



Highlights of [GAO-07-361](#), a report to congressional addresses

Why GAO Did This Study

The success of the 2010 Census depends, in part, upon the U.S. Census Bureau's (Bureau) ability to recruit, hire, and train over half a million temporary workers at peak. Under the Comptroller General's authority, GAO reviewed the extent that the Bureau's (1) recruiting and hiring processes for these staff are consistent with selected human capital principles and (2) training delivery and content take into account known challenges. To answer these questions, GAO analyzed relevant reports and past recommendations to select principles for evaluating these activities, reviewed related Bureau documents, observed the 2006 Census Test in South Dakota and Texas, and interviewed Bureau officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending to the Secretary of Commerce that the Bureau refine its recruiting and hiring efforts and enhance training for field staff in the 2010 Census. These recommendations include using collected information to better target recruiting and hiring, collecting performance data on workers, and evaluating alternate approaches to delivering training. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Deputy Secretary of Commerce identified actions the Bureau would take on some of the recommendations but questioned the need to act on others. These stated actions partially respond to our recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-361.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Mathew J. Scire at (202) 512-6806 or sciremj@gao.gov.

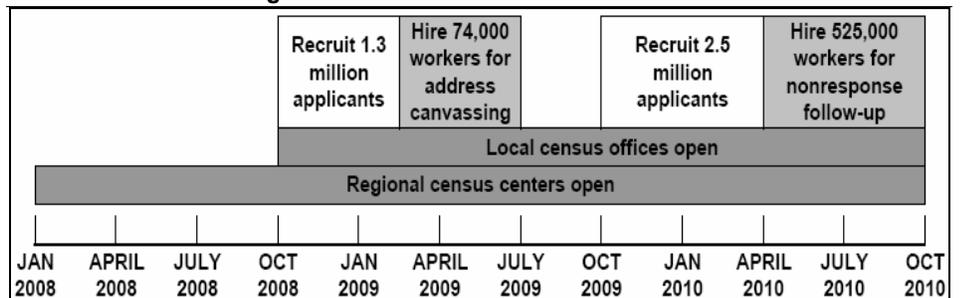
2010 CENSUS

Census Bureau Should Refine Recruiting and Hiring Efforts and Enhance Training of Temporary Field Staff

What GAO Found

For the 2010 Census, the Bureau plans to recruit 3.8 million applicants and hire nearly 600,000 temporary field staff from that applicant pool for two key operations: address canvassing, where staff verify the location of all housing units; and nonresponse follow-up, where they visit households that do not return census forms to collect data in person. Meeting these goals will be difficult because, since Census 2000, the Bureau is facing increased challenges, including the automation of its field data collection and long-standing demographic shifts, whereby the population is increasingly diverse and hard to locate. For the 2010 Census, the Bureau plans to use a recruiting and hiring approach like the one it used in 2000, which Bureau officials considered a success. That approach is designed to ensure a sufficient pool of qualified applicants from which to hire, but the Bureau could recruit and hire more efficiently.

2010 Census Recruiting Timeline



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

Opportunities exist for the Bureau to improve and refine recruiting and hiring processes for the 2010 Census. It could better target its recruiting and hiring by analyzing the characteristics, such as education and work status, of employees more likely to be successful at census work and less likely to leave. This would allow it to seek workers with the skills, interests, and likelihood for success. Also, the Bureau does not collect performance data needed to rehire former workers, to whom it may give hiring priority. Officials said they try to exclude those terminated for cause. Conduct problems, such as selling drugs or striking another worker or unsatisfactory performance, can result in such terminations.

The Bureau's training approach for temporary field staff, consisting primarily of verbatim lectures, is largely unchanged from previous decennials. The Bureau is providing some computer-based training on using the handheld computers in key operations. However, despite findings that we and others have made suggesting that the Bureau consider alternatives to its verbatim approach, it has not done so. Further, although the Bureau has found that its field staff face an increasingly reluctant population and other location-specific challenges, it has not substantially changed the content of training.