaluate the Bureau's efforts to improve the 2020 Census design, focusing on how the results of the Bureau's evaluation plans will inform the new decennial design, and (2) evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Bureau's management initiatives designed to enhance organizational change.

## CENSUS BUREAU

### 2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census

OIG-12-023-I

#### WHAT WE FOUND

The Census Bureau recognizes that it must fundamentally change its decennial design to improve the enumeration quality of the 2020 Census and contain life cycle costs within its preliminary estimates of \$12.8–18 billion (nominal dollars). More specifically, the Bureau should reassess how it updates its address list, enumerates households, and utilizes field and IT infrastructure in this critical effort. The Census Program Evaluation and Experiments (CPEX) program provides lessons learned from the previous decennial that inform the next design. With the Bureau's timely completion of 2010 CPEX studies in question, we found that:

*Delays In Completing 2010 Census Studies Could Adversely Impact the Bureau's Efforts to Improve the Decennial Census Design.* Our review of select early 2020 Census planning efforts found that the assessments and other studies from the previous census cycle lagged behind schedule. Bureau officials stated that delays occurred because of new processes, untimely funding, and project team challenges. We found that attrition, staff reassignments, and competition for resources may have also impacted the project schedules. By February 2012, the Bureau had released 14 reports—however, according to its revised schedule, 38 reports should have been released by December 31, 2011. Delays in completing the 109 studies from the 2010 CPEX create a risk that results may not be available as inputs for the thirty-five 2020 Census research projects slated to begin during FY 2012.

*The 2020 Census Requires a Comprehensive Risk Management Plan.* The 2020 Census Directorate is finalizing a risk management plan to ensure project delivery on time, within budget, and with the promised functionality. The Bureau is working to integrate this plan with its enterprise risk management program and the Department of Commerce's risk management efforts, including reviews of IT and non-IT major programs. This should help the Bureau monitor 2020 Census IT development—and thus help the Bureau avoid issues, such as the cost overruns and problems developing requirements, encountered with the 2010 Census field data collection automation contract. Coordination with the Department on major IT and non-IT systems will be critical in helping to control costs and ensure that systems support mission requirements.

#### WHAT WE RECOMMEND

We have recommended to the director of the Census Bureau the following actions (which, since December 2011, the Bureau has already begun implementing):

- Prioritize further the 2010 CPEX studies, and focus program resources, to ensure that the most critical studies affecting the cost and quality of the 2020 Census are completed; and
- Improve the transparency of the 2010 CPEX program by posting study plans, expected publication dates for the 109 studies, and final reports online as soon as practicable so that stakeholders can review and monitor the Bureau's progress in redesigning the 2020 Census.

# Contents

Introduction .....	1
Findings and Recommendations .....	4
I. Delays In Completing 2010 Census Studies Could Adversely Impact the Bureau’s Efforts to Improve the Decennial Census Design.....	4
II. The 2020 Census Requires a Comprehensive Risk Management Plan .....	7
Summary of Agency and OIG Comments.....	10
Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.....	12
Appendix B: Census Bureau Actions Taken in Preparation for the 2020 Census.....	13
Appendix C: Status of 2010 Census Studies .....	17
Appendix D: Agency Response .....	23

# Introduction

The Census Bureau (“the Bureau”) is directed by law to carry out the decennial census, which is mandated by the Constitution. Decennial census data are used to apportion seats in Congress; redraw congressional districts; and allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds for state and local governments, as well as other public and private sector purposes. Since 1970, the design of the decennial census has involved mailing out and delivering questionnaires to households nationwide and asking households to return completed forms by mail. For those households that do not receive or return questionnaires, the Bureau sends out temporary workers to collect the information during field operations.

The 2010 Census encompassed a fiscal year (FY) 2001–2013 life cycle that included planning, testing, and reporting of results. This effort—managed by the Decennial Management Division under the Decennial Census Directorate—involved 11 major field operations employing more than 800,000 temporary employees assigned to nearly 500 field offices. For the 2020 Census, the Bureau has planned the following life cycle, which follows a similar model divided into several phases with important deliverables. Figure 1 shows the different phases of the 2020 Census life cycle and some major deliverables.

**Figure 1. 2020 Census Life Cycle and Corresponding Major Deliverables**

FY 2012	FYs 2012–2014	FYs 2015–2018	FYs 2019–2023	
<p><i>Options Analysis</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform operational design and program management options analysis</li> <li>—</li> <li>Develop and baseline IT integration plan</li> <li>—</li> <li>Develop 2020 Census business plan</li> <li>—</li> <li>Create a new 2020 Census Directorate</li> </ul>	<p><i>Research and Testing</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct research and testing and field tests</li> <li>—</li> <li>Develop and baseline systems engineering processes</li> <li>—</li> <li>Determine strategy for major acquisitions</li> <li>—</li> <li>Determine and refine initial operational designs</li> </ul>	<p><i>Operational Development and Systems Testing</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and baseline operational requirements</li> <li>—</li> <li>Conduct systems development and testing</li> <li>—</li> <li>Conduct operational and system tests</li> <li>—</li> <li>Establish field infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><i>Supplemental Research and Testing</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and baseline supplemental research and testing plan</li> <li>—</li> <li>Conduct supplemental research and testing</li> <li>—</li> <li>Begin critical planning for the 2020 Census</li> </ul>	<p><i>Readiness Testing, Execution, and Closeout</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test systems readiness</li> <li>—</li> <li>Update address frame</li> <li>—</li> <li>Conduct enumeration activities</li> <li>—</li> <li>Execute Census Day</li> <li>—</li> <li>Deliver apportionment counts and redistricting data</li> </ul>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau information

