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**DIFFICULT-TO-MEASURE TOPICS**

**The 2010 Census: Enumerating the Hard to Count, including Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers**

Note by the United States Census Bureau

**Summary**

Enumerating the hard to count population, including migrant and seasonal farmworkers, is a key goal for the 2010 Decennial Census. Migrant and seasonal farm worker populations pose several census challenges, including fear and mistrust, unconventional housing arrangements, language and literacy, and mobility. A variety of communications methods and operations will be used to enumerate this population in the 2010 Census.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Enumerating the hard to count population is a key goal for the 2010 Decennial Census. One of the most significant achievements of the 2000 Census was the reduction in the estimated undercount rate for historically undercounted populations, including Hispanics, African Americans, and American Indians living on reservations. The estimated undercount rates for all historically undercounted populations declined significantly in Census 2000, a positive trend that is expected to continue in the 2010 Census.

2. Migrant and seasonal farm workers will be one critical component of the hard to count population for the 2010 Census. Migrant and seasonal farm worker populations pose several census challenges, including:

- a) *Fear and Mistrust*. Many are recent immigrants and distrust governmental authorities.
- b) *Unconventional housing arrangements*. Many live in temporary, unconventional, or overcrowded dwellings.
- c) *Language and literacy*. Many speak languages other than English and some are not fully literate.
- d) *Mobility*. Migrant workers are, by their nature, mobile.

3. This paper will discuss the Census Bureau's plans to enumerate the hard to count population in the 2010 Census, with a special focus on migrant and seasonal farm workers.

## **II. REACHING HARD TO COUNT POPULATIONS THROUGH THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

4. Research has shown that inability to communicate in English is a barrier to enumeration in the census. The linguistically isolated population is growing in the United States. Linguistically isolated households are those where the primary language spoken is not English, and where no one over the age of fourteen speaks English very well. The 2006 American Community Survey estimated that 4.8% of all households in the United States were linguistically isolated. The Census Bureau's language program has grown and adapted over the past several censuses to accommodate the growth of populations that speak languages other than English. The 2010 Census Language Program is designed to remove obstacles to enumeration, and to encourage participation in the Census by households where English is not the primary language.

5. One key improvement for 2010 is that the Census Bureau will, for the first time, mail bilingual Spanish/English census forms to neighbourhoods with higher proportions of households that need assistance in Spanish. It is possible to do this in 2010 because the American Community Survey removes the need to send a "long form," and provides updated data that allows to identify these neighbourhoods more accurately than it could be done with data from the previous census (ten years old). The bilingual form will be mailed to geographic areas with a high concentration of what is referred to as "Spanish Assistance" households, which are households where no adult aged 15+ reports speaking English "very well." It is anticipated that about 10% of the mail delivery in 2010 will be bilingual, with forms being sent to an estimated 42 states.

6. The new bilingual form has been extensively tested, due to concerns about backlash and item non-response. In testing, the form demonstrated a superior mailback rate to the English only form, with slightly higher item non-response rates for several questions. Only minimal anecdotal evidence of backlash was observed.

7. In 2010, the questionnaire will also be translated into five primary non-English languages: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian. These five languages have been chosen using projections that showed them as having the highest level of need for language assistance in 2010. In Census 2000, the fifth language was Tagalog, not Russian. The translated questionnaires will be sent to respondents who call a toll-free number to request them. This is a change from the Census 2000 practice where respondents were able to mail back a “coupon” from the census advance letter to ask that a translated questionnaire be mailed to them. This change has been made because the 2000 methodology resulted in many late and duplicate returns.

8. Another key component of the language program is language guides, which are user-friendly visual aides that assist respondents in completing the census questionnaire. There will be language guides in at least 50 languages in 2010. All language guides will be available on the Internet and through the Partnership Program. Language guides for the more prevalent languages will also be available through telephone request.

9. Finally, telephone assistance will be available in the 5 primary non-English languages. Language-specific toll-free numbers will be printed on questionnaires and language guides so that respondents can call to request help in completing their census questionnaire. During certain time periods, respondents will also be able to provide their responses over the telephone to an operator who speaks one of these 5 languages.

