

May 2006

2010 CENSUS

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





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.

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.

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.

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Abbreviations

CMMI SM	Capability Maturity Model [®] Integration
DADS II	Data Access and Dissemination System II
DRIS	Decennial Response Integration System
FDCA	Field Data Collection Automation
GPO	Government Printing Office
GSA	General Services Administration
MAF/TIGER	Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing
MTAIP	MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project
RFP	request for proposal

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 18, 2006

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chairman
The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Davis
Chairman
The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Government Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael Turner
Chairman
The Honorable Wm. Lacy Clay
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census
Committee on Government Reform
House of Representatives

For the 2010 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) is making the most extensive use of contractors in its history, turning to the private sector to supply a number of different mission-critical functions and technologies. These functions range from data capture and processing services to the manufacture and support of hundreds of thousands of handheld mobile computing devices that temporary census workers will use to locate addresses and to collect and transmit data electronically. The Bureau estimates that of the \$11.3 billion it will cost to conduct the 2010 Census, around \$1.9 billion (nearly 17 percent) will be spent on its seven major decennial contracts. More importantly, the success of these contracts will largely determine whether the Bureau meets its goals to improve the accuracy, reduce the risk, and contain the cost of the 2010 Census.

Contractors can help address the challenges the Bureau faces as it plans for and implements the 2010 Census. Because of various social and demographic trends, the nation's population has become increasingly difficult to count. Due to this and other challenges, the Bureau recognized

that it is not equipped to perform the needed tasks using its own staff and capabilities and has been looking outside the agency to obtain the expertise and services essential for a complete and accurate enumeration.

That said, increased reliance on contractors also entails certain management challenges. The Bureau's experiences in the 2000 Census—the first time the Bureau relied on contractors to perform a large number of major decennial activities—highlight the importance of a rigorous acquisition planning process¹ to help mitigate those challenges and better ensure that contractors meet the Bureau's needs in an effective, economical, and timely manner. For example, the Department of Commerce (Commerce) Office of Inspector General raised questions regarding the Bureau's ability to acquire critical systems and services. Although these projects were ultimately successful in supporting the 2000 Census, the Inspector General concluded they were more costly than necessary.²

In March 2006, we testified on the Bureau's acquisition and management of two critical information technology systems that contractors are developing for the 2010 Census. The two contracts—Field Data Collection Automation and the Decennial Response Integration System—are two of the seven major decennial acquisitions for the 2010 Census. We noted that, while the project offices responsible for these two contracts have carried out initial acquisition management activities, neither office has the full set of capabilities they need to effectively manage the acquisitions. Until these basic management activities are implemented, both projects face increased risks of cost overruns, schedule delays, and performance shortfalls.³

¹The Federal Acquisition Regulation defines acquisition planning as “the process by which the efforts of all personnel responsible for an acquisition are coordinated and integrated through a comprehensive plan for fulfilling the agency need in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. It includes developing the overall strategy for managing the acquisition.” Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) § 2.101(b)(2).

²Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *Improving our Measure of America: What Census 2000 Can Teach Us in Planning for 2010*, OIG-14431 (Washington, D.C.: Spring 2002).

³GAO, *Census Bureau: Important Activities for Improving Management of Key 2010 Decennial Acquisitions Remain to be Done*, [GAO-06-444T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2006).

Because of the mission-critical role contractors will play in the 2010 Census, we reviewed the Bureau's acquisition planning process under the Comptroller General's statutory authority. As agreed with your office, we are providing this report to you because it contains information that will be useful for your oversight responsibilities for the decennial census. Specifically, our objectives were to (1) determine the status of the Bureau's major contracts related to the 2010 Census, and (2) evaluate the extent to which the Bureau is using selected leading practices to manage its acquisition planning process for the decennial census.

To address the first objective, we reviewed documents related to the seven major 2010 Census acquisitions (as defined by Bureau officials)—including acquisition plans, strategic planning documents, requests for proposals, finalized contracts, and budget requests to the Office of Management and Budget—and interviewed knowledgeable Bureau officials responsible for contracting and acquisition planning.

To evaluate the Bureau's use of leading acquisition planning practices, we first reviewed (1) our own guidance, reports, and testimonies on the acquisition function; and (2) external studies to identify leading acquisition planning practices used in the federal government. From these, we adapted five leading acquisition planning practices most relevant to the Bureau's acquisition planning efforts for its major decennial contracts. We then evaluated the extent to which the Bureau employed these leading practices for its seven major decennial contracts by interviewing officials, reviewing Bureau documents, and observing acquisition activities related to these contracts. Appendix I provides additional information on our scope and methodology. We conducted our work from July 2005 through March 2006 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

This report is the latest in a series of evaluations that we have issued on the Bureau's preparations for the 2010 Census. Most recently, this March, we testified on the progress of the Bureau's planning and testing activities and information technology systems.⁴ See the Related GAO Products section for a list of selected reports we have issued to date.

⁴GAO-06-444T and GAO, *2010 Census: Planning and Testing Activities Are Making Progress*, GAO-06-465T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2006).

Results in Brief

The Bureau has awarded three of its seven major decennial contracts consistent with their award dates and is preparing for the award of the remaining four. The three contracts that have been awarded represent about \$1.3 billion of the \$1.9 billion the Bureau expects to eventually award.

- In June 2002, the Bureau awarded the Harris Corporation a \$209 million contract to modernize its Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) system, which provides the address list, maps, and other geographic support services for the Census and other Bureau surveys. Known as the MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project (MTAIP), the contract is currently meeting milestones for project deliverables and remains on budget, according to Bureau documents we reviewed.
- In October 2005, the Bureau awarded the Lockheed Martin Corporation a contract for more than \$500 million to develop and operate the Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS), to capture and integrate paper, Internet, and telephone responses to the census, in addition to providing assistance to census respondents. Progress on DRIS is running 60 to 90 days behind schedule because of a bid protest that was later withdrawn. Bureau officials are working to revise the contract schedule and believe this schedule change will not be a significant setback.
- In March 2006, the Bureau awarded the Harris Corporation a contract for an estimated \$600 million to provide automated resources for supporting field data collection, including the provision of handheld mobile computing devices used by the enumerators. The Bureau had originally intended to award the contract, known as Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA), in late 2005, but pushed it back so that it could first conduct a short field test to evaluate prototypes developed by multiple offerors of the mobile computing devices that enumerators are to use in their fieldwork. The Bureau then successfully awarded the contract consistent with its revised award timeline.

Of the four contracts that have not yet been awarded, the Bureau has pushed back the target award dates of two contracts due to changes in its acquisition approach.

- The Bureau changed, twice, the award date and scope of a contract related to its Data Access and Dissemination System (DADS II). Most recently, the Bureau delayed the release of the request for proposal (RFP) by 6 months and expanded the contract scope to require contractors to acquire an

integrated system. Consequently, the Bureau is delaying the contract award by 2 months to October 2006.

- The Bureau originally planned to award the 2010 Communications contract to advertise and promote the census in October 2006, but has decided to award the contract at a later date because it still researching various approaches to the acquisition. Bureau officials noted that they plan to award this contract during the 2007 calendar year.

Bureau officials have stated that the 2010 Communications contract is currently on track to award the contract in 2007. Moreover, the Bureau expects to award the two remaining contracts—one for printing census forms and the other for leasing temporary field census offices—on time.

However, any change in acquisition milestones—coupled with the Bureau’s tight systems development schedule, and the interdependence of decennial systems—could affect its ability to develop fully functional and sufficiently mature systems that can be demonstrated in concert with other operations during the dress rehearsal for the 2010 Census scheduled for 2008. For example, aspects of the DADS II contract will not be assessed during the dress rehearsal as the Bureau originally intended because of the delayed solicitation release and contract award. The 2008 Dress Rehearsal will be the Bureau’s last opportunity to assess the various procedures and systems for the decennial census under as near-census-like conditions as possible. During the 1998 Dress Rehearsal for the 2000 Census, a number of new features were not test-ready, and the Bureau said it could not fully evaluate with any degree of assurance how they would affect the census.

In preparing for these seven contracts to date, the Bureau has generally adhered to the leading acquisition planning practices we evaluated.

1. **Planning strategically:** The Bureau has documented how major decennial contract operations and its integration will achieve 2010 Census objectives.
2. **Monitoring the acquisition planning process:** To date, the Bureau monitored the acquisition planning process for individual contracts.
3. **Involving stakeholders:** The Bureau has so far involved relevant stakeholders in the acquisition planning process.

-
4. **Addressing business process changes:** The Bureau has addressed changes to its business processes resulting from its increased reliance on contractors.
 5. **Planning for the acquisition workforce:** The Bureau is taking steps to strategically plan for its acquisition workforce, which includes census staff who award or manage contracts.

However, the Bureau has not completed necessary actions regarding certain activities within two of the practices. First, while the Bureau has taken steps to plan for the integration of its decennial systems, it does not have a schedule for documenting what and when information needs to be provided to development teams that will integrate all decennial systems. Successful systems integration will facilitate the Bureau's ability to achieve its goals for a successful enumeration during the 2010 Census.

Second, the Bureau does not assess or monitor, at an agencywide level, gaps in the skills needed by its decennial acquisition workforce. It also has not incorporated the needs of the decennial acquisition function in its agency human capital plan or in a plan specific to the acquisition workforce. Taking these actions could help the Bureau anticipate and address challenges that may be faced by the acquisition workforce stemming from demands brought on by the Bureau's greater reliance on contractors for conducting the 2010 Census.

