

United States  
**Census**  
**2000**

## **A. Introduction**

Federal Agency Abbreviations

Federal Users of Census Data

Index to Questions Planned for  
Census 2000

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Many Americans understand that the number of Representatives from each state to the United States House of Representatives is based on the population in each state and that the census was begun to ensure an accurate apportionment of House seats among the states. Many also are aware that census data are widely used for the Constitutional purpose of redistricting and for redrawing Congressional districts within each state. Why, then, does the census ask some people questions about their homes, jobs, schooling, and even how they get to work? The short answer is that the principle of accuracy, which was the basis for establishing the census in 1790, still holds true today. The decennial census is the only data-gathering effort that collects the same information from enough people to get comparable data for every geographic area in the Nation. Just as the Founding Fathers sought an accurate way of distributing the House seats, so too have modern legislators turned to the decennial census as the primary basis for an accurate distribution of fiscal resources under a wide range of Federal, state, local, and tribal government programs. More than \$100 billion in Federal funds alone are allocated annually based on census data.

### **History of Questions Not Needed for Apportionment or Redistricting**

The earliest censuses were simple tallies of individuals in each household. By the early 1800's, policymakers in the Congress and elsewhere, as well as statisticians and other scholars, urged that information be gathered about additional subjects while the population was being enumerated. Inquiries about manufacturing were added in 1810, more detail about the population was included in the 1820 census, and by 1850, questions on school attendance, illiteracy, and occupation were added. Since that time, population and housing subjects have been added and deleted to reflect changes in society and, by extension, the changing needs for information. For example, conditions during the Depression years motivated the Census Bureau to ask about unemployment, migration, and income; and the Congress mandated that a Census of Housing be conducted beginning in 1940. More recently, concerns about traffic congestion inspired questions about how Americans get to work, what time they leave for work, and the use of carpools.

Concerned about burdening respondents with too many questions, the Census Bureau introduced modern sampling techniques in the 1940 census, and the "long form" was born. The selection of a sample of households, based on established scientific methods, means that not everyone is asked every question - five out of six households will get a "short form" containing only the most basic demographic questions needed for apportionment and to ensure an accurate census total. Thus, the need for more information is achieved without significantly increasing the burden on respondents or census costs.

## **Changing Needs for Data**

The Census Bureau constantly monitors and evaluates changing needs to be sure that necessary data are collected and that unnecessary questions are dropped. For Census 2000, we plan to reduce the number of subjects asked of every household by five.

## **Keeping Costs Down**

The long form is a sound investment - for a relatively small additional cost, information of high quality about a variety of subjects is collected for small geographic areas. The return on this investment is concrete information that serves as the basis for sound policy decisions and that supports the accurate allocation of billions of dollars.

On the surface, it seems apparent that asking more questions should cost more. But the majority of costs associated with a decennial census are related to the basic enumeration: compiling an address list, getting a census form to every household, and following up at those households that do not respond. Concerns about rising costs led the Congress to direct the National Academy of Sciences to do a thorough study of the country's decennial census activities. The Academy's Panel on Census Requirements in the Year 2000 and Beyond estimated the cost of the long form to be 11 to 19 percent of the total 1990 census cost. They concluded that "the long form...represents a marginal addition to total census costs."<sup>1</sup>

## **Keeping Response Rates Up**

The Panel on Census Requirements in the Year 2000 and Beyond also looked at the question of whether the long form discourages participation in the census. They found that the difference in mail return rates between the long and short forms was just 1.5 percentage points in 1980. By 1990, the overall mail return rate had dropped and the difference between the two forms had grown to 4.5 percentage points. The panel noted that "Since only one-sixth of all households received the long form, however, the difference in return rates reduced the overall mail return rate by less than 1 percentage point."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Panel on Census Requirements in the Year 2000 and Beyond, National Academy of Sciences, Modernizing the U.S. Census, National Academy Press, 1995, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

## Contents of This Report

Beginning in December 1992, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in conjunction with the Census Bureau, asked Federal agencies to provide information describing their data needs. The initial review was completed in the Summer of 1994, and further submissions were reviewed as received. Although agencies were requested to notify the OMB or the Census Bureau of subsequent changes to Federal legislative requirements, some recent revisions may not be included here. This report focuses on Federal uses of census data. However, non-Federal uses are extensive and need to be considered in making decisions about census content.