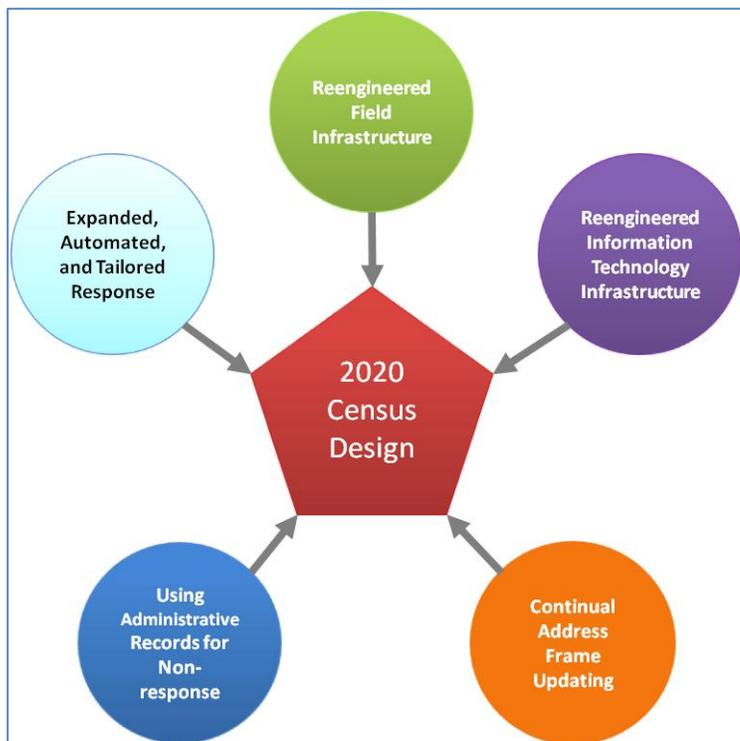
For the 2020 Census, the Bureau has undertaken a reorganization to improve its research and testing, foster innovation, and develop more cost-effective program processes and methods.

Among the changes are a reorganization of its regional office structure and the creation of the 2020 Census Directorate, the Research and Methodology Directorate, and the Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation. Also, the Bureau is working to improve its cost estimation process for the next decennial census, generating rough order of magnitude (ROM) estimates for several potential designs. It will update estimates as research and testing progress, so that budget requests align with decennial census requirements (see section II for the role of the Bureau's risk management office and appendix B for a summary of the remaining changes).

As planning for the 2020 Census proceeds, these organizational changes must contribute to the design research and testing needed to develop a cost-effective and high quality decennial census. The final cost of the 2010 Census was more than \$12 billion—nearly twice the cost of the 2000 Census (nominal dollars)—due in part to a late-stage design change and higher-than-expected contractor costs. If the Bureau implements the changes currently under consideration, preliminary 2020 Census cost estimates rise to \$12.8–18 billion (nominal dollars). However, if the design remains unchanged, the 2020 decennial census could reach \$30 billion—based on the decennial's history of doubling in cost on average every cycle, according to a recent GAO estimate.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau has announced its goal of a 2020 Census costing less per housing unit (adjusted for inflation) than the 2010 Census, while maintaining quality.

To produce a more efficient and effective decennial census—that contains costs, maintains or improves information quality,<sup>2</sup> and reduces program risks—the Bureau must make fundamental changes to its design, which would impact planning, development, and implementation. Planning for the 2020 Census has begun and, over the next several years, staff will examine five different research tracks to formulate the 2020 Census design (see figure 2). Whatever design the Bureau chooses, it must allow sufficient time for testing, improvement, and implementation.

**Figure 2. Five Major Research Tracks for the 2020 Census Design**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>1</sup> Government Accountability Office, December 2010. *2010 Census: Data Collection Operations Were Generally Completed as Planned, but Long-standing Challenges Suggest Need for Fundamental Reforms*, GAO-11-193, Washington, DC: General Accountability Office, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Final results from a post-enumeration survey that provides estimates of persons missed or erroneously counted are scheduled for release in 2012. These results will gauge the accuracy of the 2010 Census count.

The period between FYs 2011 and 2014 will prove crucial for 2020 Census success. In previous decennial census cycles, Congress—and consequently the public—paid minimal attention to the early stages of planning and design formulation, holding one hearing during the first half of the decade prior to the 2010 Census. This decade, the OIG plans to monitor the 2020 Census throughout its life cycle to help the Bureau achieve its goal of containing the costs of the next decennial by recommending changes to promote a more cost-effective design.

For this review, we sought to (1) evaluate the Bureau's efforts to improve the 2020 Census design, focusing on how the results of the Bureau's evaluation plans will inform the new decennial design, and (2) evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Bureau's management initiatives designed to enhance organizational change. See appendix A for the complete objectives, scope, and methodology of this evaluation.

## Findings and Recommendations

The Census Bureau recognizes that it must fundamentally change the decennial census design to contain costs and improve enumeration quality. Rather than make marginal changes to a design used for the past 5 decennial census cycles, the Bureau needs to reassess how it updates its address list, enumerates households, and utilizes field and IT infrastructure to carry out this critical effort. In FY 2011, the Bureau began planning for the next decennial census. During our review of these efforts, we recommended management ensure that 2010 Census studies are completed on schedule and posted online quickly upon completion for stakeholders to review and monitor. These studies, carried out by the Census Program Evaluation and Experiments (CPEX) program, provide lessons learned from the previous decennial that inform the next design. After the 2000 Census, the Bureau, due in part to resource constraints, cancelled more than a quarter of the program evaluations—and, along with them, potential lessons learned needed to make changes to the 2010 Census. If the Bureau cannot complete the 2010 Census studies on time, their results may not provide input for 2020 Census research projects—jeopardizing the Bureau’s goal of developing a design that contains costs while maintaining data quality.

### I. Delays In Completing 2010 Census Studies Could Adversely Impact the Bureau’s Efforts to Improve the Decennial Census Design

Our review of select early 2020 Census planning efforts found that the assessments and other studies from the previous census cycle lagged behind schedule. These provide data necessary for 2020 Census research projects that will help formulate the new design. Although major decennial census field operations ended in 2010, the Bureau continues work to complete the comprehensive 2010 CPEX—the assessments, quality profiles, evaluations, and experiments (see box at right) scheduled for release into FY 2013. However, tracking information provided by CPEX staff shows some studies have missed their original report release dates. This situation materialized after the 2000 Census—when the Bureau’s former Testing, Experimentation, and Evaluation Program cancelled 29 percent of its evaluations due, in part, to resource constraints. For example, the Bureau cancelled a 2000 Census evaluation on the use of U.S. Postal Service data to update its address database, as well as 4 of 7 evaluations measuring how accurately the Bureau enumerated hard-to-count populations living in group housing such as dormitories and shelters. The inability to complete its 2010 reviews on time, or at all, could adversely impact the Bureau’s efforts to formulate a new 2020 decennial census design and realize cost savings while maintaining or improving the accuracy of the census.