We are making three recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce in this report. First, we recommend that the Secretary of Commerce ensure that the key systems to be developed or provided by contractors for the 2010 Census are fully functional and ready to be assessed in concert with other operations as part of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. To help ensure the successful integration of decennial systems, we are also recommending that the Secretary direct the Bureau to establish a schedule for the definition of interfaces between all decennial systems so that these data can be provided on a timely basis to development teams. Third, the Secretary should direct the Bureau to devote further attention to planning strategically for its decennial acquisition workforce by, among other actions, identifying and assessing acquisition workforce skill gaps, and involving appropriate acquisition-related stakeholders in identifying the needs of the acquisition workforce in its workforce plans.

The Secretary of Commerce provided written comments on a draft of this report (see app. II). While Commerce neither agreed nor disagreed with our recommendations it described actions the Bureau is taking that, to

some extent, address our third recommendation for the Bureau to devote further attention to decennial acquisition workforce planning. We believe that these are important first steps. We also believe that fully incorporating the key strategic workforce planning principles we describe in our report would help the Bureau to better align its acquisition workforce with the demands brought on by the Bureau's greater reliance on contractors to help carry out the 2010 Census.

Background

The Constitution vests Congress with the authority to conduct the decennial census in such manner as it determines, and Congress in turn has granted the Secretary of Commerce (and by delegation, the Director of the Census Bureau) considerable latitude in carrying out the census. In counting the nation's population, it is important for the Bureau to stay on schedule, as the Secretary of Commerce is statutorily required to (1) conduct the census on April 1 of the decennial year, (2) report the state population counts to the President for purposes of congressional apportionment by December 31 of the decennial year, and (3) send population tabulations to the states for purposes of redistricting no later than 1 year after the April 1 census date. To meet these mandated reporting requirements, census activities need to take place at specific times and in the proper sequence. As Census Day approaches, the tolerance for any operational delays or changes becomes increasingly small.

Throughout its history, the Bureau has mostly relied on its in-house capabilities to conduct the decennial census.⁵ However, the 2000 Census marked the first time the Bureau relied on contractors to perform a large number of major decennial activities. For example, the Bureau awarded a data capture contract—to scan more than 100 million questionnaires, capture and read that data, and send the information to headquarters for additional processing—to TRW, and awarded the advertising firm of Young & Rubicam a contract to develop an outreach and promotion campaign.

⁵In conducting the census, the Bureau hires enormous numbers of temporary employees to conduct field data collection as well as other tasks. For example, during the 2000 Census, the Bureau hired around 500,000 enumerators.

Although the contractors generally performed well,⁶ Commerce's Office of Inspector General identified several shortcomings. For example, incomplete quality assurance procedures for the Bureau's printing contracts led to one contractor printing and mailing out approximately 20 million misaddressed letters informing households that the decennial questionnaires would soon follow, resulting in unnecessary negative publicity just weeks before the Bureau was to send out census forms.

Further, the Inspector General found that the Bureau did not have sufficient program management staff with the training and experience to efficiently acquire systems and manage complex, high-dollar contracts. As a result, the Bureau incurred higher costs than necessary. For example, costs for the data capture system increased from a projected \$49 million at the time of contract award in 1997 to \$238 million by the end of the decennial because of continually changing and expanding requirements late in the decade. The Commerce Office of Inspector General recommended that for the 2010 Census, the Bureau would need a sufficient number of highly skilled and properly trained personnel dedicated to the planning and management of decennial contracts.

The Bureau Has Made Progress on Major Decennial Contracts, but Adherence to Contract Milestones Will Be Essential

The Bureau has awarded three of its seven major decennial contracts on time, and is working to accomplish contract milestones for these three and preparing for the award of the remaining four contracts. However, the tight systems development and testing schedule coupled with the interdependence of decennial systems may affect the Bureau's ability to meet its ambitious schedule for completing the testing necessary for a successful census.

The Bureau Has Awarded Three Contracts and Is Working to Achieve Contract Milestones

As shown in table 1, the Bureau has awarded three of its seven major decennial contracts on time, and is working to accomplish contract milestones for these three and preparing for the award of the remaining four contracts. However, the Bureau has pushed back the award dates of two of the remaining four contracts because of changes in its acquisition

⁶For example, the data capture system exceeded its performance goals for accuracy, and the advertising campaign blanketed the country with more than 250 advertisements in 17 languages, which helped boost the response rate higher than the Bureau had expected.

approach for the contracts (additional detail about each of the seven contracts is presented in apps. III through VII). Going forward, it will be important for the Bureau to stay on schedule so that key systems can be demonstrated in concert with one another as part of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal.

Table 1: Status of Major Decennial Contracts

Contract	Contractor/agency managing contracts	Contract purpose	Estimated contract cost	Target award dates
Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing Accuracy Improvement Project (MTAIP)	Harris Corporation	Delivery of accurate, improved, and current information to the Master Address File/ Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) database	\$209 million	June 2002 (actual)
Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS)	Lockheed Martin Corporation	Providing a solution for data capture and respondent assistance	More than \$500 million	October 2005 (actual)
Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA)	Harris Corporation	Providing automated resources for supporting field data collection, including the provision of mobile computing devices used by enumerators	\$600 million	March 2006 (actual)
Data Access and Dissemination System II (DADS II)	To be determined	Develop a replacement for legacy tabulation and dissemination system	To be determined	October 2006
2010 Communications	To be determined	Development of an advertising campaign to promote the 2010 Census	To be determined	Calendar year 2007
2010 Census printing contracts	Government Printing Office (will manage contracts)	Printing and distribution of census questionnaires and other documents	To be determined	March 2007 (contract for major operations) November 2008 - April 2009 (other printing contracts)
Decennial Census Leasing	General Services Administration (will manage leasing)	Leasing, build-out, and management of regional census centers and local census offices	To be determined	April 2007 - June 2009 (leases signed for individual offices)

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

The MTAIP contract, for about \$209 million, was awarded in June 2002 to the Harris Corporation (Harris). Harris is to correct in the Bureau's geographic information system, called the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) database, the location of every street, boundary, and other map feature so that coordinates are

aligned with their true geographic locations. Our review of Bureau documents indicates that Harris is meeting expected schedule and cost targets for the MTAIP contract. According to Bureau documents, Harris completed work for 75 counties in fiscal year 2003, as was planned for the first year of production for the contract. Bureau documents also show that in fiscal years 2004 and 2005, Harris was both on schedule and within budget, completing 602 counties in 2004 and 623 counties in 2005. Similarly, for the first 2 months of fiscal year 2006, Harris was also on schedule and within budget. Bureau plans call for Harris to finish its work for all remaining counties by the end of fiscal year 2008.

The DRIS contract was awarded in October 2005 to Lockheed Martin and is expected to cost more than \$500 million. Bureau officials told us that work on the DRIS contract is slightly behind schedule. The implementation of the DRIS contract was pushed back by 60 to 90 days, according to Bureau officials, because of a bid protest that was ultimately withdrawn. Bureau officials told us they did not expect this change to substantially affect the contractor's ability to complete the work as planned. DRIS staff are working to adjust the schedule for the first few months of the contract to accommodate the change.

The Bureau awarded the FDCA contract to Harris for an estimated cost of \$600 million. Although the award date was consistent with its schedule, the Bureau had revised the original award date for FDCA from late 2005 to March 2006 to enable multiple offerors to develop and test prototypes of the mobile computing device that will be used by enumerators during their fieldwork. The Bureau held a 3-day field demonstration in January 2006 to evaluate the prototype, and considered the results as part of the process for selecting a contractor. Bureau officials with responsibility for FDCA believe this strategy had multiple advantages. For example, they believe the development of a prototype prior to contract award increases the likelihood of having a working device in time for the first operation of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal.

Of the four remaining contracts, the Bureau has also revised the original award dates for two but expects to award the contracts for printing and field office leasing according to its original schedule. The two contracts for which the Bureau has pushed back the award dates are the DADS II contract to replace the Bureau's data tabulation and dissemination system and the 2010 Communications contract to advertise and promote the 2010 Census.

The Bureau has twice changed the DADS II award date and contract scope. It originally planned to establish a new Web-based system that would serve as a single point for public access to all census data and integrate many dissemination functions currently spread across multiple Bureau organizations. The Bureau had planned to award that contract in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2005. However, due to fiscal and resource constraints, the Bureau decided against investing in this integrated approach and opted instead to rely on contractors to enhance the DADS system used for the 2000 Census. The Bureau planned to release a RFP for DADS II on February 27, 2006, and to award the contract in August 2006.

On March 8, 2006, however, the Bureau announced its plan to delay the release of the RFP by 6 months to gain a clearer sense of budget priorities before issuing a delegation of procurement authority. The Bureau also changed its plan to acquire a contractor to maintain and enhance the system used for the 2000 Census. In its draft RFP for the DADS II contract, the Bureau noted that because the system used in 2000 was becoming obsolete, it planned to revert back to its original plan to acquire an integrated system. The Bureau currently estimates it will delay the award of the DADS II contract from August to October of 2006.

The Bureau had also originally planned to award the 2010 Communications contract in October 2006—earlier in the decade than for Census 2000, when the Bureau awarded its advertising contract in October 1997—but has decided to do so at a later date because it is still researching various approaches to the acquisition. Bureau officials told us they plan to award the contract during the 2007 calendar year. They also told us that the contract is currently on track.

