U.S. Census Bureau

FDCA Program for 2010 Census Is Progressing, but Key Management and Acquisition Activities Need to Be Completed (OSE-17368)

What We Found

In the fall of 2004, we began an inspection survey of the bureau’s progress in planning and managing FDCA and acquiring an integration contractor. Because of FDCA’s importance to the decennial and the major reorganization of the program that occurred as we were concluding our fieldwork, we decided to report on the risks we identified during our survey and recommend mitigating measures instead of starting a formal inspection. Census agreed with this approach. Our findings included:

The bureau’s late decision to use an integration contractor and slow start in implementing project management have increased project risk. According to the bureau’s acquisition roadmap, several important documents, including the acquisition strategy, source selection plan, and functional requirements were to be completed by the end of 2004. These milestones were missed. In addition, at the end of 2004, almost a year since the decision to contract for FDCA had been made, a project office still had not been established and a project plan had not been developed.

A project office was established, but project management planning needs to be completed. Census should develop a project management plan based on an analysis of all work needed to complete FDCA.

Census’s acquisition strategy addresses time constraints but requires careful planning and implementation. The integration contractor will have only about a year after the contract award to prepare for the start of the dress rehearsal address canvassing operation.

What We Recommended

We recommended the Census Bureau director take actions including:

1. For future complex IT projects, consider contracting for the entire effort early in the capital asset planning process.
2. Assign responsibility for planning and managing complex IT projects to Census organizations with appropriate experience.
3. Formulate a project management plan that describes project execution, monitoring, control, and reporting.
4. Address complexity in the source selection process by developing procedures for how Census staff will communicate with offerors during prototype development, training staff in communication procedures, and providing requirements modifications to all offerors.

To view the full report, visit http://www.oig.doc.gov/oig/reports/2005/Census-OSE-17368-08-05.pdf