*Assessments document final volumes, rates, and costs for individual operations using data from production and quality assurance files—as well as information collected from debriefings.*

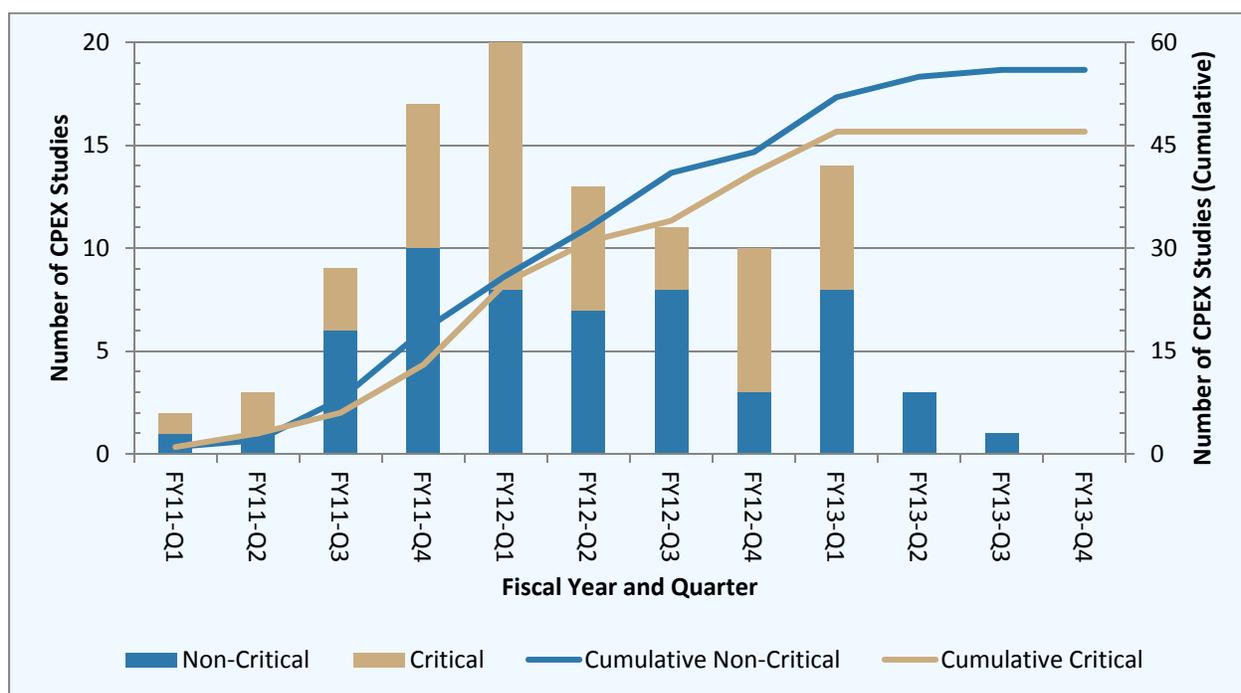
*Quality Profiles document the results of quality control operations.*

*Evaluations analyze the effectiveness of census components and their impact on data quality and coverage, using data collected from census operations and systems.*

*Experiments are quantitative studies (involving national surveys) during a decennial census that informs future decennial census planning.*

Since 1950, the Bureau has incorporated a testing, evaluation, and experimental program to evaluate the current decennial census and facilitate planning for the next one—two activities that support efforts to improve the decennial census design. Teams of employees across the Bureau are working to complete 109 studies evaluating decennial census data for insight into improving its processes. The Bureau plans to issue reports on the 2010 Census studies on a rolling basis through April 2013.<sup>3</sup> Figure 3 shows the number of reports completed or scheduled for completion (represented by columns, as measured by the left-most y-axis) and the cumulative totals (represented by lines, as measured by the right-most y-axis) by fiscal year. However, over the past few months, the release of these studies has been delayed, in some cases by several months. Of the 30 reports (13 of which the Bureau has designated as critical for 2020 Census research and testing) planned for release by the end of FY 2011, Census issued only 2. A third report—the Address Canvassing Operations Assessment, the one critical report of the three—was in final review at the end of FY 2011, 9 months after the scheduled December 2010 release date that was published in the official study plan.

**Figure 3. CPEX Study Release Schedule by Quarter, as of September 30, 2011**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Bureau officials stated that delays occurred because the study development process was new, funding to conduct fieldwork was delayed, and project teams were unable to obtain the required information according to the project schedule. By reviewing study plans and interviewing staff, we found that attrition, staff reassignments, and competition for resources may have also impacted the project schedules. Since Census released the plans, 13 studies have

<sup>3</sup> During our review, we were provided revised report release dates. Of the 10 reports scheduled to be released by the end of FY 2011 per the new schedule, only 3 were completed. We present the entire list of studies as appendix C.

lost at least one author and 11 others have had authors reassigned to new divisions. For example, the Address Canvassing Targeting and Cost Reduction Study, whose results are essential to a 2020 Census design that uses an efficient and effective address canvassing operation, lost an author to attrition. This left one full-time person to work on this critical evaluation. The 2010 Census Match Study, which analyzes the use of administrative records to help enumerate the population, has recently lost key staff. (See box, below, for brief explanations of these two studies.) Twenty study plans cited risk of delay because staff assigned to research, develop, and author the reports are also assigned to other critical Census operations that may take priority over study activities.

*The Address Canvassing Targeting Study will assess the feasibility of a targeted address canvassing operation—which could save millions of dollars in nationwide field costs that, in 2010, totaled \$444 million.*

*The Census Match Study will analyze the use of administrative records to help enumerate households nationwide. This could reduce the need for large nonresponse followup operations requiring thousands of temporary workers*

To help the studies catch up to their schedules, Bureau officials have devised a new briefing strategy to streamline the process. The lower-level Census Integration Group (CIG), which consists of the various managers responsible for 2010 operations, is no longer briefed on study results. Instead, study briefings now occur during the report drafting stage with the high-level Executive Steering Committee for the 2010 Census Assessments and Research.<sup>4</sup> This committee, which was chartered in April 2011, is tasked with (1)

providing guidance on the results from research on and assessment of 2010 Census operations and (2) helping direct early 2020 Census life cycle testing. At the CIG meeting held on February 8, 2012, the Bureau reported 51 studies briefed and 14 reports released. Since, according to the revised schedule, 38 reports should have been released by December 31, 2011, stakeholders cannot yet determine whether this new process will allow the Bureau to meet the release dates for the remaining CPEX studies, particularly if projects continue to lack the necessary resources. Nonetheless, we recommend posting final reports online as soon as practicable for stakeholder review.

Delays in completing 2010 Census studies create a risk that the results and information may not be available as inputs for the thirty-five 2020 Census research projects slated to begin during FY 2012. These research projects seek to improve major aspects—such as the address list, counting the population, response options and processing, data products, and infrastructure-related issues—as well as inform the redesign of the 2020 Census. Of particular importance are specific projects aimed at improving map and address accuracy with continual updating (to allow for a less-costly targeted address canvassing) and using administrative records (to reduce the size and scope of expensive field operations). With the Bureau expecting to have major design components in place starting in FY 2015, the timely completion of research projects becomes critical.