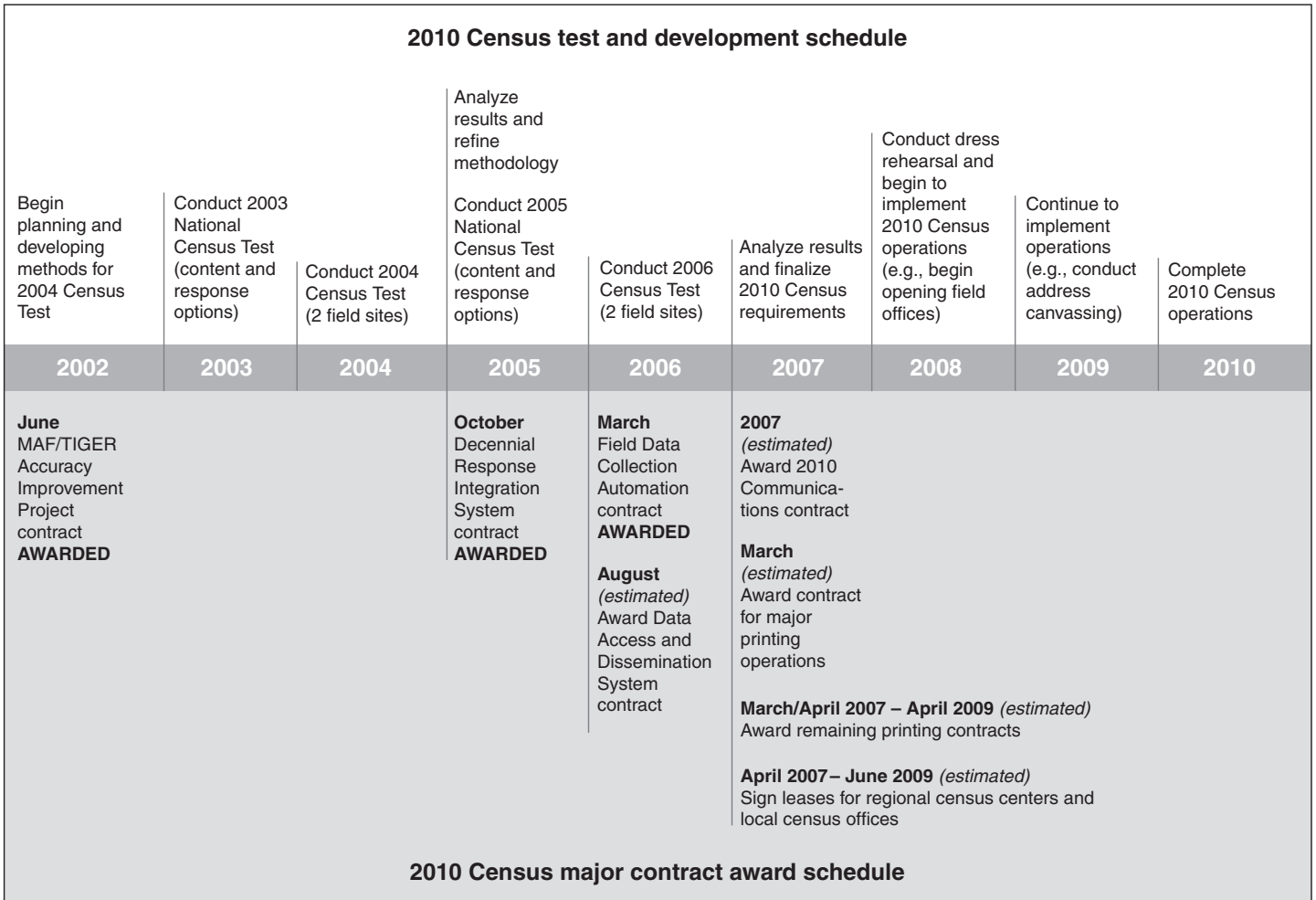
Tight Time Frames May Affect the Bureau's Ability to Properly Test Key Systems

The tight schedule for systems development and testing schedule coupled with the interdependence of decennial systems may affect the Bureau's ability to meet its ambitious time frame for completing the testing necessary for a successful census. For example, as shown in figure 1, the FDCA contract—the scope of which will provide handheld mobile computing devices to be used by enumerators—was awarded in March

2006 to Harris. This occurred⁷ in the midst of the 2006 Census Test⁷ during which the Bureau is assessing the use of these devices. Although the Bureau noted that it provided competitors for the FDCA contract information about the design, requirements, and specifications for the 2006 test in its RFP, Harris will have only a short time to incorporate performance information from the 2006 test into the development of new mobile computing devices, as these devices need to be ready by April 2007 for the address canvassing operation of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. The dress rehearsal will be the Bureau's last opportunity to assess the various procedures and systems for the decennial census under as near-census-like conditions as possible.

⁷The Bureau's testing and development program for the 2010 Census included field tests in Georgia and New York during its 2004 Census Test, as well as ongoing field tests in Texas and South Dakota for the 2006 Census Test. In 2008, the Bureau plans to hold a dress rehearsal in California and North Carolina, which is to be a demonstration of the operations and systems planned for 2010.

Figure 1: The Bureau’s Testing and Development Schedule and Contract Activities Overlap

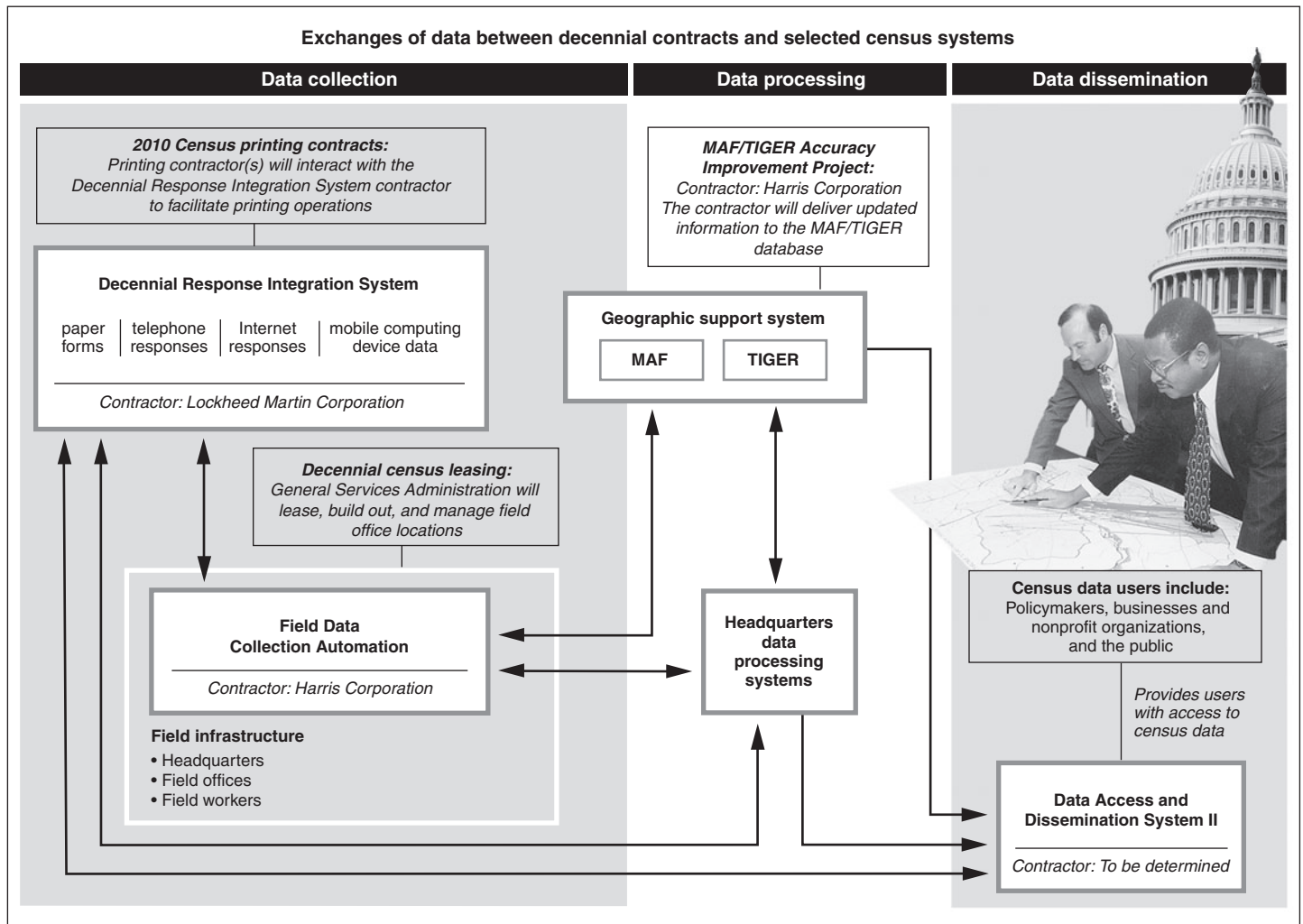


Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Moreover, several of the Bureau’s key decennial systems—both those developed by contractors and those developed by the Bureau itself—will need to exchange data (or interface) with each other to carry out decennial operations, as illustrated in figure 2. The decennial system is comprised of many systems that must work in concert and rely on one another. Because of these interdependencies, these various systems need to stay on schedule during the development phase. For example, data collected by the mobile computing devices supplied under the FDCA contract need to be processed by the data capture system provided by the

DRIS contractor to be consistent with data from other sources, such as the Internet or telephone.

Figure 2: Decennial Contracts and Other Census Systems Will Need to Work in Concert with One Another



Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and image).

More broadly, the principal census-taking activities and systems need to be sufficiently mature so they can be demonstrated in concert with one another as part of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. Based on the Bureau's past experience, a true dress rehearsal—which requires the Bureau to specify all design features by 2007—is critical for meeting the Bureau's goals and objectives. We previously reported that during the 1998 Dress Rehearsal

for the 2000 Census, a number of new features were not test-ready; as a result, the Bureau said it could not fully evaluate with any degree of assurance how they would affect the census.⁸ These late design changes and hastily developed untested systems resulted in additional costs to that census.

