



PREPARED STATEMENT OF
CHARLES LOUIS KINCANNON
DIRECTOR, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The 2010 Census

Before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security
U.S. Senate

17 July 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the progress of the 2010 reengineered decennial census. Census Day is now less than three years away. As we look forward, we should note that the success of the short-form census in 2010 also depends on the success of all the components of the reengineered decennial census program. This program includes:

1. *The American Community Survey*: the replacement for the decennial census long form.
2. *The MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program*: the comprehensive modernization of the census address list, known as the Master Address File (MAF), and the digital mapping system, the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Reference System—better known as TIGER.
3. *The 2010 Short-Form Census*: a wide-ranging planning and testing program, which encompasses not only technological, but questionnaire, content, and language testing, to improve the accuracy and coverage of the short-form 2010 Census.

Each of these components is integral to the 2010 decennial census program. Their goals are complementary and the success of each component supports the overall success and accuracy of the 2010 Census—which is our most important goal as we proceed to Census Day.

The decennial census is the U.S. Census Bureau's highest priority as well as a constitutional responsibility, as outlined in Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution, permitting the fair distribution of representation as well as resources. The Census Bureau's overall request for discretionary funding in FY 2008 totals \$1.2 billion. The request for \$797 million for the decennial census, including all of the components, accounts for nearly two-thirds of the budget. The overall cost of the decennial census (its lifecycle costs) is \$11.5 billion.

It is important to note this figure also includes the cost of the American Community Survey, which delivers yearly, accurate information for every local community in the country, and the MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program, which updates a national resource and helps ensure the accuracy of the short-form census. Moreover, this figure represents a savings to the American taxpayer. If the Census Bureau were forced to replicate the design of the traditional census, the overall cost of the census would be \$1.4 billion more than the current decennial program, which includes the American Community Survey.

To examine the progress we have made, it may be useful to briefly describe the status of each component of the 2010 reengineered decennial census program. The President's funding request for FY 2008 maintains and supports the progress achieved thus far through the reengineered 2010 Decennial Census Program, including the American Community Survey, the MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program, and the short-form only decennial census.

The success of the 2010 Decennial Census Program depends upon the American Community Survey, the nation's largest household survey collected with an overall sample of approximately three million households per year or 250,000 households per month, including group quarters. The Census Bureau's budget request for FY 2008 includes \$187 million to conduct the American Community Survey, which replaces the traditional decennial long-form data collection and will provide annual detailed socio-economic information for every state, tribal government, county, city, and neighborhood throughout the United States. In 2005, we began full implementation for the survey; and in 2006, we incorporated group quarters, such as nursing homes, college dormitories, and jails, into the survey—fulfilling our commitment to replace the long form in 2010. The third annual release of data for areas of populations of 65,000 or more is next month. In 2008, we will release the first information for areas with populations of 20,000 or more.

Just as the American Community Survey is implemented and underway, so are the important structural improvements and enhancements to the nation's road map, which are the primary goals of the MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program. The MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program is a multi-year effort to collect and correct the locations of streets and other geographic information. Key objectives of the program include realigning the TIGER map in order to take advantage of GPS capabilities, modernizing the processing system, and expanding geographic partnerships. To fulfill these objectives, we are partnering with the private and public sectors. We are working with the Harris Corporation to realign the street-centerlines for every one of the 3,232 counties in the U.S. This initiative is on schedule and on budget. By the end of FY 2007, we will have completed 2,865 counties. The Census Bureau's budget request for FY 2008 includes \$59 million to complete the final 367 counties in time to conduct Address Canvassing Operations, the first major field activity of the decennial census.