The CPEX program—which cost \$68 million for FYs 2009–2011 and, according to the Bureau, is budgeted for \$11 million in FY 2012—faces significant challenges from the reporting delays

<sup>4</sup> Members of this Executive Steering Committee include associate and division directors involved in decennial census planning.

encountered to date.<sup>5</sup> With 2020 research projects scheduled to have already started and with the prospect of constrained future budgets, the Bureau should further prioritize which 2010 CPEX studies to complete. Among the 109 studies, Census management had identified 52 (7 of which had been released as of February 8) that would provide information critical to planning and implementing the thirty-five 2020 Census research projects.

Following the FY 2012 appropriations, the Bureau revised its plans for the 2010 CPEX studies.<sup>6</sup> The Bureau eliminated 20 CPEX studies, 2 of which it deemed critical to informing the 2020 Census research projects<sup>7</sup> and 10 of which were quality profiles designed to assess quality control processes for certain decennial operations. This reduced the number of critical studies to 50. Given the federal government's current constrained fiscal environment, the Bureau could face funding challenges beyond FY 2012. To prepare for such a possibility, the Bureau should further prioritize which 2010 CPEX studies are most critical to 2020 Census planning efforts—and focus on providing program resources (including full-time subject matter experts) to them to ensure their completion.

## II. The 2020 Census Requires a Comprehensive Risk Management Plan

During FY 2011, the Bureau was still developing risk management activities while it prepared to enter its research and testing phase. During our 2010 Census oversight, we noted that risk management activities began late in the life cycle. In our final 2010 Census report to Congress, we recommended that these activities commence from the outset of the life cycle. The 2020 Census Directorate is finalizing a risk management plan to ensure project delivery on time, within budget, and with the promised functionality. The plan aims to avoid potential problems during the life cycle by helping staff identify project risks and develop strategies to mitigate them. Effective risk management will require the involvement of relevant stakeholders and oversight organizations, including the Bureau's Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation and the Department's Office of Program Evaluation and Risk Management and Investment Review Board (IRB).

OIG quarterly reports on the 2010 Census<sup>8</sup> identified significant problems in *project planning* (e.g., not employing critical path management or thoroughly reviewing project start and end dates up front) and *risk management* (e.g., starting such activities late in the decennial census life cycle and not completing contingency plans on time) that the Bureau needed to resolve to contain costs and maintain information quality for the 2020 Census. To accomplish this, we recommended that risk management activities begin from the outset of the current decennial census life cycle, rather than just before field operations (as happened for the 2010 effort).

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<sup>5</sup> For FY 2013, the Bureau has stated it requested slightly more than \$7 million to fund the 2010 CPEX program.

<sup>6</sup> The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-55) was signed into law on November 18, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> The two critical cancelled studies are the (1) Sample Design Assessment and the (2) Respondent Debriefings of Person Interview and Person Followup Evaluation. These pertain to the Census Coverage Measurement program, which examines coverage errors from the 2010 Census to improve future censuses.

<sup>8</sup> *OIG-19791-1*, August 2009; *OIG-19791-2*, December 2009; *OIG-19791-3*, February 2010; *OIG-19791-4*, May 2010; *OIG-19791-5*, January 2011; and *OIG-11-030-1*, June 2011.

Similarly, a recently issued National Research Council report<sup>9</sup> on redesigning the 2020 Census encouraged planning for the next decennial to start early in the life cycle to ensure a more cost-effective design. To accomplish these goals, the Bureau needs to effectively monitor risk management activities.

The 2020 Census Directorate recently developed a risk management plan modeled after the 2010 effort. The Bureau's 2020 Census risk management plan establishes processes to identify and analyze risks, populate a risk register,<sup>10</sup> develop mitigation and contingency plans, assess mitigation activities, and periodically reassess the risks as needed. The Bureau's draft business plan identifies several risks for the research and testing phase of the decennial life cycle (see box, opposite). Census management is currently developing an enterprise risk management program to complement and oversee individual plans developed by Bureau units.

In addition to planning documents, Census staff is exploring best practices for research and testing. For example, it cohosted a June 2011 seminar to learn about successful government system engineering projects from three major consulting firms. Through these concepts and case studies, the Bureau aimed to learn how to use systems engineering<sup>11</sup> for planning and developing the 2020 Census.

The Bureau is working to integrate its 2020 Census risk management plan with its enterprise risk management program and the Department of Commerce's risk management efforts, including reviews of IT and non-IT major programs. Effective monitoring of decennial risk management activities will require coordination with several Bureau and Departmental oversight bodies. During the previous decennial census, the Bureau's Risk Review Board, composed of senior Census managers involved with the decennial census, met weekly to oversee risk management activities during field operations. Census managers informed us they

#### Select 2020 Census Program Risks Identified During the Research and Testing Phase

- Alignment of acquisition policy with 2020 Census needs
- Gaps and weakness in the research and testing plan
- Insufficient funding for research and testing
- Lack of Census manager support of the planning approach
- Lack of external stakeholder support for 2020 Census design alternatives
- Mandatory cost constraints
- Premature life cycle cost estimate
- Resistance to improved program management and accountability
- Shortage of necessary skills—operational and technical subject matter, systems engineering, program/project management, acquisition
- Unanticipated mandatory change

Source: OIG, based on U.S. Census Bureau data

<sup>9</sup> National Research Council. 2011. *Change and the 2020 Census: Not Whether But How*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>10</sup> A *risk register* contains the results of a project's risk analysis and includes risk descriptions, probability of occurrence, impact on objectives, proposed responses, owners, and current status.

<sup>11</sup> *Systems engineering* is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on defining customer needs and required functionality early in the development cycle, documenting requirements, and then proceeding with design synthesis and system validation—with the goal of providing a quality product that meets the user needs.

will again use the Board for the next decennial. Additionally, the Bureau's newly-created Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation (which reports to the deputy director) will oversee Bureau program risks. Their standardized risk management provides a consistent methodology to apply to all programs and operating units. One task will be to monitor 2020 Census IT development—which may help the Bureau avoid issues, such as the cost overruns and problems developing requirements, encountered with the 2010 Census field data collection automation contract. Independent of the Bureau directorates, the risk management office can help identify common risks across directorates and facilitate communication among them to resolve problems quickly.