For the 2010 Census, changes to the acquisition milestones of both the FDCA and DADS II contracts affected the testing programs for both of those systems. For example, as the Commerce Office of Inspector General concluded in a recent report,⁹ delaying FDCA time frames reduced the amount of time after contract award to complete the remainder of the work needed to prepare for, and begin, the dress rehearsal. Moreover, pushing back the award date resulted in a missed opportunity for the FDCA contractor to observe the real-time use of the mobile computing devices for address canvassing in 2005 as part of the 2006 test. According to the Inspector General, observations of the 2006 Test could have provided the contractor with a level of understanding of key census-taking operations that would have been difficult to obtain in any other fashion.

Additionally, the DADS II system will not be developed in time to be fully tested during the 2008 Dress Rehearsal, partly due to the delay in its acquisition milestones. Moreover, because the Bureau moved the release date for the RFP from February to August 2006 and plans to award the contract in October 2006, the time frame the Bureau now has to prepare for awarding the contract has been compressed from 6 to 2 months. In 2 months, the Bureau has to (consistent with planning activities leading up to contract award by governments acquiring systems) prepare for and evaluate responses, conduct supporting negotiations, and recommend a contract award, among other activities involved in selecting a contractor.

⁸GAO, *2010 Census: Basic Design Has Potential, but Remaining Challenges Need Prompt Resolution*, [GAO-05-9](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 12, 2005).

⁹U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, *FDCA Program for 2010 Census Is Progressing, but Key Management and Acquisition Activities Need to be Completed*, OSE-17368 (Washington, D.C.: August 2005).

The Bureau Is Generally Following Five Leading Acquisition Planning Practices, but Continued Management Focus Will Be Critical

In planning its major acquisitions for the 2010 Census, the Bureau has generally adhered to the five leading practices for acquisition planning we selected (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning
Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals
Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts
Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts
Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission
Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically

Source: GAO.

However, additional efforts are needed within two of these practices in the Bureau's activities leading up to contract award. As part of its strategic planning process (practice 1), the Bureau needs to complete its plan for integrating its major decennial systems. Further, in planning for its decennial acquisition workforce (practice 5), the Bureau needs to fully implement key principles of strategic workforce planning. In the years ahead, it will be important for Bureau management to follow these leading practices to successfully plan for and award its remaining contracts for the development of mission-critical systems to support activities for the 2010 Census.

The Bureau Has Developed a Strategic Plan Linked to Program Goals but Needs to Fully Address Systems Integration

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals

Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts

Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts

Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission

Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically

Source: GAO.

Leading results-oriented organizations that rely on acquisitions to accomplish their missions use strategic plans to align the activities of individual contractors with the organizations' overall objectives. Linking an organization's acquisition activities to specific program goals is particularly important for the census, where various systems have to work seamlessly and in the right sequence. For example, the National Academy of Sciences reported that during the 2000 Census, weaknesses in the Bureau's strategic planning for major systems developed by contractors led to a patchwork of information systems that were costly, complex, and high risk.

For the 2010 Census, the Bureau has developed a strategic plan linking some activities to be performed by contractors to the Bureau's program goals. To enhance its planning process and improve systems efficiency, the Bureau is developing a 2010 Census Architecture, which is a blueprint of its business process, data, applications and interfaces, and the technologies needed to efficiently conduct the census. This architecture will also serve as the basis on which the Bureau and its contractors will build systems necessary to complete the 2010 Census. The National Academy of Sciences has endorsed the Bureau's development of the 2010 Census Architecture and noted that its full use has the potential to greatly reduce risk in system development and enable the various information subsystems of the census to communicate effectively with each other.

Within this architecture, the Bureau has several documents that detail its plans to produce a census that achieves its program goals for the reengineered 2010 Census. Although these documents do not specifically

identify contracts, they do link activities that will be performed by contractors to achieving specific program goals. For example, the 2010 Baseline Design specifies that automation and use of mobile computing devices—to be provided by the FDCA contractor—will significantly reduce the amount of paper used in the field. It will also cut down on the large number of staff and the office space required to handle that paper, thereby also reducing the cost of the census. Likewise, in a budget document submitted to the Office of Management and Budget, the Bureau also links contracted activities to decreased workload and costs.

The Bureau is planning for the integration of DRIS, FDCA, DADS II, and its other information technology systems. Successful systems integration involves almost every aspect of the project and reaches from the very beginning through the maintenance phase of a system's life cycle. To facilitate this planning, the Bureau will use the 2010 Census Architecture to coordinate technical planning for systems integration. As part of this architecture, the Bureau has developed the Physical Architecture, which specifically identifies which systems need to exchange data or interface with one another. Contractors will be required to follow this document as they develop interoperable systems. Bureau officials stated that they plan to finalize the Physical Architecture by the spring of 2006.

As the Bureau continues its testing and development for the 2010 Census, it will be important for it to fully develop and carry out its plan to integrate its decennial systems. The Bureau has taken the responsibility of managing systems integration itself. Therefore, it needs to provide each contractor with the information needed to enable the systems they develop to work in concert with other decennial systems. Bureau officials indicate that they intend to define these information needs after all major information technology contracts have been awarded and will implement a joint effort with the Bureau's contractors and in-house developers to integrate its systems development schedules at that time.

However, the Bureau has not yet established a schedule for defining this information that needs to be shared with contractors or other census teams for their development of decennial systems. To successfully provide this information on schedule so as to ensure the successful integration of decennial systems, the Bureau—in its role as the systems integrator—should establish a schedule to define interfaces between all decennial systems so that the interface information can be provided on a timely basis to development teams. Consistent with the leading acquisition planning practice of strategically planning for contracts, the successful integration of decennial systems is a key factor in the Bureau's ability to meet its

internal milestones. This integration will decrease the chance for unanticipated cost increases as well as technical and programmatic risks.

To Date, the Bureau Has Monitored the Acquisition Planning Process for Individual Contracts

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals

Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts

Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts

Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission

Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically

Source: GAO.

Agencies relying on contractors should monitor planning activities leading up to contract award so that appropriate corrective actions can be taken if the process begins to deviate from plan. These planning activities involve (1) planning for and performing the actions necessary to develop and issue a solicitation package, (2) preparing for the evaluation of responses, (3) conducting an evaluation, (4) conducting supporting negotiations, and (5) making recommendations for award of the contract. Without appropriate monitoring of acquisition planning, agencies run the risk of delaying contract award and other contract milestones, which can result in acquisitions becoming more costly than necessary.

The Bureau has monitored activities leading up to contract award for the three major contracts it has awarded and is monitoring its acquisition planning for the remaining four major contracts. For two of its awarded contracts—MTAIP and DRIS—the Bureau has established acquisition project schedules and processes, while also tracking whether its acquisition activities are performed on time through the maintenance, review, and inspection of detailed contract files. The Bureau was relatively close to meeting the dates specified in its contracts' revised planning schedules for the issuance of the MTAIP and DRIS RFPs and subsequent award of those contracts. The Bureau has also been monitoring the planning process for the award of its remaining major decennial contracts.

Continued monitoring of contractor performance after contract award will also factor heavily into the success of major decennial contracts. For example, in our March 2006 testimony¹⁰ focusing on the DRIS and FDCA contracts, we noted that several plans needed for post-award contract monitoring for the two contracts, such as detailed performance measures for tracking the contractor or the Bureau's own internal progress, were not yet developed. While the Bureau does not have a policy requiring such plans to be completed prior to contract award, not having them in place could limit the Bureau's ability to determine when performance deviates from expectations and could increase the risk of delays in identifying problems with the project and taking appropriate corrective actions.

The Bureau Has So Far Involved Relevant Stakeholders in the Acquisition Planning Process

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals

Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts

Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts

Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission

Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically

Source: GAO.

In our previous work,¹¹ we found that engaging relevant stakeholders¹² and empowering them to coordinate acquisition actions help agencies to better define their needs and to identify, select, and manage providers of goods and services. For the inputs of stakeholders to be useful during the acquisition planning phase, careful selection of relevant stakeholders is necessary. A plan for stakeholder involvement should include a list of

¹⁰[GAO-06-444T](#).

¹¹GAO, *Framework for Assessing the Acquisition Function at Federal Agencies*, [GAO-05-218G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2005).

¹²Relevant stakeholders include representatives from program offices, contract officials, financial managers, human capital officials, and information technology officials.

relevant stakeholders, the roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders, and a schedule for stakeholder involvement. The Bureau, in its evaluations of the 2000 Census, reported that it could have had greater involvement from internal division stakeholders in its planning process. Likewise, the Commerce Office of Inspector General found that inadequate stakeholder participation—namely, the lack of coordination between the General Services Administration (GSA), the contractors GSA managed, and Bureau staff—resulted in many wasted hours of government employee time and increased contractor cost on the contract involving the opening of over 500 local offices during the 2000 Census.

For some decennial contracts, the Bureau developed plans that include a list of relevant stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities, and schedules of when the involvement of each is needed. For example, the project management plan for the FDCA contract includes a strategy to communicate between internal and external stakeholders and the different management and technical teams that will provide oversight of the FDCA contract. It also details specific roles and responsibilities for individuals within project teams that will support the management and technical activities for the FDCA contract. In another example, the charter for the DRIS acquisition review team details the composition of the team, membership responsibilities, and guidelines in reviewing the acquisition of the system.

After contract award, Bureau attention to stakeholder involvement will remain important. For example, each participant's role in post-contract-award activities should be clearly defined and shared among stakeholders for each contract. We noted in our testimony evaluating the Bureau's progress on the DRIS contract¹³ that in at least one case, the Bureau has not yet obtained written stakeholder buy-in on a project plan for managing the contract.

