



Report In Brief

U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General



Why We Did This Review

We examined the Census Bureau's progress in planning and managing the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) program for the 2008 dress rehearsal and 2010 decennial census. FDCA is an \$800 million effort to automate field data collection and provide services such as logistics, training, and help desk support for 12 regional centers, more than 450 local census offices, and up to 500,000 field staff. The key technology component of this effort is a mobile computing device equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) capabilities, which field staff will use to accurately locate housing units, update address lists and maps, and collect questionnaire data.

Background

Census expects to reduce overall 2010 census costs as much as \$900 million by automating. Census had originally intended to develop FDCA internally with contractor support.

However, in early 2004, the bureau determined that it did not have the management or technical resources to develop field data collection systems for the dress rehearsal and 2010 census while simultaneously supporting its 2004 and 2006 site tests.

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

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.