Finally, Census will need collaboration between the Department's Office of Program Evaluation and Risk Management and the IRB. The Department's risk management office will serve an important role as the Department's authority on enterprise and programmatic risk matters—including implementing enterprise-wide policies and procedures, identifying and applying best practices, and advising Department and Bureau management on programmatic risks. Based on our interview with staff, we concluded that the Department's risk management office had yet to finalize its oversight role with the 2020 Decennial Census program. The IRB's role in advising the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on major IT and non-IT systems will be critical in helping to control costs and ensure that systems support mission requirements. Any significant delay in the development of these relationships presents a risk to the Bureau in its efforts to plan for the 2020 Census.

### *Recommendations*<sup>12</sup>

We recommend the director of the Census Bureau take the following actions:

- Prioritize further the 2010 CPEX studies, and focus program resources, to ensure that the most critical studies affecting the cost and quality of the 2020 Census are completed; and
- Improve the transparency of the 2010 CPEX program by posting study plans, expected publication dates for the 109 studies, and final reports online as soon as practicable so that stakeholders can review and monitor the Bureau's progress in redesigning the 2020 Census.

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<sup>12</sup> We do not offer any new recommendations to address finding II, which concerns a comprehensive risk management plan. Currently, the Bureau is addressing an OIG recommendation—from our final quarterly report to Congress—to “[i]mplement improved project planning and management techniques early in the decade.” Among management priorities are plans to address risk management activities for the 2020 Census (see table B-1 in appendix B of this report).

## Summary of Agency and OIG Comments

In its March 21, 2012, response to our draft report, the Bureau reported it had already taken steps to address our recommendations. The Bureau has made progress implementing our recommendations following our December 20, 2011, exit conference. Regarding the first recommendation, the Bureau has completed a series of internal reviews to ensure the most critical studies are completed. In addition, the Bureau stated that it monitors the progress of reports through exchanges with authors, managers, and stakeholders—as well as through the use of tracking tools to ensure allocating appropriate resources for their completion. In response to our second recommendation, the Bureau has created a website to disseminate the CPEX reports to the public. The Bureau’s response further stated it had posted online 21 reports.

In addition to responding to our recommendations, the Bureau provided technical comments to our draft report. After consideration of the comments, we modified our final report to reflect appropriate changes. The Bureau also suggested modifying our report to reflect the updated number of studies in its current schedule. However, we retained the numbers in our draft report that were listed in the original CPEX studies schedule—which the Bureau provided to us in October 2011—while later changes provided by the Bureau reflect their subsequent prioritization. (For further details about the Bureau’s changes, find the Bureau’s response in appendix D.) We outline below specific changes involving the number of studies and those designated critical:

- We reported 109 studies in our draft report based on a list of studies the Bureau provided to us in October 2011 and a list of 20 canceled studies contained in an internal memorandum dated February 2012.<sup>13</sup> After examining its response (and through a follow-up interview with staff), we determined that—since October 2011—the Bureau split 1 study into 12 individual studies, effectively adding 11 new studies. Adding those 11 studies to the remaining 89 studies results in 100 current studies, as reported by the Bureau.
- On page 7, we reported that 52 CPEX studies designated as critical were reduced to 50 when 2 studies were canceled. However, the Bureau’s response to our draft report states that 53 critical studies now exist. In addition to the 2 canceled studies, the Bureau redesignated 2 critical studies as noncritical<sup>14</sup> and named 5 others critical.

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<sup>13</sup> See *2010 Decennial Census Program Decision Memorandum Series No. 38—Decision to Reduce Scope of the 2010 Census Program for Evaluations and Experiments* (February 14, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> The studies no longer considered critical are (1) Missing Housing Unit Assessment (renamed “Evaluation to Assess Effect of Census Coverage Measurement [CCM] Search Area and Census Address List Formation Rules on CCM Estimates”) and (2) Behavior Coding of the 2010 Nonresponse Followup Interviews Evaluation.

- On page 7, we stated that the Bureau released 7 critical reports as of February 8, 2012. In the Bureau's response they report the release of 9. This discrepancy results from the definition of the release date. We define "release date" as the date of the signed memorandum that formally releases the report for distribution. As such, the Bureau had released only 7 critical reports by the aforementioned date.

# Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To conduct this review, we sought to (1) evaluate the Census Bureau's efforts to improve the 2020 Census design, focusing on how the results of the Bureau's evaluation plans will inform the new decennial design; and, (2) evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Bureau's management initiatives designed to enhance organizational change.

Our methodology included interviewing senior Bureau managers and staff and reviewing planning documentation for the 2020 Census. Specifically, we:

- Interviewed Bureau staff to (1) understand their roles in support of the 2020 Census and (2) monitor development of the decennial census design;
- Interviewed Bureau regional directors to obtain (1) their feedback on the 2010 Census and (2) their suggestions for improving the 2020 Census;
- Interviewed outside stakeholders to understand their concerns and receive suggestions for improving the 2020 Census design;
- Reviewed the Bureau's draft 2020 Census business plan and rough order of magnitude for long-term cost estimates;
- Assessed the study plans for 2010 Census assessments, evaluations, experiments, and quality profiles and research plans for the 2020 Census; and,
- Evaluated Bureau organizational changes and new management initiatives put in place in preparation for the 2020 Census.

We conducted this review from February through October 2011, under the authorities of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Departmental Organization Order 10-13, dated August 31, 2006, as amended. The review was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (January 2011) issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.



million annually, starting in FY 2014, with few staff reductions. The Bureau will continue the current practice of providing administrative functions (e.g., payroll, human resources) at each office. The Bureau intends to increase regional office participation and leverage field office infrastructure to support planning efforts for the 2020 Census. With the new 2020 Census design still under development, it is unknown how these changes in the field will impact the Bureau's goal of containing the cost of the decennial census while preserving data quality.

**2020 Census Directorate.** In late 2010, Bureau management proposed a plan to separate the tasks of handling remaining 2010 Census operations and planning for the 2020 Census. The 2020 Census Directorate fulfills the Bureau's goal of redesigning the decennial census by allowing it to focus on planning for the 2020 Census without responsibility for finalizing the 2010 Census. This directorate is composed of the associate director, the Office of 2020 Census Planning, and the American Community Survey (ACS) office. The current associate director is the former head of the decennial management division who oversaw the 2010 Census as field operations were carried out. The 2020 Census planning office is tasked with planning and implementing program management processes for research and testing and with evaluating proposed designs. The ACS office will continue to carry out its mandatory, continuous survey (which, after 2000, replaced the decennial census long form containing additional population and housing questions) but also be available to support research and planning for the next decennial census. Specifically, the Bureau plans to develop IT, field, and operational infrastructure that can support the ACS and adapt to the much larger 2020 Census. The ACS will serve as a test bed for carrying out tests, such as new survey methods, for the proposed decennial census design using existing permanent staff located throughout the country. ACS field representatives will test out new hardware platforms and software functionalities as they conduct their regular monthly surveys.