¹³ [GAO-06-444T](#).

The Bureau Has Implemented Actions to Address Changes in Business Processes Resulting from Its Increasing Reliance on Contractors

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals

Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts

Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts

Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission

Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically

Source: GAO.

An agency's increased reliance on contractors may result in changes to its business processes that can adversely affect staff and the performance of the contractor. For example, a 2003 IBM study¹⁴ found that during the 2000 Census, some Bureau employees felt threatened by the presence of contractors because they believed that their roles and responsibilities had been taken away from them. Additionally, the Bureau did not have established processes to transfer knowledge and information from Bureau personnel to contractors. This lack of effective communication created tensions and engendered a less-than-constructive working relationship between contractors and Bureau staff, according to IBM. Moreover, the study found that because Bureau employees did not know how to properly define contractual requirements and deliverables, there were cost overruns.

For the 2010 Census, the Bureau has planned several needed changes to its business processes. For example, to improve how it defines contractual requirements and deliverables, project teams led by the Bureau's Decennial Management Division are to oversee the development and management of requirements for particular operations and associated contracts. The teams will also work in conjunction with contractors to facilitate the understanding and execution of system requirements.

¹⁴IBM Business Consulting Services, *Management Evaluation of Census 2000* (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 8, 2003).

To improve communication between Bureau and contractor staff, Bureau officials are relying on the 2010 Census Architecture to provide a formal means of sharing processes and requirements with contractors. Other Bureau officials have observed that the sharing of 2010 Census Architecture work products with contractors that has occurred to date has already resulted in improvements: the Bureau received better proposals from potential contractors, better conveyed its systems needs to contractors during the RFP phase, and had a means to provide answers to contractors' inquiries about systems specifications.

The Bureau Has Taken Steps to Plan for Its Decennial Acquisition Workforce, but Needs to Fully Incorporate Key Strategic Workforce Planning Principles

Selected Leading Practices for Acquisition Planning

- Practice 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for major programs that addresses how key contracts link to program goals
- Practice 2: Develop and implement a process to monitor planning for key contracts
- Practice 3: Ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning phase for key contracts
- Practice 4: Address changes in business processes that may occur as a result of increasing the agency's reliance on contractors to accomplish its mission
- Practice 5: Plan for the acquisition workforce strategically**

Source: GAO.

Agencies that rely heavily on acquisitions to accomplish their missions stand to benefit greatly by planning strategically for their acquisition workforces. In a previous report, we noted that this planning should include developing a strategic workforce plan that defines the capabilities that will be needed by the acquisition workforce in the future, as well as strategies that can help this workforce meet these capabilities.¹⁵ During the 2000 Census, the Bureau experienced some difficulty managing its contracts because of a lack of skilled acquisition and contract-management personnel.

For example, the Commerce Office of Inspector General reported that, because the Bureau's Decennial Systems and Contracts Management

¹⁵ [GAO-05-218G](#).

Office lacked staff with the experience needed to manage large-scale contracts, the Bureau did not prepare a written contract surveillance and management plan when it awarded a contract to a firm to help respondents complete their census questionnaires over the telephone. (Surveillance and management plans describe the responsibilities, roles, and interactions among the program office, contracting officer, and contractor.) Although the Department of Commerce, in commenting on a draft of this report, noted that the Bureau carried out these surveillance and management activities without a written plan, a written plan would have provided greater assurance that the contracts were (1) executed successfully, (2) not changed without authorization, and (3) that the contractor performs as expected. For the 2010 Census, the Bureau continues to face acquisition workforce challenges.

Senior officials told us that the agency lacks and has trouble recruiting qualified acquisition personnel with the necessary experience and skills to award and oversee complex contracts. Additionally, the Bureau has not strengthened the monitoring of its mission-critical workforce more closely and at a higher level, as we noted in a June 2005 report.¹⁶ (According to a Commerce planning document, the Bureau considers its decennial acquisition workforce to be mission-critical.) For example, the Bureau did not identify its decennial acquisition workforce in its overall human capital management plan, nor did it solicit the input of the Acquisition Division in developing that plan. An April 2005 Office of Management and Budget policy letter to federal departments and agencies underscores the importance of this type of planning by requiring high-level acquisition officials to provide substantial input to their agency's human capital strategic plans regarding the acquisition workforce.¹⁷

We have previously identified five key principles that strategic workforce planning should address: (1) involving top management, employees, and other stakeholders in developing and implementing the workforce plan; (2) determining critical skills and competencies needed to achieve programmatic results; (3) developing strategies tailored to address gaps in critical skills and competencies; (4) building the capability needed to

¹⁶GAO, *Human Capital: Selected Agencies Have Opportunities to Enhance Existing Succession Planning and Management Efforts*, [GAO-05-585](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2005).

¹⁷Office of Management and Budget, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, Policy Letter 05-01 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 15, 2005).

address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce strategies; and (5) monitoring and evaluating the agency's progress toward its human capital goals.¹⁸

The Bureau has incorporated some key strategic workforce planning principles in planning for its acquisition workforce,¹⁹ but primarily at a division level. Divisions within the Bureau that have responsibility for acquisition-related staff have independently implemented certain strategic workforce planning actions, including working to determine the critical skills and competencies needed to award and manage decennial contracts and developing strategies to have adequate skilled staff in place in time for the decennial. For example, as part of its workforce planning, the Decennial Systems and Contracts Management Office retained a contractor to conduct a study of what grades, competencies, and skills were needed to effectively manage the DRIS contract. Bureau divisions are also turning to formal training to enhance the capabilities of their staff. For instance, the Decennial Management Division is requiring some of its employees to take project management or contracting officer's technical representative training. Likewise, the Decennial Systems and Contracts Management Office has trained some of its staff in program management as well as in the development of enterprise architecture.

At an agencywide level, the Bureau has taken some initial steps to identify the skills and competencies needed to manage contracts, but more could be done. For example, in the Bureau's strategic human capital plan, the Bureau acknowledges that project and contract management are among the new skills required for its staff for the reengineering of the 2010 Census. To build the capacity to help staff obtain these and other skills, the Bureau has established a Project Management Master's Certificate Program and an Information Technology Master's Certificate Program, and has developed competency guides as well. According to Commerce, these certificate programs, initiated in 1998, are a way to develop the management and leadership skills needed in mid-to-senior level career

¹⁸GAO, *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*, [GAO-04-39](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2003).

¹⁹The Bureau defines its acquisition workforce broadly, including in its definition both Acquisition Division employees, such as contracting officers and contract specialists, and employees in other divisions that play a significant role in acquisitions, such as contracting officer technical representatives, program managers, and individuals responsible for defining contract requirements.

employees to successfully oversee Bureau operations well beyond the 2010 Census.

However, the Bureau still lacks an agencywide approach to strategically planning for its acquisition workforce. First, as we previously noted,²⁰ the Bureau does not assess or monitor gaps in numbers by mission-critical occupation at an agencywide level. Instead, it focuses on “building infrastructure” by recruiting and developing competencies. The Bureau delegates decisions to line managers to fill vacancies, and believes there is no need to assess workers by mission-critical categories. In not performing this agencywide assessment, the Bureau cannot monitor its mission-critical occupations related to acquisitions more closely and at a higher level within the agency. As a result, it may not know overall if it has the acquisition-related competencies it needs in place agencywide to be prepared for conducting the 2010 Census as efficiently or effectively as possible.

Second, the Bureau has not identified the needs of its decennial acquisition workforce in its agencywide human capital management, nor has it developed a separate plan specific to the acquisition workforce that identifies these needs. Further, according to Bureau officials in the Acquisition Division, their input was not sought in the development of the Bureau’s existing human capital management plan.

This lack of high-level attention to the decennial acquisition workforce in the Bureau’s strategic human capital planning process is notable, especially in light of the Bureau’s challenges of recruiting qualified acquisition personnel. It will be important for the Bureau to address the needs of its acquisition workforce in its agencywide human capital management plan or a separate plan and to involve the Acquisition Division in this planning effort. Taking these actions would help facilitate a better alignment between the acquisition workforce and the demands brought on by the Bureau’s greater reliance on contractors for the successful conduct of the 2010 Census.

Conclusion

As the 2010 Census approaches, the Bureau faces the challenge of managing its extensive network of contractors to perform mission-critical operations. The Bureau is well aware that early planning, testing, and development will help facilitate a successful decennial census. Acquisition

²⁰ [GAO-05-585](#).

planning plays a key role in that process and provides a road map the Bureau can use to manage its contracts to increase the likelihood of timely deliverables at reasonable cost.

Overall, progress on the seven major decennial contracts is moving forward. Still, as Census Day 2010 draws closer, it will become increasingly difficult for the Bureau to make up any time lost to delays. Already, aspects of the Bureau's DADS II system will not be assessed in the dress rehearsal because of a change in the contract's acquisition milestones, while changes to FDCA time frames have reduced the amount of time the Bureau will have to complete the work needed to prepare for, and begin the dress rehearsal.

