



Highlights of [GAO-06-277](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

For the 2010 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) is making the most extensive use of contractors in its history to supply a number of mission-critical functions and technologies. Because of the critical role that contractors will play in the 2010 Census, GAO reviewed the Bureau's acquisition planning process. Specifically GAO's objectives were to (1) determine the status of the Bureau's major decennial contracts, and (2) evaluate the extent to which the Bureau is using selected leading practices to manage its acquisition planning for these contracts.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending to the Secretary of Commerce that the Bureau (1) ensure that key systems to be provided by contractors are fully functional and ready to be assessed as part of the dress rehearsal, (2) establish a schedule for the definition of interfaces between all decennial systems so that this information can be provided on a timely basis to development teams, and (3) devote further attention to planning strategically for its decennial acquisition workforce by, among other actions, identifying and assessing acquisition workforce skill gaps. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Secretary neither agreed nor disagreed with the recommendations but described steps the Bureau is taking that address the last recommendation.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-277](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-277).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-6806 or [farrellb@gao.gov](mailto:farrellb@gao.gov).

# 2010 CENSUS

## Census Bureau Generally Follows Selected Leading Acquisition Planning Practices, but Continued Management Attention Is Needed to Help Ensure Success

### What GAO Found

The Bureau has awarded three of its seven major decennial contracts consistent with their award date, but has changed the award dates of two of the remaining contracts (data dissemination and communications) because of changes in its acquisition approach. Bureau officials noted that the communications contract is currently on track. Still, changes in contract milestones—coupled with the Bureau's tight systems development schedule and interdependence of those systems—could affect the Bureau's ability to develop fully functional and sufficiently mature systems to be tested in concert with other operations during the 2008 Dress Rehearsal for the 2010 Census. Already, aspects of the Bureau's data dissemination system will not be assessed during the dress rehearsal because of changes to solicitation and contract award dates.

#### Status of Major Contracts Related to the 2010 Census

Contract	Purpose	Target award dates
Master Address File/ Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) Accuracy Improvement Project	Delivery of accurate, improved, and current information to MAF/TIGER system	June 2002 (actual)
Decennial Response Integration System	Data capture/processing and respondent assistance	October 2005 (actual)
Field Data Collection Automation	Providing automated resources and support for field data collection	March 2006 (actual)
Data Access and Dissemination System II	Providing a replacement for legacy tabulation and dissemination system	October 2006
2010 Communications	Development of an advertising and outreach campaign to promote the 2010 Census	Calendar year 2007
2010 Census printing contracts	Printing and distribution of census questionnaires and other documents	March 2007 - April 2009
Decennial Census Leasing	Leasing, build-out, and management of regional census centers and local census offices	April 2007 - June 2009 (sign leases for individual offices)

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

To date, the Bureau has generally followed five selected leading practices for federal acquisition planning that we evaluated. For example, the Bureau has monitored the acquisition planning process for individual contracts, involved relevant stakeholders in the planning phase, and implemented certain actions to its business processes resulting from its reliance on contractors. However, as part of its strategic planning, the Bureau does not have a schedule for documenting what and when information needs to be provided to development teams to integrate all decennial systems. Additionally, in planning for its decennial acquisition workforce—which includes staff who award or manage contracts—the Bureau has not fully implemented key strategic workforce planning principles. For example, while the Bureau took steps at the division level to plan for its acquisition workforce, it does not assess or monitor at a high level gaps in the skills needed by its decennial acquisition workforce. The Bureau also has not identified the needs of the decennial acquisition workforce in its human capital management plan and did not involve all relevant acquisition workforce stakeholders in the development of this plan.