For each subject in the census, this report describes some of the ways Federal programs use census data. The data needs were classified according to a narrow legalistic typology. Subjects for which there were Federal laws that explicitly stated that decennial census data were needed were classified as “M” for “mandatory.” Those for which there were Federal laws that explicitly required data (although not specifically decennial census data), and decennial census data are the only or historical source, were classified as “R” for “required.” A subject also was classified as “required” if case law requirements for data on this subject had been imposed by the U.S. Federal Court System. Items which are used for Federal program planning, implementation, evaluation, or to provide legal evidence, whose underlying laws do not explicitly require the use of data, were classified as “P” for “programmatically.”

This report includes an introduction, two appendices, and the subjects planned for Census 2000 (shown with facsimiles of the questions). A general list of the actual uses of census data based on information obtained about the subjects asked in the 1990 census is shown in the appendices. An informational copy of the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal questionnaire also is included.

Census 2000 subjects were presented to the Congress on March 31, 1997. The Census Bureau recommended that all of the 1990 subjects identified as either mandatory or required be included in Census 2000. The specific question wording will be presented to the Congress by April 1, 1998. For more information about the content of Census 2000, please contact Louisa F. Miller by telephone (301-457-2073) or by E-mail (lmiller@census.gov).

### Federal Agency Abbreviations

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMERCE / DOC            | Department of Commerce                      |
| CCR                       | Commission on Civil Rights                  |
| DOD                       | Department of Defense                       |
| DOT                       | Department of Transportation                |
| EDUCATION / DOEd          | Department of Education                     |
| EEOC                      | Equal Employment Opportunity Commission     |
| ENERGY / DOE              | Department of Energy                        |
| EPA                       | Environmental Protection Agency             |
| FCC                       | Federal Communications Commission           |
| FEDERAL RESERVE / Fed Res | Federal Reserve Board                       |
| HHS                       | Department of Health and Human Services     |
| HUD                       | Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| INTERIOR                  | Department of the Interior                  |
| JUSTICE / DOJ             | Department of Justice                       |
| LABOR / DOL               | Department of Labor                         |
| NEA                       | National Endowment for the Arts             |
| NSF                       | National Science Foundation                 |
| SSA                       | Social Security Administration              |
| USDA                      | Department of Agriculture                   |
| VA                        | Department of Veterans Affairs              |

## Federal Users of Census Data

| <b>Subject</b>  | <b>Federal Users <sup>1</sup></b>                              |
|---|--|
| <i>Population:</i>                                      |  |
| Age .....   | DOC, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, EPA, HHS, HUD, VA                   |
| Ancestry .....  | DOJ, DOL, EEOC, HHS  |
| Disability .....  | DOEd, DOJ, DOL, DOT, EPA, HHS, HUD, NSF, SSA                   |
| Education   |  |
| (Enrollment/Attainment) .....                           | DOC, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, HHS, HUD, NSF                             |
| Gender .....  | CCR, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, EPA, HHS, VA                        |
| Grandparents as Caregivers .....                        | New in Census 2000   |
| Hispanic Origin .....                                   | DOC, DOEd, DOJ, EEOC, EPA, Fed Res, HHS                        |
| Income .....  | DOC, DOE, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, EPA, Fed Res, HHS,<br>HUD, NSF, USDA |
| Industry, Occupation, and                               |  |
| Class of Worker .....                                   | DOC, DOD, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, EPA, Fed Res, HHS, HUD, NEA, NSF     |
| Labor Force Status .....                                | DOC, DOJ, DOL, EPA, HHS, HUD, NSF                              |
| Language Spoken at Home .....                           | DOC, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, EPA, HHS, HUD                       |
| Marital Status .....                                    | DOL, HHS, HUD, NSF   |
| Place of Birth, Citizenship,<br>and Year of Entry ..... | DOC, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, HHS, NSF                                  |
| Place of Work and                                       |  |
| Journey to Work .....                                   | DOC, DOJ, DOL, DOT, EEOC, EPA, Fed Res, HHS                    |
| Race .....  | DOC, DOEd, DOJ, DOL, EEOC, Fed Res, HHS, HUD, USDA, VA         |
| Relationship .....                                      | DOC, DOEd, DOL, HHS, HUD, SSA                                  |
| Residence 5 Years Ago (Migration) .                     | DOL, HHS, HUD, NSF, VA   |
| Veteran Status .....                                    | DOL, HHS, VA   |
| Work Status Last Year .....                             | DOJ, DOL, HHS, NSF   |
| <i>Housing:</i>   |  |
| Bedrooms .....  | DOE, HHS, HUD  |
| Farm Residence .....                                    | DOC, USDA  |
| House Heating Fuel .....                                | DOE, EPA, HHS  |
| Kitchen Facilities .....                                | HHS, HUD   |
| Plumbing Facilities .....                               | DOE, EPA, HHS, HUD, USDA                                       |
| Rent .....  | DOC, DOE, Fed Res, HHS, HUD, USDA                              |
| Rooms .....   | DOE, HHS, HUD, USDA  |
| Selected Monthly Owner Costs .....                      | DOE, DOJ, HHS, HUD, USDA                                       |
| Telephone Service Available .....                       | DOJ, DOL, FCC, HHS, HUD, USDA                                  |
| Tenure (Owner/Renter) .....                             | DOC, DOT, Fed Res, HHS, HUD, USDA                              |
| Units in Structure .....                                | DOC, DOE, DOJ, Fed Res, HHS, HUD                               |
| Value .....   | DOC, DOJ, DOT, EPA, Fed Res, HHS, HUD, USDA                    |
| Vehicles Available .....                                | DOE, DOJ, DOT, HHS   |
| Year Moved Into Unit .....                              | DOJ, HHS, HUD  |
| Year Structure Built .....                              | DOE, DOJ, Fed Res, HHS, HUD                                    |