Further, to help the contractors stay on track, Bureau officials will need to document a schedule for when information needs to be exchanged between contractors and census teams working to develop these interoperable systems for the 2010 Census. The Bureau also needs to pay attention to strategically—and at an agencywide level—managing the human capital planning for its acquisition workforce.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To help the Bureau improve the management of the 2010 Census, we recommend that the Secretary of Commerce direct the Bureau to take the following three actions:

- Ensure that the key systems to be developed or provided by contractors for the 2010 Census are fully functional and ready to be assessed in concert with other operations as part of the 2008 Dress Rehearsal.
- Establish a schedule for the definition of interfaces between all decennial systems so that these data can be provided on a timely basis to development teams.
- Devote further attention to planning strategically for its decennial acquisition workforce by (1) assessing, at a higher level within the agency, whether it has the acquisition-related skills needed to conduct the 2010 Census by developing strategies to identify and address gaps, monitoring and evaluating progress toward closing gaps, and adjusting strategies accordingly; and (2) identifying the needs of the acquisition workforce in its human capital management plan or another acquisition-specific workforce plan and involving appropriate stakeholders in this planning effort.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In written comments on a draft of this report, Commerce neither agreed nor disagreed with our recommendations. Commerce commented on aspects of our principal findings and our third recommendation regarding its planning for the decennial acquisition workforce. Its comments included some technical corrections and suggestions where additional context was needed, and we revised the report to reflect these comments as appropriate. Commerce's comments are reprinted in their entirety in appendix II.

Commerce did comment on our first principal finding concerning the Bureau's readiness for the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. This finding led to our first recommendation for the Bureau to ensure that its key systems are fully functional and ready to be assessed in concert with other operations during the dress rehearsal. Commerce noted that the Bureau provided competitors for the FDCA contract information about the design, requirements, and specifications for the 2006 Test in its RFP (we have now added this information to our report). Commerce also noted that the Bureau will be sharing preliminary results from the 2006 Test with Harris—the firm that was awarded the contract—as soon as the results are available. However, the Bureau did not specify when this might be. Moreover, as we discussed in the report, the mobile computing devices will need to be ready by April 2007, when the Bureau is to use them for the address canvassing operation for the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. Consequently, the contractor will have around a year, perhaps less, to study the results of the 2006 Test; assess what worked and what improvements, if any, are needed; and develop and test any solutions in time to be included in the devices that will be used in 2007.

For our second principal finding that the Bureau does not have a schedule for defining what and when information needs to be provided to development teams to better integrate the systems they develop, Commerce did not comment on our recommendation for the Bureau to develop such a schedule, but stated that it was not clear how the Bureau could have had such a schedule prior to awarding the contracts. Commerce further noted that the Bureau plans to implement a joint effort with its contractors and in-house developers to integrate its development schedules. Our report acknowledged that the Bureau intended to define these information needs after it awards the major information technology contracts. We believe that establishing a schedule defining the interfaces between all decennial systems as soon as practical is critical because it allows the Bureau to better manage the process and hold various components accountable to a schedule and thus help ensure the successful integration of decennial systems.

In its comments related to our third finding and recommendation for the Bureau to assess the decennial acquisition workforce at a higher level within the agency, Commerce described the actions the Bureau is taking consistent with this recommendation. For example, Commerce reported that high-level Bureau officials will be regularly briefed on the status of each decennial acquisition. Commerce also detailed the steps the Bureau is taking with stakeholders to plan for the needs of the Bureau's acquisition-related workforce as part of its human capital management plan. Commerce noted that this plan includes input from managers who represent each Bureau directorate.

These are important first steps toward addressing our third recommendation. While the Bureau has begun working closely with stakeholders to plan for the decennial acquisition workforce as part of its human capital management plan, it has not yet begun incorporating that information into the plan. As we stated in our report, documenting its decennial acquisition workforce needs in the Bureau's strategic human capital plan would help facilitate a better alignment between the acquisition workforce and the demands brought on by the Bureau's greater reliance on contractors for the successful conduct of the 2010 Census.

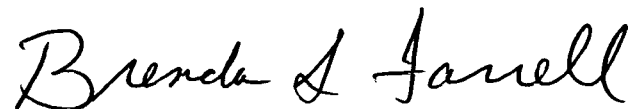
In addition, Commerce commented on information in our report that was obtained from our March 2006 testimony and a 2002 Commerce Office of Inspector General study. Specifically, our report notes that in March 2006, we testified that neither the FDCA nor DRIS contract project offices had the full set of capabilities they need to effectively manage those acquisitions.²¹ Commerce commented that full project management offices were not needed to carry out the Bureau's initial acquisitions and will be staffed in time to effectively manage the contracts. As discussed in the testimony and noted in our report, a full set of capabilities—including the institution of requirements management or risk management processes—are significant factors in successful systems acquisitions and development programs. Having these capabilities in place will also improve the likelihood of meeting cost and schedule estimates as well as performance requirements. Regarding the Inspector General's study, we noted that the Inspector General found that the cost of the data capture system for the 2000 Census increased almost fivefold by the end of that decennial cycle because of continually changing and expanding requirements late in the

²¹[GAO-06-444T](#).

decade, and the Inspector General recommended that for 2010, the Bureau would need a sufficient number of trained personnel dedicated to the planning and management of decennial contracts. In its comments, Commerce noted that the issue of changing and expanding requirements must be addressed by program management, and that the Bureau, in its preparations for the 2010 Census, is following practices for rigorous requirements management.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Commerce, Commerce Office of Inspector General, the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau and other interested congressional committees. We will make copies available to others upon request. This report will also be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please contact me on (202) 512-6806 or by email at farrellb@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix VIII.



Brenda S. Farrell
Acting Director
Strategic Issues

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

Our objectives for this report were to (1) determine the status of the U.S. Census Bureau's (Bureau) major contracts related to the 2010 Census, and (2) evaluate the extent to which the Bureau is using selected leading practices to manage its acquisition planning process for the decennial census. To address our first objective, we reviewed documents related to major 2010 Census acquisitions, including acquisition plans, requests for proposals (RFP), finalized contracts, and budget requests to the Office of Management and Budget. We also reviewed the Bureau's strategic planning documents, such as its 2010 Census Management Plan, 2010 Census Architecture, and 2010 Baseline Design for Reengineering the Decennial Census.

Additionally, we interviewed Bureau officials about the status of and future plans for the major contracts for the 2010 Census (as defined by Bureau officials). Those officials include those from the Decennial Management Division, which is responsible for implementing the decennial census; the Decennial Systems and Contracts Management Office, which manages selected system contracts supporting the decennial census; and the Acquisition Division, which carries out acquisition activities, including setting up and signing contracts, for other Bureau offices. Further, we interviewed an official from the Decennial Information Technology and Geographic Systems division.

For the second objective, we identified selected leading acquisition planning practices used in the federal government from a variety of sources. Sources included our own guidance, reports, and testimonies on the acquisition function¹ as well as external works, such as the Capability Maturity Model[®] Integration (CMMISM)² model. The CMMISM model was developed by Carnegie Mellon University's Software Engineering Institute, recognized for its expertise in software and system processes. The CMMISM model includes criteria to evaluate, improve, and manage system and software development processes. We adapted these CMMISM criteria to evaluate system and software development issues during acquisition planning for the four information technology contracts (Field Data Collection Automation, Decennial Response Integration System, MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project, and Data Access and

¹See for example, GAO, *Framework for Assessing the Acquisition Function at Federal Agencies*, [GAO-05-218G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2005).

²CMM[®], Capability Maturity Model, and Capability Maturity Modeling are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. CMMISM is a service mark of Carnegie Mellon University.

Dissemination System II). From these, we selected five leading practices based on the acquisition-related challenges the Bureau faced during Census 2000. The five leading practices we selected focused on management oversight of the Bureau's acquisition planning process, not on the Bureau's acquisition strategy for specific contracts or compliance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

To evaluate the extent to which the Bureau followed these leading practices, we reviewed relevant Bureau documents, such as acquisition plans, strategic planning documents, RFPs, finalized contracts, and budget requests to the Office of Management and Budget; observed some acquisition-related events at the Bureau, including Bureau presentations for potential bidders and contract monitoring meetings; and interviewed knowledgeable Bureau officials about acquisition planning. We focused on the Bureau's activities to date in planning for its major decennial contracts. Because the Bureau is still planning most of these acquisitions, our review presents findings about current status and plans as reported by Bureau officials or as supported by Bureau documents. We conducted our work from July 2005 through March 2006 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Commerce



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 24, 2006

Ms. Brenda S. Farrell
Acting Director
Office of Strategic Issues
United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Farrell:

The U.S. Department of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to comment on the United States Government Accountability Office draft report entitled *2010 Census: Census Bureau Generally Follows Selected Leading Acquisition Planning Practices, but Continued Management Attention Is Needed to Help Ensure Success*. The Department's comments on this report are enclosed.

Sincerely,

Carlos M. Gutierrez

Enclosure

U.S. Department of Commerce
Comments on the
United States Government Accountability Office
Draft Report Entitled *2010 Census: Census Bureau Generally Follows Selected Leading
Acquisition Planning Practices, but Continued Management Attention Is Needed to
Help Ensure Success*
(GAO-06-277)

General Comments:

In case the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) would like to add this information to the final report, the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) contract was awarded to the Harris Corporation. The contract was awarded on schedule, March 31, 2006, for an estimated \$600 million.

Page-Specific Comments:

On pages 3-4, the report states that neither the FDCA nor Decennial Response Integration Systems (DRIS) contract project offices has the full set of capabilities they need to effectively manage the acquisitions.

Comment: The project offices had what they needed to carry out all initial acquisition management activities. We do not believe the full Project Management Offices (PMOs) were needed for that phase. The full PMOs will be staffed in time to effectively manage the contracts.

On pages 7-8, the report states: “[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.”

Comment: It is not clear how the Census Bureau could be expected to have such a schedule prior to awarding these major contracts. Since the Census Bureau is outsourcing for solutions, it would not know the specific detailed schedule for development of systems until it has awarded each contract to a specific vendor. The Census Bureau does plan to implement a joint effort with its contractors and in-house developers to integrate its development schedules.