### **III. REACHING HARD TO COUNT POPULATIONS THROUGH AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**

10. The success of Census 2000 has been partly attributed to the use of an expanded outreach campaign, including the use of paid media. The Census 2000 mail response rate was 64.3%, significantly higher than had been projected. The mail response rate represents the percent of all addresses eligible for Nonresponse Followup that mailed back a questionnaire. In the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau plans to build on the successes of the 2000 outreach campaign with key improvements and updated strategies. Reaching and motivating the hard to count is a major part of this strategy.

11. One improvement for the 2010 Census is that the outreach and partnership campaigns have been combined to comprise the “Integrated Communications Program.” In Census 2000, the partnership effort was planned and conducted separately from the paid outreach campaign. In the 2010 Census, all outreach efforts are planned jointly, with coordinated messages for all campaign segments. Another key improvement is that the 2010 Integrated Communications Program will use updated outreach strategies that take into account changes in the media landscape and technology in the past ten years, such as increased use of the Internet and social networking sites.

12. Major components of the 2010 Integrated Communications Program include advertising and public relations, and national and local partnerships.

**A. Advertising and public relations**

13. In September 2007, the Census Bureau signed a contract with a communications company to provide support for the 2010 Census Integrated Communications Program. The communications contract has three goals:

- a) Increase the number of households that complete and mail back a census form,
- b) Decrease the differential undercount, and
- c) Increase cooperation with door-to-door Census-takers.

14. Achieving these goals will require development of effective messages and outreach for hard to count populations, and will include media directed toward these audiences, including in-language print, TV, and radio. The communications contractor has teamed with a group of companies that specialize in outreach to minority audiences. These subcontractors will use their specialized expertise and knowledge of their target audiences to tailor the messages and activities. Many migrant and seasonal farm workers are Hispanic, and the subcontractor that specializes in the Hispanic market will develop messages and media designed to reach this population.

15. An important feature of the Integrated Communications Program is the market segmentation plan that identifies areas and groups in the population. This segmentation plan will guide the placement of paid media versus partnership activities, and to some degree the content of messages. This segmentation plan should produce superior results to the segmentation plan used in Census 2000, because of sources of data have been improved for the 2010 Census.

**B. Partnership**

16. The Partnership Program is the component of the Integrated Communications Program that focuses most clearly on the hard to count population. The enumeration of the migrant and seasonal farm worker population is dependent on partnership, because the Bureau relies heavily on local advocacy groups and members of the community to help find and communicate with these populations.

17. The 2010 Census Partnership Program employs Census Bureau field staff to work with state, local and tribal governments; community-based organizations; faith-based groups, schools; businesses; the media; and others to mobilize community support for the census. It is recognized that a successful head count requires the local knowledge, experience, and expertise that local organizations provide.

18. While some national and local partnership activities began earlier in the decade, the 2010 Census Partnership Program began in earnest in 2008. In January 2008, the first wave of local partnership staff was hired, who immediately began to re-establish relationships with partners from the prior census, and to enter into new partnership arrangements. Additional local partnership specialists will be hired in 2009 to achieve peak staffing of about 680 partnership

staff from roughly January 2009 to June 2010. During the second phase of the Partnership Program, staff will work with local partners to encourage response. Additionally, more informal efforts are implemented to kick off the national Partnership Program began earlier in the decade. Official kickoff meetings with important national advocacy groups are planned in the summer and fall of 2008.

19. It is planned to work with communications contractor to produce partnership materials designed to publicize the census, and to educate and motivate respondents. Materials likely to produce include posters, fact sheets, videos, articles for newsletters, press releases, sample forms, graphics and promotional items. Additionally, some partners develop their own educational and information materials for distribution to their constituents. All of these materials will be developed in a variety of languages.

20. Census Bureau partnership staff will participate in or organize a variety of partner activities, designed to publicize the census, including events, community meetings, parades, fairs, etc. Partnership specialists encourage local jurisdictions to form complete count committees. A complete count committee is a team of community members appointed by the highest elected local official of that jurisdiction to publicize the census and encourage response. Additionally, local partnership staff ask partners to donate space that can be used to set up staffed Questionnaire Assistance Centers, where respondents can come to get assistance with filling out their questionnaires.