**Research and Methodology Directorate.** The new Research and Methodology Directorate is expected to support mission-critical research for the 2020 Census and collaborate with program divisions throughout the life cycle. The new directorate strengthens the former Methodology and Standards Directorate by tasking it with functions critical to redesigning the 2020 Census. This directorate will support teams working on 2020 research projects as needed. Headed by the associate director, this unit is divided into 5 centers:

- Statistical Research and Methodology
- Economic Studies
- Administrative Records Research and Applications
- Disclosure Avoidance and Research
- Survey Measurement

The Research and Methodology Directorate is expected to work closely with the 2020 Census Directorate in areas such as administrative records and survey measurement.

**New Effort at 2020 Census Cost Estimation.** The Bureau is working to improve its cost estimate for the proposed decennial census design. Since 1970, the cost of the decennial census has increased significantly with each successive cycle, despite the Bureau utilizing virtually the

same design to collect information. For 2010, the cost was more than \$12 billion,<sup>16</sup> which was more than the original life cycle estimate of \$11.7 billion made in 2001 but less than the \$14.7 billion estimate made in 2008 following the announcement of a return to a paper-based Nonresponse Followup operation. With the final 2020 Census design unknown, the Bureau has generated rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost estimates for four preliminary design options spanning the entire life cycle (FYs 2012–2023) based on inputs from the 2010 Census (such as enumerator training and salaries, operation workloads, and office space costs). The most expensive option, which makes few changes to the 2010 Census design, could cost up to \$18 billion—while the least expensive option, which utilizes targeted address canvassing, greater use of administrative records to help enumerate the population, and fewer field offices than in 2010, carries a \$12.8 billion estimate. The costs of the remaining two designs fall in between these figures.<sup>17</sup> The preliminary costs of these designs are in contrast to GAO’s independent estimate of up to \$30 billion based on doubling the cost on average of the previous decennial census design.

Bureau staff generated many thousands of simulations for each design option to increase the accuracy of its cost estimates. The Bureau plans on updating these estimates on an annual basis to take into account changes made during the research and testing phase and avoid having one static estimate, as developed for the 2010 Census, that certainly will change over time. Per its decennial business plan, the Bureau will have an initial operational design by FY 2015 based on initial research and testing of the five research tracks through FY 2014. From then on, the budget for 2020 Census should provide more accurate numbers for the finalized design and associated costs, particularly for administrative records and targeted address canvassing.

**Status of Challenges to the 2020 Census.** For our June 2011 final quarterly report to Congress on the status of 2010 Census operations, we enumerated 7 major challenges to the 2020 Census that the Bureau must address to ensure a cost-effective and quality decennial census. During this review, we found that the Bureau has taken initial steps to address some of these challenges with specific actions as it continues planning for the next decennial census (summarized in table B-1, next page):

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<sup>16</sup> According to the Bureau, this represented a savings of \$1.9 billion due to efficiencies gained during field operations and not spending approximately \$800 million in contingency funds for emergencies that did not materialize.

<sup>17</sup> There were two other potential designs for which they did not generate ROM estimates, because the designs rely heavily or nearly exclusively on the use of administrative records and include no address canvassing. Testing involving these two areas remains ongoing and the extent of their potential use is unknown.

**Table B-I. Summary of Bureau Actions to Address OIG's 2020 Census Challenges**

Challenges to the 2020 Census <sup>a</sup>	Actions Taken by the Census Bureau in FY 2011
Revamp cost estimation and budget processes to increase accuracy, flexibility, and transparency	The Bureau has generated ROM estimates for budget years FY 2012–2014 that encompass the research and testing phase. Census Bureau staff stated that they will update budget estimates annually to inform the annual budget process.
Use the Internet and administrative records to contain costs and improve accuracy	Bureau staff plan to incorporate these two activities as part of its research and testing projects to redesign the 2020 Census. The Bureau expects to implement its final decennial census design in FY 2015 that may utilize the Internet and administrative records.
Implement a more effective decennial test program using the ACS as a test environment	Bureau managers plan on utilizing resources from the ACS to test new enumeration methods, hardware and software products, and conduct smaller field tests in support of the 2020 Census redesign effort. Specific plans have not yet been finalized.
Effectively automate field data collection	As part of its 2020 research and testing program, the Bureau plans on researching how to increase the efficiency of its field infrastructure, exploring ways to automate the collection and processing of information during field operations.
Avoid a massive end-of-decade field operation through continuous updating of address lists and maps	As part of its planning process, the Bureau has proposed several decennial census designs, some of which include a targeted address canvassing operation to supplement continuous map and address updating. The decision on the extent to which targeted address canvassing will be used as part of the final decennial census design will be made after initial research and testing concludes in FY 2014.
Implement improved project planning and management techniques early in the decade	The Bureau formulated a draft business plan to support its FY 2012 budget initiative that provides a road map on FYs 2012–2014 planning activities. Management has begun to formulate plans to address project and risk management activities for the 2020 Census.

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

<sup>a</sup>The challenge to create a director position that spans Presidential administrations requires Congressional action and cannot be addressed solely by the Census Bureau.

## Appendix C: Status of 2010 Census Studies

STUDY TITLE (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	Original Release Date	Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date	Revised Release Date	Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date
<b>Census Coverage Measurement</b>				
CCM Independent Listing Quality Profile	FY 11 (4Q)		FY 11 (3Q)	FY 11 (3Q)
Demographic Analysis Operation Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (4Q)	FY 12 (1Q)
CCM Sample Design Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Person Interview Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Initial Housing Unit Operations Assessment	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
CCM Person Interview Operations Assessment	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
CCM Final Housing Unit Operations Assessment	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
CCM Person Matching and Followup Operations Assessment	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
Recall Bias Panel Plan Evaluation	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
CCM Respondent Debriefings of Person Interview and Person Followup Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Initial Housing Unit Clerical Matching Quality Profile	FY 13 (2Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Person Followup Quality Profile	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Person Clerical Matching Quality Profile	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Investigation of Methods to Evaluate Coverage of the Group Quarters Population Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Developing an Error Structure in Components of Census Coverage Error Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Initial Housing Unit Followup Quality Profile	FY 13 (2Q)		FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
Explaining How Census Errors Occur through Comparing Census Operations History with Census Coverage Measurement Results Evaluation	FY 13 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
CCM Final Housing Unit Followup Quality Profile	FY 13 (3Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>