On page 10, the report states: "...costs for data capture system increased [for Census 2000] from a projected \$49 million ... to \$238 million ... because of continually changing and expanding requirements...."

Comment: The report implies this resulted from a lack of training and experience of contract management staff. The issue of changing and expanding requirements is beyond the scope or authority of the *contract* management staff. It must be addressed by overall program management. The absence of a rigorous requirements and management and traceability discipline during the 2000 cycle is being rectified for this cycle by the Census Bureau's commitment to Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) processes. CMMI includes specific practices for rigorous requirements management. We and our contributors follow CMMI Level 3.

On page 14, the report states that the Census Bureau delayed Data Access and Dissemination Systems (DADS) to "develop a strategy to provide potential bidders with a more comprehensive understanding...."

Comment: The contract award for DADS was delayed to gain a clearer sense of budget priorities before issuing a delegation of procurement authority.

On pages 15-16, the report states: "The FDCA contractor will have only a short time to incorporate performance information from the 2006 Test into the development of new mobile computing devices...."

Comment: Competitors for the FDCA contract were provided information about design, requirements, and specifications for the 2006 Census Test as part of Section J of the Request for Proposal. The Census Bureau will be sharing preliminary results from the test as soon as they are available.

On page 16, the report provides a schedule of major activities and contract award dates.

Comment: The dates shown for "Award remaining printing contracts" are not current. The dates should read "March/April 2007 through April 2009."

On page 17, the report shows a schematic of data exchanges between decennial contracts and systems.

Comment: The schematic shows a direct link between DRIS and our geographic support systems, but this link is not part of the Census Bureau's current plans. Similarly, the direct link shown between FDCA and DADS is not part of their current plans.

On page 29, the report states: "The Bureau did not prepare a contract surveillance and management plan...."

Comment: The report quotes an Office of Inspector General (OIG) report here, but does not add the additional context that the OIG report also recognized that the Census Bureau carried out these surveillance and management activities in spite of the lack of a written plan.

On page 30, the report references the June 2005 (GAO-05-585) report and states that the Census Bureau has not monitored its mission-critical acquisition workforce more closely as GAO has recommended.

Comment: The June 2005 report makes no mention of the Census Bureau's acquisition workforce.

On page 31, the report notes that divisions within the Census Bureau that have acquisition-related staff have "independently implemented certain strategic workforce planning actions...."

Different offices at the Census Bureau, such as the Decennial Systems and Contracts Management Office (DSCMO), Decennial Management Division (DMD), and Acquisition Division have different occupational mixes, professional competencies, and responsibilities. The Acquisition Division is comprised of Contracting Officers who have specific and unique roles. They are the only organization with GS-1102 Contract Specialists. That occupation has unique characteristics and responsibilities. The type of training and the competencies required for staff in the Acquisition Division will vary significantly from staff in DSCMO and/or DMD. There are, however, standards in place for acquisition-related staff in terms of the training they are required to have.

Since March 2004, the Department of Commerce has implemented a "Contracting Officer Representative Certification Program" for acquisition personnel. The goal of this program is to provide individuals who are managing government contracts with the necessary tools and abilities to do so effectively and efficiently. Based on the level of responsibilities an individual has and the size of the contracts they are managing, the individual is assigned a level, from I to III, that specifies the number of and types of courses they are required to take. Bureaus have the discretion to require any additional courses and/or hours that they feel are necessary. The Census Bureau requires all their Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) to be Level II-certified, which requires them to take 40 hours of acquisition training, with a refresher course every 3 years and 18 hours of Project Management training. Census Bureau task managers are required to be Level I-certified, which requires them to take 18 hours of acquisition and 12 hours of Project Management training.

On page 32, the report notes that the Project Management (PM) Master's Certificate and the Information Technology (IT) Master's Certificate were established to help staff gain the project and contract management skills needed for the reengineering of the 2010 Census.

The PM and IT programs were initiated in 1998 as part of the Census Bureau's much larger succession planning practices. The certificate programs are a way to develop the management and leadership skills needed in mid-to-senior level career employees to successfully oversee Census Bureau operations well beyond the 2010 Census. Since its inception, the programs have had participants from across the Census Bureau. By the end of 2005, there were 758 employees who had completed the program.

Comments on Recommended Actions:

GAO's Recommended Actions: "Devote further attention to planning strategically for its decennial acquisition workforce by (1) assessing, at a higher level within the agency, whether it has the acquisition-related skills needed to conduct the 2010 Census by developing strategies to identify and address gaps, monitoring and evaluating progress toward closing gaps, and adjusting strategies accordingly and (2) identifying the needs of the acquisition workforce in its human capital management plan or another acquisition-specific workforce plan and involving appropriate stakeholders in this planning effort."

On page 32, the report suggests that the Census Bureau needs to track the acquisition workforce "at a higher level within the agency." We have begun a regular assessment of Census Bureau acquisition-related skills and processes. The Associate Director for Decennial Census and the Assistant Director for Decennial Information Technology and Geographic Systems, as well as the Census Bureau's Chief Information Officer (CIO), will be regularly briefed on the status of each decennial census acquisition. Further, the Census Bureau's Associate Director for Administration and Chief Financial Officer (ADACFO), the Bureau's CIO, and oversight groups from GAO and the OIG have been issued a standing invitation to attend all program review meetings.

The Human Capital Management Council (HCMC) has been working closely with the Decennial Acquisition Management staff to develop strategies to help them obtain the experienced staff they need to successfully oversee the 2010 Census contracts. The HCMC have also been working closely with the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to obtain additional flexibilities to help staff key positions in the acquisition arena on a time-limited basis.

One flexibility that has been granted to the Census Bureau is the direct-hire authority for acquisitions-related personnel. On January 30, 2006, the Department of Commerce granted the Census Bureau the direct-hire authority for contract specialists and procurement analyst positions, GS-1102, in GS 5 through 14. This authority will help the Census Bureau recruit and appoint qualified acquisition personnel needed to successfully conduct the 2010 Census.

The Census Bureau's Human Capital Management Plan was developed corporately by HCMC, which consists of managers who represent each directorate, including both the decennial and the administration directorates (of which the Acquisition Division is a part). The directorates' human capital representatives were responsible for soliciting the input of their senior managers to reflect goals, needs, and priorities in the plan. Senior managers, including senior level officials in the Acquisition Division, provided their Council representatives with the information they determined was appropriate and necessary for the corporate-level Human Capital Management plan covering fiscal years 2005 through 2010. The ADACFO provided guidance and direction to ensure that the plans and relevant issues for acquisition were developed and expressed in concert with all of the administrative areas, reflecting a more comprehensive view. The ADACFO also won support from key acquisition stakeholders to fill three senior contracting officer and two contract specialist positions to manage/support the large decennial contracts.

Appendix III: MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project (MTAIP) Contract Details

Contract details

Contractor: Harris Corporation
Contract type: Cost plus award fee and some fixed price elements
Estimated cost: \$209 million
RFP release date: November 2001
Award date: June 2002

Contract scope

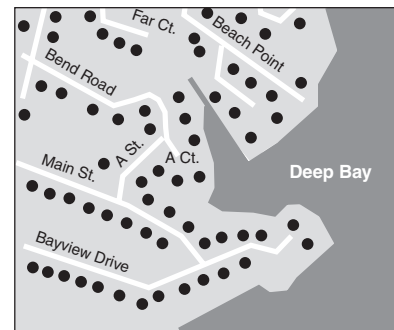
The primary goal of the contract awarded to the Harris Corporation (Harris) is to correct information in the Bureau's repository of the location of every street, boundary, and other map feature (known as the TIGER database) so that coordinates are aligned with their true geographic locations. Harris will also develop a capability to link each of these geographic locations and coordinates on file with a corresponding record to the Bureau's address list of where people live and work (also known as MAF).

Schedule

Stage	Start	End	Main activities
Phase I	FY 2002	FY 2003	(1) Conduct overall technical analysis necessary to finalize technical decisions involving requirements, source data, and the relationship of these factors to cost; and (2) engage in overall planning necessary to finalize approach for Phase II activities
Phase II	FY 2003	FY 2010	Harris implements MTAIP contract to improve the accuracy of the information in the MAF and associated TIGER database

Additional information

- Census 2000:** The Bureau developed a functionally integrated set of computer files and applications—MAF/TIGER—that required large columns of information from many external sources to establish and maintain a current and accurate housing unit address list, boundaries for all governments, address ranges to facilitate geocoding various files, and other map information.
- 2010 Census:** MAF/TIGER will interface with several entities that are external to the program. Some entities include the Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS)—with which it will coordinate to maintain data as geography records are created, updated, or deleted—and the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) system, with which it will work to store spatial coordinates for the mobile computing devices provided by the FDCA contractor.
- Activities to date:** According to Bureau documents, Harris, as planned, completed work for 75 counties in fiscal year 2003, the first year of production for the contract. Bureau documents also show that in fiscal years 2004 and 2005, Harris was both on schedule and within budget, completing work for 602 counties in 2004 and 623 counties in 2005. Similarly, for the first 2 months of fiscal year 2006, Harris was also on schedule and within budget. Bureau plans call for Harris to finish improving all remaining counties by the end of fiscal year 2008.



Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and image).