21. A variety of strategies has been developed to communicate with the migrant and farm worker population. These strategies all rely on using local partners, including the following:

- a) Community-based organizations that provide services to immigrants and migrant seasonal farm workers,
- b) Churches or other places of worship that provide in-language and other social services,
- c) Ethnic/minority print and electronic media outlets that can carry census messages, and
- d) Medical and health centers, businesses and restaurants that can display and/or distribute census materials.

22. Working with these partners and local community leaders, the Bureau will seek to identify areas with high concentrations of migrant and farm workers, and to identify strategically-located sites for Questionnaire Assistance Centers and Be Counted forms. Finally, work will be conducted with these partners to promote census jobs in areas with high concentrations of migrant and farm workers.

23. This last point, promoting census jobs, is particularly important, as it has been found that local hiring is key to enumerating areas with large hard to count populations. Local hiring enables the Census Bureau to hire individuals who are more likely to be attuned culturally and linguistically to the local population. Local partners are often able to assist with recruitment in their neighbourhoods.

#### **IV. REACHING HARD TO COUNT POPULATIONS THROUGH SPECIALIZED OPERATIONS**

24. In addition, the Census Bureau will use specialized operations to enumerate the hard to count population in 2010.

##### **A. Census address list**

25. An accurate census address list (the Master Address File or MAF) is the foundation of a successful census. An operation called Address Canvassing is conducted the year before the census to ensure that the MAF is both complete and up-to-date. In Address Canvassing it is made sure that all living quarters are included on the address list. Having an accurate MAF ensures that questionnaires are properly delivered, minimizes costly follow-up efforts at vacant or nonexistent residences, and increases the probability that people are counted at their usual place of residence. The effort to enumerate the migrant and seasonal farm worker population is especially dependent on MAF accuracy, as housing may be off-farm, crowded, or comprised of multiple households.

26. One of the changes for the 2010 Census is that the Address Canvassing operation will use a Hand Held Computer (HHC) to collect either a GPS coordinate or a manual “map spot” for each structure, and obtain address information for all living quarters. During Address Canvassing, field staff will use the HHC to add, correct, and delete addresses from the existing MAF, based upon what they find in the field.

27. During Address Canvassing, field staff will also identify “other living quarters,” or OLQs. Examples of OLQs are workers’ dormitories, campgrounds, marinas, prisons, jails, hotels/motels, recreational vehicle parks, college residence halls, nursing homes, and shelters for people experiencing homelessness. During the Group Quarters Validation operation, field staff will visit each identified OLQ and conduct an interview to validate whether the address is group quarters (GQ), a housing unit (HU), not a housing unit (such as a commercial establishment) or a transient location (such as a hotel or campground). If the address is determined to be group quarters (places such as workers group living quarters that include migratory farm worker camps), additional questions will be asked to determine the name of the facility, the maximum number of workers who can stay at the address, and months of the year that the workers live or stay there. For GQs with migrant and seasonal farm workers in the 2010 Census, the focus will be on the identification of “Workers Group Living Quarters and Job Corps Centers,” a revision to the Census 2000 GQ definitions. This definition now includes facilities such as dormitories, bunkhouses, and similar types of group living arrangements for agricultural and non-agricultural workers.

28. In 2010 Census Address Canvassing operation, the Census Bureau will repeat its Census 2000 practice of including additional listing instructions focusing on the identification of housing used by migrant and seasonal farmworkers. For example, it is planned to create graphic displays of various types of living quarters to be included in the training materials to help Census field staff with the identification of these areas.

**B. Research about including migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the Census**

29. This decade the Census Bureau has conducted a variety of research to improve its strategies to reach migrant and seasonal farm workers. Through research and meetings with service providers, the Census Bureau is seeking to better understand the challenges these populations face, and to develop more effective ways to communicate with them.

30. In Census 2000, the Census Bureau used data from the National Agricultural Survey to identify counties that were expected to have high concentrations of migrant and seasonal farm workers at the time of the census. The identification of these areas enabled to focus outreach efforts to the migrant and seasonal farm workers in these counties. This targeted listing effort was considered successful and will be used again. The Census Bureau commissioned and recently received a report from a prominent researcher in this area, identifying where farm workers are expected to be concentrated in the 2010 Census. The report focuses on crop workers, who are often employed seasonally, tend to live in low-visibility housing with crowded multiple family arrangement, and who tend to migrate. All of these factors make crop workers hard to count.