STUDY TITLE (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	Original Release Date	Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date	Revised Release Date	Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date
<b>Coverage Improvement</b>				
Non-ID Processing Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 13 (1Q)	
Count Review Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (2Q)	
Small Multiunit Structures Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Alternative Coverage Followup Questions and Design Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
LUCA Participant Survey Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Address Canvassing Targeting and Cost Reduction Evaluation	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Data-based Extraction Processes for the Address Frame Evaluation	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Effectiveness of Unduplication Evaluation	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
Avoid Followup Evaluation	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Administrative Records Use for Coverage Problems Evaluation	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Address Frame Accuracy and Quality Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Address List Maintenance Using Supplemental Data Sources Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
Comparative Ethnographic Studies of Enumeration Methods and Coverage Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Census Match Study Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Matching Error Study Evaluation	Unavailable		FY 13 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Missing Housing Unit Assessment	Unavailable		FY 13 (1Q)	
<b>Field Operations</b>				
Address Canvassing Operations Assessment	FY 11 (1Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Global Positioning System Evaluation	FY 11 (2Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (4Q)	
Group Quarters Validation Quality Profile	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED OVERDUE</b>
Address Canvassing Quality Profile	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
Group Quarters Validation Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	

<b>STUDY TITLE</b> (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	<b>Original Release Date</b>	<b>Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date</b>	<b>Revised Release Date</b>	<b>Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date</b>
Enumeration at Transitory Locations Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (3Q)	
Nonresponse Followup Operations Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Field Verification Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Group Quarters Enumeration Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (3Q)	
Shipboard Enumeration Operation Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (3Q)	
Island Areas Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Update/Leave Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
Coverage Followup Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Be Counted/Questionnaire Assistance Center Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Federally Affiliated Overseas Count Operation Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Observing Census Enumeration of Non-English-Speaking Households Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
Nonresponse Followup Contact Strategy Experiment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Group Quarters Enumeration Quality Profile	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Update Enumerate Operations Assessment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
Nonresponse Followup Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Enumeration of Transitory Locations Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Update Enumerate Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Update/Leave Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Field Verification Quality Profile	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Automation in Field Data Collection for Address Canvassing Evaluation	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Island Areas Quality Profile	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Military Enumeration Assessment	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>

<b>STUDY TITLE</b> (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	<b>Original Release Date</b>	<b>Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date</b>	<b>Revised Release Date</b>	<b>Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date</b>
Service-Based Enumeration Assessment	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Puerto Rico Assessment	FY 12 (4Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
<b>Field and Headquarters Infrastructure</b>				
Recruiting and Hiring Field Staff Assessment	FY 11 (2Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	FY 12 (1Q)
Cost and Progress Assessment	FY 11 (2Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Logistics Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
Forms Printing and Distribution Assessment	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
ELCO/LCO IT Equipment Deployment and De-installation Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Mail Response/Return Rates Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
DRIS Paper Questionnaire Data Capture Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
RCC/LCO Space Acquisition Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Web Discovery Evaluation	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (3Q)	
Universe Control and Management and Response Processing System Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Program Management Process: Risk Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
Program Management Process: Schedule Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Program Management Process: Change Control Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Program Management Process: Issues Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Field Office Administration and Payroll Assessment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Decennial Applicant, Personnel, and Payroll System Assessment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
2010 Census Postal Tracking Assessment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Census Unedited File Assessment	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Late Adds Mailout Assessment	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Personally Identifiable Information Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	

STUDY TITLE (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	Original Release Date	Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date	Revised Release Date	Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date
<b>Questionnaire Content</b>				
Behavior Coding of the 2010 Nonresponse Followup Interviews Evaluation	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (4Q)	FY 11 (4Q)
Item Nonresponse and Imputation Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Bilingual Questionnaire Assessment	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	FY 11 (4Q)
Confidentiality Notification Experiment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
Content and Forms Design Program Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Language Program Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Census Quality Survey Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
AQE—Census 2000 Form Replication Experiment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Content Reinterview Evaluation	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Behavior Coding of the 2010 Coverage Followup Interviews Evaluation	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
AQE—Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
2010 Census and American Community Survey Comparability Evaluation	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
DRIS Data Capture QA and Paper Data Quality - Quality Profile	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Behavior Coding of the 2010 Census Coverage Measurement Person Interview Evaluation	FY 13 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
<b>Communications</b>				
National Partnerships Evaluation	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 13 (1Q)	
Census In Schools Research Evaluation	FY 11 (4Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 11 (3Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>
Deadline Messaging and Compressed Mailing Schedule Experiment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (1Q)	
Paid Advertising Heavy-Up Experiment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
Integrated Communications Program Assessment	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 13 (1Q)	
Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Survey II Evaluation	FY 12 (1Q)		FY 12 (2Q)	
Integrated Communications Program Evaluation	Unavailable		FY 12 (1Q)	
<b>Geographic Programs</b>				

<b>STUDY TITLE</b> (critical studies highlighted in yellow)	<b>Original Release Date</b>	<b>Status, End of FY 2011 Based on Original Release Date</b>	<b>Revised Release Date</b>	<b>Current Status, Based on Revised Release Date</b>
Type of Enumeration Area Delineation Assessment	FY 11 (1Q)	<b>OVERDUE</b>	FY 12 (1Q)	
Service-Based Enumeration, Group Homes, and Carnival Locations Address List Update Assessment	FY 12 (2Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
Local Update of Censuses Addresses Assessment	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (3Q)	
New Construction Assessment	FY 12 (3Q)		FY 12 (4Q)	
<b>Reports Overdue Based on:</b>	<b>Original Date</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Revised Date</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: OIG analysis of U.S. Census Bureau information

# Appendix D: Agency Response

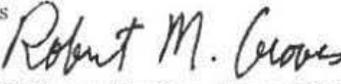


**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MAR 21 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR Ann Eilers  
Principal Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation

Through: Rebecca M. Blank *for*   
Under Secretary for Economic Affairs

From: Robert M. Groves   
Director

Subject: Draft Report: *2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census*

The attached comments are in response to your draft audit report, *2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census*. The U.S. Census Bureau appreciates the comments and recommendations developed by the Office of the Principal Assistant Inspector General in producing this audit report.