Appendix IV: Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS) Contract Details

Contract details

Contractor: Lockheed Martin Corporation

Contract type: Cost plus award fee with some firm fixed price elements

Estimated cost: More than \$500 million

RFP release date: February 2005

Award date: October 2005

Contract scope

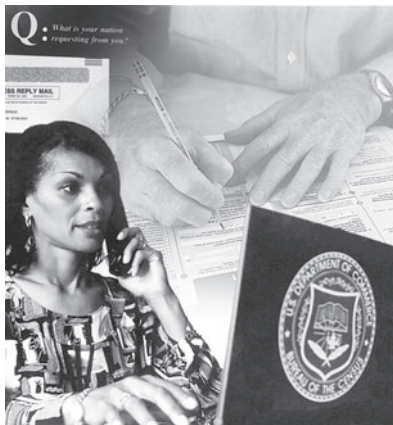
The DRIS contractor will be responsible for designing, building, and operating the systems, staffing, and infrastructure to

- process census data provided by respondents via census forms, telephone agents, the Internet, and enumerators;
- assist the public via telephone and Internet; and
- monitor the quality and status of the data capture operations.

The DRIS contract does not include providing the systems or staffing used for field enumeration operations.

Schedule

Stage	Start	End	Main activities
Phase IA	October 2005	September 2006	Develop detailed program management and technical documentation
Phase IB	October 2006	December 2008	Implement program management, technical, and operational functions needed for the 2008 Dress Rehearsal
Phase II	August 2008	January 2011	Acquire, upgrade, and set up facilities, complete national deployment of DRIS components and full-scale production operations for the 2010 Census, and prepare for closeout
Phase III	July 2010	Contract end	Address post-2010 Census disposition and archiving



Additional information

- **Census 2000:** The Bureau procured key elements of its data capture and processing system from different contractors, and it developed in-house a system for collecting data from the Internet. The Bureau was also responsible for integrating data collected through the different modes of capture (paper, telephone, Internet, and field operations).
- **2010 Census:** The DRIS contract will allow the Bureau to have a single contractor design, develop, and implement a system to integrate data from all of the response modes.
- **Activities to date:** The Bureau began acquisition planning for DRIS in 2003. Between 2003 and contract award, it performed planning and solicitation activities including conducting research on data capture, developing planning documents, drafting and issuing a RFP, and evaluating proposals from vendors. The Bureau awarded the contract on schedule in October 2005.

Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and image).

Appendix V: Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) Contract Details

Contract details

Contractor: Harris Corporation
Contract type: Cost reimbursement with multiple incentives
Estimated cost: \$600 million
RFP release date: June 2005
Award date: March 2006

Contract scope

FDCA will provide the automation for the Bureau to capture information collected during personal interviews, eliminating the need for paper maps and address lists for address canvassing and nonresponse follow-up. The FDCA contractor will provide

- office automation for 12 regional census centers, the Puerto Rico area office, and approximately 500 offices;
- the telecommunications infrastructure for headquarters, regional, and local offices;
- mobile computing devices for field workers;
- integration with other 2010 Census systems; and
- development, deployment, technical support, deinstallation, and disposal services.

Schedule

Stage	Start	End	Main activities
Baseline planning period	March 2006	May 2006	Activities associated with creating management plans and addressing in detail the first major phase (Execution Period #1) of FDCA implementation
Execution Period #1	June 2006	December 2008	Activities proposed by the FDCA contractor to support field operations to conduct the 2008 Dress Rehearsal (Mar. 2006 – Mar. 2009)
Execution Period #2	January 2009	September 2011	All activities proposed by the FDCA contractor to support field operations to conduct the 2010 Census (April 2006 – Sept. 2010)
Execution Period #3	August 2010	December 2011	Operational closeout and contract closeout activities as reflected in the FDCA contractor's Work Breakdown Schedule within this period of performance



Additional information

- **Census 2000:** Field data collection was predominantly handled through paper address lists, maps, and questionnaires.
- **2010 Census:** FDCA is designed to support the Bureau's field data collection activities and also interface with the Decennial Response Integration System, the Bureau's data capture system.
- **Activities to date:** The Bureau moved the award date for FDCA from the end of the 2005 calendar year to March 2006 to enable potential contractors to develop, at their own expense, a "near production ready" prototype system for address canvassing, which will be evaluated as part of source selection.

Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and image).

Appendix VI: Data Access and Dissemination System (DADS II) Contract Details

Contract details

Contractor: *To be determined*
Contract type: *To be determined*
Estimated cost: *To be determined*
RFP release date: *Estimated August 2006*
Award date: *Estimated October 2006*

Contract scope

DADS, developed prior to Census 2000, is the Bureau's system for tabulating and disseminating data from the decennial census and other Bureau surveys to the public. DADS allows users to access prepackaged data products, as well as to build custom reports through its American FactFinder Web site. The Bureau will require the DADS II contractor to replace the legacy DADS system that the Bureau used during Census 2000.

Schedule

Stage	Start	End	Main activities
Phase I	October 2006	December 2006	Transition planning: gain in-depth knowledge of existing DADS systems and develop a detailed transition plan for Phase II and Phase III
Phase II	January 2007	June 2007	Transition: implement, execute, manage, and control the Transition Plan for Phase II and III; transfer responsibilities from the previous DADS contractor
Phase III	July 2007	June 2016	Production: assume full responsibility for all functions, including all activities described in the performance work statement

Additional information

- **Census 2000:** The Bureau developed the DADS program in order to meet customer demand for faster, more flexible access to census data. The program was developed in multiple phases, first launching as a pilot project developed in-house, and then being managed through a contract with IBM awarded in April 1997.



- **2010 Census:** The contractor will be required to provide a replacement of the legacy system to form an integrated solution. The contractor is also expected to provide comprehensive support to the Census 2000 DADS system.
- **Activities to date:** The Bureau originally planned to establish a new Web portal for the public to access all census data and to integrate many of the dissemination functions. Because of fiscal and resource constraints, it decided not to invest in this new initiative, but instead to pursue a follow-on acquisition to the DADS program. In March 2006, the Bureau announced that it will delay the release of the solicitation and contract award date to gain a clearer sense of budget priorities before issuing a delegation of procurement authority. It also changed the scope of the contract to ask contractors to develop a replacement to its legacy system.

Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and image).

Appendix VII: Summaries of Major Decennial Contracts Planned for Award in 2007 or Later

2010 Communications Contract

Contractor: To be determined
Estimated cost: To be determined
Award date: Estimated 2007



Census 2000 experience: The Bureau awarded a contract to Young & Rubicam, along with four partner agencies, to create and produce an advertising campaign to inform and motivate the public to complete and return the census form. The campaign was considered an operational success, and was one of the factors that helped boost response rates.

2010 acquisition plans: While the scope of the 2010 Communications contract has not yet been determined, it may include some or all of the components of the 2000 Communications Program (advertising, media relations, and special events, among others). The Bureau plans for it to be part of an integrated communications program where all components work together to motivate participation in the 2010 Census.

2010 Census Printing Contracts

Agency managing contracts: Government Printing Office (GPO)
Estimated cost: To be determined
Award date: Estimated March 2007 (contract for major operations); November 2008 – June 2009 (other printing contracts)



Census 2000 experience: The Bureau used GPO to contract for decennial printing jobs, such as the printing of questionnaire packages, field follow-up forms, and promotional materials. GPO then selected dozens of private sector companies to perform the work. Contracts for printing Census 2000 material totaled over \$65 million and included the printing of almost 400 million items.

2010 acquisition plans: The Bureau will again work with GPO to contract for its printing needs. In March 2007, the Bureau plans to award one major contract for one of its most complex printing operations, including the printing of questionnaires and other materials for the mail out/mail back and replacement mailing operations. Contracts for the printing of other products, such as military census forms and reminder postcards, will be awarded separately beginning in late 2008.

Decennial Census Leasing

Agency managing leasing: General Services Administration (GSA)
Estimated cost: To be determined
Award date: Estimated that leases will be signed starting in April 2007 and continuing through June 2009



Census 2000 experience: The Bureau and GSA formed a partnership that obtained leases, oversaw the build-out construction of offices, arranged for security and for data and voice telecommunications, and provided office equipment and supplies. All local census offices were successfully opened in sufficient time to conduct operations.

2010 acquisition plans: As in Census 2000, the Bureau has established an interagency agreement with GSA to structure lease agreements. The Bureau expects to lease 12 regional census centers, 1 Puerto Rico area office, and approximately 500 local census offices nationwide and in Puerto Rico.

Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Census Bureau (data and images).

Appendix VIII: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Robert Goldenkoff, Assistant Director; Betty Clark; Shirley Hwang; Anne McDonough-Hughes; and Brendan St. Amant made key contributions to the report. Tim DiNapoli, Richard Donaldson, Richard Hung, John Krump, Donna Miller, and Amy Rosewarne provided significant technical support.

Related GAO Products

Selected GAO Reports on the 2010 Decennial Census

2010 Census: Planning and Testing Activities Are Making Progress. [GAO-06-465T](#). Washington, D.C.: March 1, 2006.

Census Bureau: Important Activities for Improving Management of Key 2010 Decennial Acquisitions Remain to be Done. [GAO-06-444T](#). Washington D.C.: March 1, 2006.

Data Quality: Improvements to Count Correction Efforts Could Produce More Accurate Census Data. [GAO-05-463](#). Washington, D.C.: June 20, 2005.

Information Technology Management: Census Bureau Has Implemented Many Key Practices, but Additional Actions Are Needed. [GAO-05-661](#). Washington, D.C.: June 16, 2005.

2010 Census: Basic Design Has Potential, but Remaining Challenges Need Prompt Resolution. [GAO-05-9](#). Washington, D.C.: January 12, 2005.

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American Community Survey: Key Unresolved Issues. [GAO-05-82](#). Washington, D.C.: October 8, 2004.

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Decennial Census: Lessons Learned for Locating and Counting Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers. [GAO-03-605](#). Washington, D.C.: July 3, 2003.

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Acquisition Workforce: Status of Agency Efforts to Address Future Needs. [GAO-03-55](#). Washington, D.C.: December 18, 2002.

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