---

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Bureau of the Census.

## Index to Questions Planned for Census 2000

[Based on Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>]

| <b>Population:</b>                                       | <b>Question<br/>Number(s):</b> | <b>Appears on<br/>Page:</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Age .....  | 4 .....                        | 2                           |
| Age (screener) .....                                     | 18 .....                       | --                          |
| Ancestry .....   | 10 .....                       | 46                          |
| Disability .....   | 16, 17 .....                   | 58                          |
| Education: Enrollment and Attainment .....               | 8, 9 .....                     | 40                          |
| Gender .....   | 3 .....                        | 4                           |
| Grandparents as Caregivers .....                         | 19 .....                       | 60                          |
| Hispanic Origin .....                                    | 5 .....                        | 12                          |
| Income .....   | 31, 32 .....                   | 16                          |
| Industry, Occupation, and Class of Worker ...            | 26 - 29 .....                  | 22                          |
| Labor Force Status .....                                 | 21, 25 .....                   | 20                          |
| Language Spoken at Home .....                            | 11 .....                       | 50                          |
| Marital Status .....                                     | 7 .....                        | 8                           |
| Name .....   | 1 .....                        | --                          |
| Place of Birth, Citizenship,<br>and Year of Entry .....  | 12 - 14 .....                  | 48                          |
| Place of Work and Journey to Work .....                  | 22 - 24 .....                  | 32                          |
| Race .....   | 6 .....                        | 10                          |
| Relationship [ <i>asked only of Persons 2-5</i> ] .....  | 2 .....                        | 6                           |
| Residence 5 Years Ago (Migration) .....                  | 15 .....                       | 54                          |
| Telephone Number [ <i>asked only of Person 1</i> ] ..... | 2 .....                        | --                          |
| Veteran Status .....                                     | 20 .....                       | 28                          |
| Work Status Last Year .....                              | 30 .....                       | 26                          |
| <b>Housing:</b>  |                                |                             |
| Bedrooms .....   | 38 .....                       | 68                          |
| Farm Residence .....                                     | 44b, 44c .....                 | 80                          |
| House Heating Fuel .....                                 | 42 .....                       | 76                          |
| Kitchen Facilities .....                                 | 40 .....                       | 70                          |
| Plumbing Facilities .....                                | 39 .....                       | 72                          |
| Rent .....   | 46 .....                       | 92                          |
| Rooms .....  | 37 .....                       | 66                          |
| Selected Monthly Owner Costs<br>(Shelter Costs):         |                                |                             |
| Utilities and Fuels .....                                | 45 .....                       | 88                          |
| Mortgage Costs .....                                     | 47, 48 .....                   | 88                          |
| Taxes .....  | 49 .....                       | 88                          |
| Insurance .....  | 50 .....                       | 88                          |
| Condominium Fee .....                                    | 52 .....                       | 88                          |
| Mobile Home Costs .....                                  | 53 .....                       | 88                          |
| Telephone Service Available .....                        | 41 .....                       | 74                          |
| Tenure (Owner/Renter) .....                              | 33 .....                       | 84                          |
| Units in Structure .....                                 | 34 .....                       | 64                          |
| Value .....  | 44a, 44b, 51 .....             | 86                          |
| Vehicles Available .....                                 | 43 .....                       | 36                          |
| Year Moved into Unit .....                               | 36 .....                       | 78                          |
| Year Structure Built .....                               | 35 .....                       | 62                          |

---

<sup>1</sup> An informational copy of the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal questionnaire is included in the back inside pocket of this document.