Attachment

cc: US/EA

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**OIG Draft Report**  
**2020 Census Planning: Delays with 2010 Census Research Studies**  
**May Adversely Impact the 2020 Decennial Census**

**U.S. Census Bureau Response**

The Census Bureau has reviewed the Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, (OIG) Draft Report dated March 5, 2012, and has the following comments:

**Specific Comments**

**Page 4, first paragraph:** The sentence reads... *“After the 2000 Census, the Bureau cancelled more than a quarter of the program evaluations...to make changes to the 2010 Census.”*

**Census Bureau response:** We agree with this statement. We, in fact, canceled some evaluations after the 2000 Census due in part to resource constraints. To make the connection with this paragraph to the subsequent paragraph on this page, we suggest you modify this statement to read ... *“After the 2000 Census, the Bureau, due in part to resource constraints, cancelled more than a quarter of the program evaluations ....”*

**Page 6, paragraph 3:** *“Delays in completing 2010 Census studies...the timely completion of research projects becomes critical.”*

**Census Bureau response:** As we move forward with 2010 CPEX, we are scheduled to brief the findings of all 100 studies to the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) by the end of fiscal year 2012. The ESC, which is comprised mostly of Associate Directors and Division Chiefs, was established to “provide guidance on the results from research and the assessments of the 2010 Census operations.” We are working under the assumption that review and approval of final reports (after the presentation of findings to the ESC) would on average require approximately four months after the presentation. We estimate that we will still be able to release all final reports by April 2013. In the meantime, we have made all preliminary findings available internally to staff working on early 2020 Census efforts. As well, the staff working on early 2020 Census research and testing have, in many cases, worked also on the 2010 Census operations, and therefore already have knowledge of operational outcomes that they rely on when assisting in developing research plans. We will also continue to make preliminary findings available – as we did with the assessment of the Address Canvassing Operations – to the OIG and GAO as requested to support specific audits.

**Pages 6-7, last paragraph:** *“The CPEX program - which costs \$68 million for FYs 2009–2011...and implementing the thirty-five 2020 Census research projects.”*

**Census Bureau response:** The actual expenditures for the 2010 CPEX in fiscal years 2009 through 2011 were \$68.1 million combined, while the budget for fiscal year 2012 is currently \$11.2 million and the funding request for fiscal year 2013 is \$7.3 million.

**Page 9: Recommendation 1 - *Prioritize further the 2010 CPEX studies, and focus program resources, to ensure that the most critical studies affecting the cost and quality of the 2020 Census are completed.***

**Census Bureau response:** Since the time the OIG conducted this review, the Census Bureau underwent a series of activities to ensure that the most critical studies affecting the cost and quality of the 2020 Census are completed. First, the 2010 CPEX staff worked directly with management who oversee early 2020 Census research and testing efforts to identify the 53 2010 CPEX studies from which results were deemed critical to early decennial census planning. When we received significantly lower than requested appropriations from Congress for fiscal year 2012, the Census Bureau had to identify 20 studies for cancelation leaving us with the current 100 studies. We removed from consideration any studies where findings had already been presented to the ESC for Census Assessments and Research, as well as any studies that were designated as critical to early 2020 Census efforts (see 2010 Decennial Census Program Decision Memorandum Series, Memorandum 38 for more information on this process). Therefore, it is important to note that none of the studies designated as critical to early 2020 Census research and testing were eliminated from the 2010 CPEX program.

We conduct regular briefings on the progress of the program to various stakeholders including:

- weekly check-ins with the Associate Directors for 2010 and 2020 Censuses, and Division Chief for 2020 Research and Planning Office where we present the 2010 CPEX dashboard showing the number of reports briefed to the ESC, reports submitted for final review, and reports that have been finalized and released for the overall program,
- monthly progress reports to the Deputy Director on the 2010 CPEX dashboards and the ESC briefing dates for each 2010 CPEX study, and
- monthly status reports to the Office of Management and Budget and DOC on the overall progress of the 2010 CPEX program.

We also monitor the progress of individual reports through the use of specialized tracking tools and through continuous exchanges with individual authors, managers, and stakeholders. We utilized this approach to ensure appropriate resource loading and timely availability of accurate findings from all 2010 CPEX studies.

In the case of the concerns raised about the delayed public release of the Address Canvassing Assessment, we identified the need for more critical review of the preliminary findings that were delivered on March 24, 2011. Between March 2011 and January 2012, the Bureau worked to discuss, debate, and fine-tune our interpretations of the findings so that we could present the most accurate and well-rounded portrayal of the Address Canvassing Operation. As part of this

process, the Bureau held discussions on findings from the Address Canvassing Operation with oversight groups including the National Academy of Sciences and the Office of Inspector General in August 2011. As a result of these efforts, preliminary findings were available to relevant stakeholders to assist in the development of research plans related to future address canvassing operations. While not all external stakeholders had the benefit of this briefing before the final reports were posted on the web, we believe we are balancing the maximum gains of sharing information from the CPEX program while addressing fiscal constraints. Also, we consistently monitor the resources available to individual studies to ensure the timely production of results. To date, authors or managers have not contacted us with a request for additional human resources due to loss of key staff during critical periods.

**Page 9: Recommendation 2** - *Improve the transparency of the 2010 CPEX program by posting study plans, expected publication dates for the 109 studies, and final reports online as soon as practicable so that stakeholders can review and monitor the Bureau's progress in redesigning the 2020 Census.*

**Census Bureau response:** Currently, there are 100 studies in scope for the 2010 CPEX, not 109 as the report indicates. Of these 100 studies, we have already received the first drafts for two-thirds of them that detail preliminary findings. The findings for 56 of these studies have been briefed to the ESC. We have finalized 21 of the reports and published them on our Web site at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/about/cpex.php>. This Web site provides some background information on the 2010 CPEX process as well as provides various methods to access the final reports from 2010 CPEX studies – including which 2020 Census investment area they pertain to.

## General Comments

### Page 5:

- Correct the report throughout to show total 100 CPEX studies, not 109.
- The Address Canvassing Operations assessment was released January 2012, not September 2011 as the chart caption indicates.

**Page 6:**

- The ESC that is hearing briefings of CPEX results is not the 2020 ESC as stated in the report, but the ESC for Census Assessments and Research. The briefings actually started in April 2011, not July 2011.

**Page 7:**

- Correct the first sentence in paragraph 1 to show that there were 53, not 52, studies among the 100 that had been identified as critical, and nine, rather than seven, were released by February 8.
- Correct paragraph 2 to show there were 53 critical studies, not 50. Although the report claims 2 critical studies were eliminated, none of the 53 studies originally described as critical have been eliminated. The total remains at 53.

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