31. In addition, it is planned to collect data on the characteristics of housing conditions of migrant and seasonal farm workers, and for major farm worker counties, including observations and ethnographic data on within-county distributions of farm workers and housing conditions. This information will be used to enhance the training for 2010 Census operations, such as the Address Canvassing. The training will focus on how to facilitate access to difficult areas, and to gain cooperation with the census.

32. Earlier in the decade the Census Bureau conducted focus groups with organizations that serve migrant and seasonal farm workers. The purpose of the focus groups was to collect information that would help develop new outreach strategies to reach rural populations. Valuable information was gained in these focus groups about how to reach and motivate residents of rural areas, best practices to develop and disseminate promotional materials, how to strengthen outreach to migrant populations, and how to best communicate the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality.

**C. Diverse workforce**

33. The Census Bureau expects to hire over 500,000 temporary employees to help take the 2010 Census. Experience has shown that hiring a diverse and skilled workforce is a vital component of enumerating the hard to count population. Every effort is made to ensure that both enumerators look and sound like those they are enumerating. This type of diversity is crucial to gaining the public trust and cooperation that is essential to conduct a successful census. The Census Bureau has always relied on local hiring to ensure people work in the area where they live, and thus are members of the community themselves, and this strategy will be used in 2010 again.

**D. Be counted program**

34. The Be Counted Program is designed to make it easier for the hard to count population to participate in the census. The goals of the Be Counted program are to: count persons who did not receive a census questionnaire, count persons who believe they were not included on any other census form; encourage participation of persons who are traditionally undercounted in the census; and provide a means for people with no usual residence to be counted in the census. The vast majority of Be Counted forms are distributed in areas that are known to have high concentrations of hard to count or linguistically isolated populations.

35. In Census 2000, over 560,000 people were added to the census through the Be Counted Program. While the number is not large in comparison to the U.S. total, it contains higher percentages of traditionally undercounted groups than were observed in the census overall, including children, and minority groups. Approximately 41% of all Be Counted forms that were picked up by respondents were in languages other than English.

**E. Service-based enumeration operation**

36. The Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) is a specialized operation conducted at service locations to provide an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to be included in the census. These service locations include: shelters for people experiencing homelessness, soup kitchens, regularly scheduled mobile food vans, and targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations. Again, for the 2010 Census, it is planned to provide an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to be included in the census during the Service-Based Enumeration operation. The first step will occur in the fall of 2009 when officials in local governmental units and representatives from advocacy organizations will be asked to identify these service locations. On Census Day enumerators will visit these locations and count people there.

**F. Enumeration of transitory locations**

37. A new census operation is being introduced for the 2010 Census, the Enumeration of Transitory Locations (ETL) operation. This operation may also affect the enumeration of the hard to count, including migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The ETL operation involves sending census workers to transitory locations such as hotel/motels, marinas, and campgrounds.

**G. Tailored local enumeration efforts**

38. In Census 2000 the Census Bureau employed tailored local enumeration efforts in areas with larger hard to count populations. One example is the effort in the *Colonias*.

39. The *Colonias* are areas in Texas, along the U.S. Mexico border that contain makeshift housing and unstable living arrangements. The population of the *Colonias* has historically been one of the most difficult populations to count in the Census. For this reason the *Colonias* were enumerated in 2000 using the Update/Enumerate methodology, rather than the standard Mailout/Mailback procedure. In 2000 a new strategy was also adopted, employing “*promotoras*,” individuals who worked as street level cultural facilitators. These paid, short-



term employees accompanied census enumerators and assisted them in gaining access to the community and encouraging participation.

40. For the 2010 Census, tailored local enumeration efforts will again be employed for areas with particularly large concentrations of hard to count populations. It is hoped that *promotoras* will again be employed in the 2010 Census, as experience tells that their assistance was helpful to help allay the fears and mistrust associated with census participation.

## V. CONCLUSION

41. The Census Bureau is planning to use a variety of strategies to count the hard to count population in the 2010 Census, including a Language Program, an Integrated Communications Program, and specialized operations. These strategies should help promote the accuracy of the count for migrant and seasonal farm workers.

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