During this operation census listers will canvass census blocks and conduct brief interviews to verify or update address information against the address information on the Census Bureau's address lists and maps, including the information provided by tribal, state, and local governments as part of Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. LUCA is also an important effort in helping to ensure the accuracy of the census address list. The LUCA program provides every tribal, state, and local government the opportunity to review the Census Bureau's address list and to submit either corrections or additions. The LUCA program for the 2010 Census includes several improvements, including a longer review period and three participation options. In January, we sent advance notification letters to approximately 39,000 governments in anticipation of sending the invitation letters later this summer. The advance notification letters described the LUCA program, as well as the options for participation. Beginning in March and concluding in June, we conducted nearly 1,000 pre-invitation promotional workshops to encourage participation by tribal, state, and local governments. Approximately 10,000 governments took part in these workshops. In August, we will mail the official invitations. Governments will be allowed, starting this fall, 120 days to review and update the Census Bureau's address materials.

The accuracy of the census address list and the map are vital because the census must fulfill two principal requirements: to count every person living in America, once and only once, and to count every person at the correct address. Therefore, the accuracy and the ultimate success of the census—our constitutional obligation—depend upon the accuracy of the MAF and TIGER systems.

Our plans for FY 2008 demonstrate our commitment to achieving this constitutional responsibility, and we are requesting \$551 million to sustain the testing, planning, and early implementation activities associated with the short-form census, including the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. As with any stage production, the Dress Rehearsal brings together the components of the production in one final rehearsal before the curtain goes up. Throughout the decade, we have tested various components—including the use of handheld computers for non-response follow-up, and the English-Spanish bilingual questionnaire we intend to use in neighborhoods with higher proportions of people who need assistance provided in Spanish. In 2004 and 2006, we conducted field tests in both rural and urban communities, and national census tests in 2003 and 2005. These mail-out and mail-back tests were designed to assess questionnaire design, including response options and the race and Hispanic origin questions.

We believe these efforts will help us improve the accuracy of the responses and, thereby, census coverage. We will take these experiences and the research conducted thus far into the field with the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. The sites for the Dress Rehearsal are in San Joaquin County, California, and Fayetteville and surrounding counties in eastern North Carolina, near Fort Bragg. In April, we opened Local Census Offices (LCO) in both locations and started hiring approximately 1300 people in preparation for address canvassing, which began in May.

The Dress Rehearsal is our last opportunity before the census to ensure planned procedures and operations will function as designed once they are integrated. While it is still too early to evaluate the Dress Rehearsal, we completed the address canvassing operation on June 26th and can report its success, as well as some challenges with the software. For instance, we noted software performance issues in processing information for large census blocks. There were also issues concerning technical support, and the contractor, the Harris Corporation, is reevaluating its help desk strategy. It is important to note that these concerns are being addressed and corrected and do not pose serious challenges to the use of the handheld computers for the 2010 Census. We are, in general, pleased with the performance of the handheld computers, whose overall durability and usability were affirmed during the addressing canvassing operation. In fact, out of 1,388 handheld computers, only five had problems out of the box. Based on the Dress Rehearsal experience, as well as our ongoing planning efforts, we are confident that we can and will effectively implement the use of handheld computers for the 2010 Census. The handheld computers, as well as other innovations, have created new opportunities to improve the accuracy and coverage of the census.

The American Community Survey is one of the most important innovations. It is revolutionizing the federal statistical system and improving our nation's data infrastructure by filling the 10-year census data gap and providing yearly data to local communities. The enhancement and modernization of the census address list and the map, using GPS technologies, will also result in improved census accuracy and coverage. Finally, we will implement the planned improvements we have tested throughout this decade to the short-form only census—ranging from improved questionnaire content to a replacement second mailing, which could increase the census response rates as much as seven to ten percent, to the handheld computers which will dramatically increase the efficiency of our field operations.

The Census Bureau believes these planned and tested improvements are vitally important to the accuracy of the 2010 census. Every community from New Castle, Delaware, to Newcastle, Oklahoma, will have a stake in our success, and we are committed to giving taxpayers a good return on their investment.

Mr. Chairman, I hope you support this investment and I would be happy to answer any questions.